

Keystone

The Journal of Christian Home Schoolers

of Australasia

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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. -- Ps 112:1-2

Winged Fire-Breathing Dragons

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Dad's Role

(Part III)

(The following is the third and last part of the speech delivered by the Rev Graham Capill, leader of the Christian Heritage Party and co-leader of the Christian Coalition, at the Christian Home Schoolers National Conference in Palmerston North, NZ, on Saturday 3 February 1996.)

4.) Instruction and Discipline

I'm sure I don't have to remind you of the well known texts! Ephesians 6:4 perhaps sums them all up: "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." Proverbs 22:6 says: "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it."

One of the hardest things to get right in the home is this whole area of discipline. Fathers need to be good disciplinarians. They must not be too harsh or authoritarian, otherwise they will indeed provoke their children to wrath. On the other hand, they must not be weak or inconsistent.

If Dad is to give good leadership in this area, he had better start by understanding the truth of Hebrews 12:11: "No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it." And it is the father's task to lead the way in this activity. Too often Dads are oblivious to what their children are up to. It's the mother who cops the lot and is left to control the troops. And because they are left to do the task by themselves, words are more frequently used instead of the rod, and the end result is the parents have made a rod for their own backs as the children grow in age. The Scripture is clear that if you spare the rod you

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Keystone is intended to inform, challenge, encourage and inspire. The trustees of CHomeS believe that the Christian faith is being undervalued. Christianity is fully able to present a world view that is intelligent, coherent, consistent and complete. Committed to scholarship, the free exchange of ideas and the need to stimulate reasonable debate, **Keystone** may publish articles that will not necessarily reflect the views or beliefs of the Trustees. Original articles and letters are welcomed as is good quality material from other publications providing full acknowledgment is given and copyright respected. Letters sent to the Editor will be considered for publication unless the sender specifically requests that they not be.

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Editorial



A big WELCOME to all the new Australian readers!! Our ad was in the Australian Creation ex nihilo magazine a lot earlier than we had anticipated, yet the response has been most encouraging. We are now truly Christian Home Schoolers (CHomeS) of Australasia, and will continue to work at providing a thoroughly Christ-honouring presentation of news, views, politics and commentary (a combination which seems almost unique, or at least as scarce as horse-feathers) on items of interest and applicability to home educators. We will also endeavour to field items of national interest to both Auzzie and Kiwi readers. As the nature of material in this and the last issue indicates, we are not afraid of controversy. It is our editorial conviction that because we are all fallen sinners, we need a loyally humble attitude before Scripture and also an eagerness to hear, seek to understand, and graciously respond to views of Scripture at variance to our own. None can claim a corner on the truth; all of us can learn from each other. Thorough discussion and debate is encouraged, with all grace and humility, although it is recognised that some issues, by their very nature, require articulation in forthright, strong, clear and unambiguous language. It is also acknowledged that a final answer to many questions will remain elusive to this forum. But we do not see controversy and debate as a harmful thing. Since we are all vitally involved, as home schooling parents, in the realm of ideas & attitudes & values, such debate can be extremely beneficial in sharpening our own minds and educating those of our children to the width and breadth of Christian thought.

The proposed Home Schoolers Hui for NZ has been cancelled since the original issue, the annual reports, simply did not generate strong feelings one way or the other to warrant it. However, the discussions and trading of information that took place seemed of great value to local support groups and national networks alike. I'm sure we'll see specific benefits emerging in the future.

I rang London last night: the Wall Charts of World History are still not in stock, nor is there an anticipated arrival date.

For your forward planning: The NZ school-leaving age will rise to 17 as from January 1998.

Letters



Halleluya!

"And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart."—Galatians 6:9 Halleluya! Thank you very much for your time, prayers and effort you put into this valuable journal. It is a great encouragement for us to Keep On...teaching the children, praying for each other, drinking from the Fountain of Life! At the present time we are looking for a wholesome German Language course to add to our curriculum (ideally a 2-3 year course with tests, etc.) Is there anybody "out there" who could recommend one? Thank you for your help.

Kersten & Beate
R.D. 1
Collingwood 7171, NZ

The True Rock

I could write pages warning my brothers and sisters against the errors of Roman Catholicism. However, I will pick up on one point that was included in a letter in the last edition of *Keystone*.

The writer had been converted to Roman Catholicism after what he claimed to be "intense study". He quoted Matthew 16:17-19 and claimed that Jesus was talking to Peter personally when he said, "You are Peter and upon this rock will I build this church...."

To set the record straight, the Greek is this: Peter is "petros" which is a small stone or a piece of a rock. The word rock is "petra" and that means an immovable foundation! They are two very different words. The Bible does not contradict itself. Ephesians 2:20 says that Jesus is the chief cornerstone, not Peter. There is only ONE foundation and that is Jesus Christ. See also I Corinthians 3:11. Jesus was referring to Peter being a little stone. This ties in with I Peter 2:5 where it says that we are "lively stones" and are built together as a spiritual house.

I am glad that John raised this point as it provided an opportunity to expose some faulty thinking in what many believe is a genuine Christian denomination.

Delwyn McAlister
Tokoroa, NZ

Express Unity

I was very disappointed with the content of the letters in the last issue of *Keystone*. A friend of mine had died on the morning that it arrived. There is nothing quite like the death of a mother of three young children to put into perspective what is important and what is not. Surely home schoolers can put aside doctrinal differences and concentrate on the issues that affect us all and the faith we share. I am enriched by the backgrounds of my friends from different denominations; we have plenty in common. One of the benefits of home schooling for me is being able to lend books written by Christian authors to friends who profess no faith but do care about their children. Surely we want opinions in a Christian magazine to express unity not divisiveness. Romans 10:9 sums up the issue concisely. Thanks for the work you are putting into the evaluation/report issue.

Dorinda Duthie
Auckland

Suggestions, Please!

How long before children enjoy home schooling when they have already been attending school for some time? Our children still have days when all they do is complain and say being at home is hard and dumb etc. It gets a bit wearying, especially when my husband isn't quite as committed to the ideals. Any suggestions? I would be interested to know what other readers say as only today I had to pass on a telephone tree message and this mum was very discouraged over the same issue and her husband is very supportive.

Anonymous
New Zealand

(Several readers have asked similar questions. Would a reader who has gone through this barrier be prepared to share how you handled it? Send your story anonymously, if you like: this is an area where many of us could really use your advice.--Ed.)

Kamo Conference

Last weekend, 28th June, approximately 60 home schoolers including myself attended the "INPUT: Home Schooling with Excellence" Conference at the Kamo Christian College, Whangarei. It was indeed a conference of "excellence", very well planned and professionally presented. The main speaker was Gary Mawson, the Principal of the Kamo Christian College, whose own children home school. In the evening he delivered a nothing less than "challenging" message on "Thinking Biblically, Teaching Biblically", talk about renewing our minds!

There were 14 different workshops (from which we could choose four) ranging from Learning Styles & Gifts, FAT (frustration, anxiety & tension that learning disabled children experience), to Art, to making our own Integrated Units, plus much more, there was something for everyone! People left the conference with helpful tools to be more effective, to gain a greater understanding of our children (and ourselves), and to determine our goals in Christian Education.

Northlanders be encouraged not to miss the next one! The Whangarei Home School Support

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Group worked hard and gave us an "awesome conference". Grateful thanks to them for their time and effort. My Aunty and I drove home (2 hours) inspired and Praising God all the way (and still are)!

Patricia Vesey
Opononi, NZ

Eyes Opened

Thank you for the time and effort you put into the *Keystone*. We appreciate being kept up to date on all things concerning home schooling here in NZ. We have now been teaching our children for just over 1 year and we thank God that He opened our eyes to this opportunity.

Ivan & Jane Sunde
Hamilton, NZ

Amazed at God's Provision

Thanks for the copy of *Keystone* received today. Appreciate your efficiency. It arrived at just the right time--a friend had offered to have three of the children at her house for the afternoon to make bread, so Toby & I lay down to read! He went to sleep and I read the whole *Keystone* through before I had to collect the children.

People said we would be amazed at how God brings people with just the expertise or knowledge we need just at the right time, and we are! This term we've had 1) a rock collection here from a local school through a teacher at church referred by an elder at church who works with rocks; 2) We have a continuous supply of readers for Joel courtesy of another school via a teacher at church who works there; 3) Harvey Rees-Thomas (ex-Principal of Wellington College) was here on Sunday and looked at our curriculum and made very positive comments about home schooling to us all; 4) we found out that a family in another church in Tawa whom we knew were ex-MAF missionaries in PNG, a topic in our studies; 5) an Anglican lady comes fortnightly, at her request, to show us crafts etc on Friday afternoons.

We are using the new Interactive curriculum that Helen Pearson in Whangaparaoa is producing: Integrated Thematic units for J1-F4 with a Biblical foundation. Enjoying it. I would be interested in communicating with others in NZ who are now using "Interactive Education" units.

Jocelyn
7 Fyvie Ave
Tawa, NZ

Christ the Head & Heart of Home

We started "formally" educating our 5-year-old, Joshua, this year at home and fully intend to home school all our children for as long as possible, God willing. A friend has recently lent me a number of different home schooling journals, newsletters, etc which have not been from a Christian perspective, but I am afraid I don't agree with a lot of the philosophies of those groups. As Christians we desire that Christ be the head and heart of our home and we believe it's our God-given role to train and educate our children and we would appreciate all the Christian encouragement possible in this area. We hope your journal will provide some of that encouragement.

Jo-anne Low
Port Macquarie, NSW

Foreign Correspondents

[Genevieve(16) & Charmagne(9) Smith, the editor's daughters who have been home educated all their days, are currently on a field trip visiting relatives in California for two months. Please pray for their safety.]

We have been having so much fun! At Morro Bay Uncle Ron took us fishing a few times. We went out in the boat once with (cousins) Jenny and Alma. Uncle Ron pointed out all the animals such as storks, pelicans and sea otters that we could see. I had some great talks with Uncle Ron. He gets really caught up over freedom of religion. Everyone he says has the right to believe what they want...and he is willing to fight for that right (including the "right" for certain immoral people to get married to people of the same sex). One thing he says all the time (especially, I guess, when I'm being extra conservative) is "but that's just your opinion." I really wanted to talk more to him about what he believed, but I wasn't sure how to approach the subject. Once I think I became too fanatical for him when I said that people may have a right to believe what they want but ultimately only one belief leads to heaven. People who believe anything else will go to hell. And so I'm not going to be quiet about Christianity because not everyone is a Christian. I want to make sure everyone at least knows the fundamentals of the Bible. Otherwise, what kind of a Christian am I if I keep my Christianity to myself?

Grandma and I talked too. She loves Bishop Spong and does not believe that the Bible is authoritative as it has "too many translational errors". In fact she gave a book by Bishop

Spong to Auntie Stacey to read which was about "the contradictions and errors in Scripture". I was shocked. I told her Bishop Spong was a heretic and totally against Christ. She laughed and said that is what you said, Dad. After Morrow Bay, we were at the Sullivan's having lots of fun. I babysat for two days while Auntie Susan worked and I earned US\$20.

(From Charmagne): We went to church. There was a meal after the sermon because they just got a new minister and the sermon was not much of a sermon compared to ours. Poor little me. I have sunburnt shoulders, and everyone that knew you, Daddy, was patting me on my sunburnt shoulders.

Genevieve & Charmagne Smith
Fresno, California

Home Schoolers Did It



Our personal experience with the process of home education has been rather a mixed bag of positive and negative emotions, immense satisfaction and horrible disappointments, feelings of utter failure but also of knowing that the Lord is on our side, is holding our hand and that He thinks we're "okay".

We first learned about home education through an advert my husband saw in, I think, the *Challenge Weekly* (NZ). We talked about it, with me not being too sure it was right for us or whether I would cope. At the time our children were approximately 7, 5 1/2, and 3 1/2. We eventually decided to take the plunge, so went through the process of applying for an exemption. Which back then (1988) was different from the process one goes through now. You had to go to your local Education Board who sent a representative to talk to you. I remember we wrote this big screed of "why" we wanted to home educate, backed up with all the appropriate etc.

We duly got our exemption, brought the children home and started to "school" them while we waited for our ACE material to arrive (ACE was all we had heard about). Murray, being quite a handy man, built in the front porch for a school room where we could carry on the task of education and display the children's work.

Well, folks, this initial initiation lasted the total sum of six months, and I was a screaming heebie jeebie, on the war path, not coping and desperately wanting some "breathing space"! What, you may well ask, went wrong? Firstly, a lack of prayer and basic understanding of the Lord's will for the education of our children. Secondly, being quite a structured person, I was still trying to do all I did before, trying to meet the demands of a totally structured program while at the same time wanting desperately to be creative in teaching our little people. Thirdly, a lack of support from the majority of family, friends and other Christians only added fuel to the already raging fires of inferiority and very low self-esteem. What a disaster!

After about three years back in schools around the country while we chased after work for Murray, we again came to the cross-roads of

Puzzle



Congratulations to Sharon Broadbent of Palmerston North, NZ, for winning the draw among those who got all the correct answers for last issue's puzzles. She received a book on amphibians. The answers are: 1. David; and 2. Both John and Peter are right.

Three new puzzles.

1. (This is by no means a new test, but the interesting thing is that many people of very ordinary intelligence get the answer immediately; whereas numbers of highly intelligent people are quite unable to solve it.) Here are the first eight letters of the alphabet, half of them above a dividing line, and half below. A EF H

BCD G

Why are they segregated in this way?

2. How many months have 28 days?

3. What are the correct plural spellings of the following words? alibi, genus, mosquito, reindeer, index, criterion, man-of-war, datum, Mary, axis, ox, talisman.

(All those under 16 who send in the correct answers to all three puzzles will go into a draw to be held on September 2. The one drawn will receive a brand new, very colourful and informative book on how to paint, with several step-by-step projects, a real resource book for the whole family. Send name, address, age and answers to CHomeS, 4 Tawa St., Palmerston North 5301, NZ.)

decision. Our youngest child was very unhappy at school. As he is a hands-on sort of learner and finds writing quite difficult, he would day-dream in class, was easily distracted and henceforth was on the receiving end of the teacher's wrath, often being yelled at because he hadn't done his work. Two other families in the Fellowship we had started attending were home schooling using ACE and had a lot of spare material they were willing to let us use. We brought our youngest home after much anguishing, especially on my part.

After a month, we felt that the other two should also be home so home they came too. Not long afterwards, Murray was offered the job of schooling a local boy who had been expelled from school. That was a very rewarding experience which unfortunately did not last long due to the child being moved from the district. So, here we were, back home educating the children but with a much stronger conviction about it generally and having personally grown in areas that previously caused major hassles.

It is now five years since we again resumed that awesome task of educating our "gifts from God".

At times we have been in areas where there has not been a support group or even other home schoolers. They have been lonely times for both the children and ourselves, but they have also been times of growth and learning to be friends with each other. There have still been times when we were at our wits end and wanting to give it all up for an "easier" road, but this time the conviction that it is our responsibility to train up our children in the way that they should go has been much stronger, and we have been blessed with many folk along the way to encourage us and re-inspire us when seemingly there were no reserves left.

We are now using a mixture of some structured curriculum and other bits and pieces and find that works for us. We are in a place where we are blessed with a good local support group which encourages both the children and us and offers extras that we wouldn't/couldn't give the children ourselves. We don't ever come to a place where we can breathe a sigh of relief and say, "We've made it", because the Lord is always challenging us on into new areas of commitment to Him and each other which affects every area of our lives, but we are so thankful that He is in total control and knows the end from the beginning.

Some areas to think about that we have learned from experience:

1) Be sure that your reasons for home educating your children are honourable before the Lord and that your convictions regarding home education are strong enough to carry you through the rough times.

2) Be open to the Lord's leading regarding how and what you should teach your children and don't be afraid to diversify and mix curriculums. The Bible is a good text book, too.

3) All your children won't learn in the same manner. Some will be really structured, some very much hands-on children and maybe not too academic, and yet others will be a mixture. Be open to allowing them to develop in the way God has made them. We are all unique!

4) Be in regular contact with other home educators who will encourage and support you, and also challenge, and if you're close to a support group, get involved. Remember too, that often we only get out of something what we put in, so be active and contribute where you can.

5) Encourage your husband to be a vital part of the home educating even if he can't be a regular part of the actual schooling. Ask for his help in planning and after-tea help with subjects you may find difficult or lack time in. Spiritual leadership is the most important but often the most lacking.

6) If you get to a cross-roads where you are despairing over issues of the whole deal, take a step back, relax, take time out and pray and re-evaluate the why's and wherefore's of what you are doing. Never, never be in a rush to put your children into school. It is better to stop what you are doing, refresh yourselves (even if you just read together and work on some character qualities) until you get new direction. There are heaps of people around who are only too willing to encourage and give input where needed so don't be too proud to make contact and be a little more transparent.

All I can say to each one of you is: "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith..." (Heb. 12:1b-2a). "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ." (Col. 3:23-24). "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4:6-7).

With love to each of you in Christ Jesus, our Saviour, Joy Evetts of New Plymouth, NZ.

Home School Research



(During 1995 Pamela Shepherd of Christian Teachers' College of Aotearoa New Zealand sent out 100 questionnaires to Christian Home Educators all around New Zealand. She had 49 responses, which is quite high for this kind of voluntary response questionnaire. She has compiled the findings in several forms, Part One of which appeared in the Mar/Apr '96 issue of *Keystone*, Part Two in the May/June issue. Here is the final, Part Three.)

Locating Resources

Only four people were not sure of how to get hold of curriculum, resources or texts. There seems to be a lot around, but not everyone is happy with the organisation of how it is marketed and displayed. The people doing ACE do not have such a pressing need for other material, but nearly all do supplement it. There have been several complete curriculums written by NZ Christian educators. Two that I can think of are people associated with Christian Teachers' College. Bev Norsworthy has written a curriculum based on the Ten Commandments which is excellent; it outlines all the learning areas and gives suggestions as to what to teach at the stage levels. Helen Pearson has written an excellent curriculum based on the godly characteristics, eg. diligence, truthfulness, etc. As far as I know, these are both four year cycles and have been, or are adaptable for home use. There are several others that I know of which you could learn more about by contacting Christian Teachers' College, 51 Carr Rd., Mt Roskill, Auckland.

Handy Tips

- *Start with the Bible. It is the only reliable resource.
- *Don't rush out and buy large quantities of materials or books initially. Wait and see what works with your family, then venture on. Some support groups have lists of who is using what and that helps to locate those who you could ask about books, etc.
- *Libraries are so good, they are invaluable sources of information for which you only have to pay a minimal amount.
- *Second-hand bookstores are great.
- *Check out the National Library.

*Mary Pride's *Big Book of Home Learning* is good, and so is anything by Gregg Harris, Cathy Duffy, *Teaching Home Magazine*, Michael Drake, *Keystone*, and the CHESM Manual is worth getting hold of for a while.

*There's a book called *Home School Burnout* that is recommended.

*Jay E. Adams *Back to the Blackboard* is excellent.

*Cathy Duffy's *Home School Curriculum Manual* has good reports.

*The CD Rom programmes like Encarta and other encyclopedia versions are a fantastically cheap way to have the latest information at your fingertips.

Recommendations

Only six people absolutely recommend home education for everyone. You must know without a doubt that it is what God's will is for your family because when the hard days come and you don't know if you can cope any longer, you need that assurance that this is the right thing to do.

The recommendations are based on the benefits that were reported:

- *less pressured daily timetable
- *no competition
- *excellent learning environment
- *fewer distractions
- *no peer pressure
- *brings families closer together
- *children excel academically
- *family bonds become stronger
- *learning is seen as life
- *parents have the majority of the input into their children's lives
- *you care more than anyone else about your child
- *holidays are cheaper off season
- *problems are dealt with properly and immediately
- *a consistent Biblical worldview is taught and practiced
- *prayer is a natural and frequent thing
- *choice of what you teach
- *good socialisation with adults as well as children
- *no dichotomy (there is consistency) in the messages the child is receiving
- *individual needs are met
- *one to one attention
- *sheltered from ungodly influences
- *you get to know them better
- *you can cater for their learning abilities and styles
- *there is a wider range of resources available for

input

- *hands-on learning opportunities
- *ability to be creative
- *control of influences on children

Disadvantages

Seventeen percent of you said that you didn't think that there were any disadvantages with home education. Some concerns were the expertise and resources for music, science, computers, a second language and some other specialist subjects like woodwork, metal work, and engineering. Time to spend with your under five's and isolation were some of the personal disadvantages you experienced; so were others' misconceptions about you, and the possibility that some parents may be indulgent with the children or lacking in discipline. A very quotable quote from one, "There are no eternal disadvantages to home education".

Which Curriculum Do You Use?

- A Beka, 30%, essential language skills, a challenging Christian curriculum.
- ACE, 28%, presentation style can get monotonous, gets supplemented.
- Bob Jones University, 15%, excellent.
- Carey College, 11%, good & Kiwi, good morals & literature, lot of written work.
- ATI, 7%, love it, the focus on character is great.
- Rod & Staff, 7%, good Bible base.
- Saxon Maths, 4%, very good, except US money etc.
- Konos, 4%, creative but you need a good library.
- HBI Maths, 2%.
- Christian School Curriculum, 2%, good to have the support.
- Weaver, 2%.
- Far Above Rubies, 2%.
- Alpha Omega, 2%, similar to ACE.
- Scott Foresman Maths, 2%.

Summary of General Comments

- *Some people simply cannot cope with making up their own curriculum.
- *You get less sickness because the children are not mixing with lots of other children.
- *Discipline of children is the fundamental basis for all that takes place in the home. Unless you have their attention and respect then you can't teach them.
- *It is far cheaper to home educate than to send them to a private school.
- *Not having time alone with your spouse is one of the main things that parents find hard

about the continual demands that home education brings.

- *For mothers that have had their children at school and then brought them home again, the transition from having all day with just the preschoolers or alone is quite demanding. They must give up activities such as ladies Bible study, coffee mornings, meeting friends, shopping, helping other people and any other thing that takes them away from the home during the day.
- *So many of the families have a bigger than the NZ average family--Praise the Lord! For those who see children as blessings from God, as the Bible says, the difficult task of home educating becomes compounded with all the attention that each child needs. It is so sad that the wider church does not understand the demands that this lifestyle puts on the family--so many people said that their church did not help much, or at all.
- *Quite a few people wanted to know if there was a good book on children's growth and development. I have seen a few, but not one that is exceedingly good. There is a lot out there, and depending on what you want to know, different books would meet your needs.
- *James Dobson's sessions on Radio Rhema are valued by many parents out there.
- *Don't try to do too much at once, concentrate on implementing one thing at a time.
- *A visit from typical school children often dispels the momentary temptation to send your children to school.
- *The absence of TV is seen as such a blessing and makes life a lot easier.
- *One of the most typical responses to the superiority of home education is the lack of bad peer pressure on the home schooled children. It is true that bad company corrupts good character (I Cor. 15:33)
- *The school has good facilities for sport and swimming. Some support groups go together to a swimming pool and make the use of the facilities there.
- *The initial outlay of paying for books and the things needed to set up a good learning environment at home seems expensive, but it is an option that is well worth the money invested.
- *Have a time in the morning when you concentrate on God's Word and pray with your children. It sets the tone for the day

and teaches them habits for a lifetime. God comes first, and we need to commit our plans to Him.

*Having an opportunity to look at the resources and curriculum that are available to use is awkward for some. Especially the frustration of trying to browse when you are having to take care of several youngsters at the same time.

*There is a constant cry of "Other people think we're weird". Going against the flow of what everyone else is doing is never easy, especially in a day and age when qualifications are so valued. If we stand strong in the face of trials we will be rewarded. Remember Daniel and his friends; they did not bow down to the authorities, even in the face of death.

*For a parent, it may be the first time that your child has spent such a long time with you, there is no hiding what you are really like. They will see you as a real live person, and if you don't like who you are, you need to change some things.

*The men seem to think that they need some more information about how to be a Father. In this generation with so many fatherless children, those who are fathers need to do a good job. I do not think that there is a lack of material around, second hand Christian bookshops are excellent.

*Your support groups are what keep many of you going. I want to congratulate you on the way you look after each other; it is really encouraging. For a lot of people the only constant and really good support that they receive is from another home educating friend who sticks by them through all the trials.

*It is surprising the number of home educators who are state trained teachers themselves; but instead of thinking of this as an advantage, they say that it actually has got them in a wrong frame of thinking for home education. They have been so indoctrinated that it is the state's job to educate the children of NZ that the transition to a fully home-based education is a difficult decision to make and stick to. They fight against wanting to make their home into a mini-school, resisting the urge to set up a formal "classroom".

In Conclusion

Seventy-six percent of you meet regularly in a support group to encourage and help one

another. You look at different curriculum materials, share together in food and fellowship, pool resources, look at different approaches to topics, do sport, go on trips, do art, have speakers, and do heaps of other excellent things together. Most of those who are not participating are either estranged by distance or cannot make it to regular meetings. One of the greatest things in the whole Christian education movement is the coming together of so many different Christian denominations for a common cause. Where brothers dwell together in unity the Lord commands a blessing. (Psalm 133:1-3).

Interestingly enough it was never other people who talked you into home education. Your strong personal desire to be obedient to God and to fill the obligations that you have towards your children won out. You want to give your children the best and so considering all the alternatives, the choice was made. It was usually once you had taken the plunge that you realised what it was really all about. Every single person questioned was pleased with the development of their children. What an excellent testimony!

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God's Creation



The Dragons of Komodo Island

by Robert Doolan

The reports sounded fanciful. Local farmers and fishermen told stories of huge reptiles up to eight metres (26 feet) long living in the dense jungles of a few tiny Indonesian islands.

Some pearl divers said they shot several monsters which were close to this length. These giant reptiles allegedly could kill a wild pig or deer with a few rapid swipes of their tail. But even more unbelievable were the claims that these "dragons" arose from deep under the ground, and that some lived in the trees. Naturalists dismissed the stories as imaginative nonsense.

It wasn't until 1910, when the civil administrator on one of Indonesia's islands, Lieutenant van Steyn van Hensbroek, obtained specimens of the "dragons" from the island of Komodo, that the outside world began receiving credible confirmation of the existence of these creatures.

Specimens of these "Komodo dragons" were sent for study to the zoo on the nearby island of Java. Most of the earlier details, which had been thought to be fantastic, turned out to be true.

Investigation of the creatures over subsequent years revealed some amazing characteristics. Komodo dragons bury their eggs as deep as nine metres (30 feet) underground. The mother lays up to 30 huge eggs at a time. When the young dragons hatch, they begin their long journey up to the surface of the ground, then they climb trees—where they live the early portion of their lives.

These characteristics parallel two legendary traits attributed to "mythical" dragons—their reputation for living inside the earth, and their ability to fly. These qualities led two authors to comment: "They cannot spit fire, of course, but no one who has seen a Komodo Dragon can be in any doubt that such legendary beasts (or something like them) could once have existed."¹

Many historians believe that the famous depictions of Chinese dragons were modelled after creatures like the Komodo dragon because its long, forked, yellow-orange tongue looked like wisps of fire.²

World's Largest Lizards

Komodo dragons today can grow to three metres (10 feet) long and are the largest lizards on earth, adult males weighing 140 kg (300 pounds). They have stout, somewhat flattened bodies, long thick necks and longish heads. The legs are short and stout and the toes have long, vicious claws. The tail is powerful and about the same length as the head and body combined. Although they will feed on monkeys, deer and carrion, they do not have the long sharp teeth evolutionists tell us are the marks of the meat-eaters. Instead they rip chunks off with their claws and swallow large bits whole.³

Its native home is a few small Indonesian islands: Komodo, Rintja, Flores and Padar. The first is the largest and this is only 20 by 12 miles, the others being even smaller.⁴

Komodos are a species of monitor lizard. Just as many creatures living in the environment before Noah's Flood seemed to reach huge sizes, fossils of gigantic monitors have been discovered which show that today's isolated colonies have come from much larger and more wide-ranging monitors of earlier times.

Fossils of *Varamus*, the lizard group to which Komodo dragons belong, give no indication that these giant reptiles evolved from any other type of creature. One source says that the group was already "differentiated" from other lizards "60 million years ago".⁵ Another claims that fossils "strikingly similar" to Komodo dragons have been dated up to "130 million years ago" on the evolutionary timescale.⁶

Today, Komodo dragons are disappearing. Only a few thousand now survive in Indonesia, and they have become rarer than pandas in the world's wildlife sanctuaries. In zoos, they have to be kept in special large enclosures, with glazed plastic surroundings that maintain the temperature at 38 degrees Celsius (100 degrees Fahrenheit).

Even with this special care, a comparative physiologist at San Diego Zoo, Dr John Phillips, once admitted that it is rare to find a zoo dragon

living beyond 25 years.⁷ In the wild, it is possible they live 100 years or more.⁸

Evolution Problems

While the alleged evolution of Komodo dragons and other monitors seems fanciful, it should be kept in mind that the supposed evolution of reptiles from amphibians is even more difficult for the theory of evolution to explain.

For a water-loving amphibian to change into a land-dwelling reptile, at least two major life-affecting changes would be needed.

The first has to do with the skin. An amphibian's skin lacks protective devices to stop it from desiccating, or drying out. This forces it to reside in water or in very humid places. (Some amphibians have a type of scale in their skin, but these are thin, and offer no protection against drying out.) Reptiles have a different type of scale altogether—made of keratin, or horn—which lies in the outer layer of their skin and is tough enough to prevent desiccation.⁹

There is no convincing evidence from either biology or fossils that such a transformation took place.

The second major barrier to an amphibian's turning into a reptile has to do with eggs. An amphibian, hatching from an aquatic egg, develops in water in the larval form known as a tadpole. Reptiles, however, are born with all the functioning structures of an adult. This applies even to marine reptiles. They do not develop gills, or the series of sense organs needed by a tadpole, which must be resorbed and reworked into other structures in the transformation to an adult.¹⁰

How such remarkable evolutionary changes supposedly took place has never been satisfactorily demonstrated.

It is conceivable that creatures like Komodo dragons, or even some similar-looking types of dinosaurs, were the models for Chinese dragon portrayals. But what is more certain is that there is no indisputable evidence that reptiles, the larger scientific category to which Komodo dragons belong, have evolved from non-reptiles. This makes the alternative explanation—that all groups of reptiles were created by God—the most credible option.

Notes.

1. M. Marten and J. Max, *The Book of Beasts*, The Biking Press, New York, 1983, p. 110.
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6. Same as Ref. 2.
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8. *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 15th edition, Chicago, 1992, Vol. 6, p. 945
9. *ibid.*, Vol. 26, p. 698.
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Tough Questions People Throw Your Way



"What About Socialization?"

by Craig Smith

Without a doubt this is the one question, reservation and objection that is raised most often. It is usually the one raised first. It is often the one most hotly debated. And common experience among homeschoolers is that socialisation, rather than academic achievement, is the issue over which friends, relatives and educational authorities show the most concern.

What Is Socialisation?

Popular opinion assumes that children need long periods of interaction with a large group of age-segregated peers to acquire social skills. Now assuming that most of the time spent in the classroom is not spent in interacting but in paying attention to the teacher and doing the assigned work, where does most of the interaction take place? During lunch and break times, and before and after school. And who is supervising this interaction on the playground, on the school bus and on the streets to ensure that the right kind of socialisation is taking place? It is not the teachers but the children themselves. In the typical public school setting, children are being left to socialise themselves as best they can.

This fits in with today's prevailing philosophy which holds that children are inherently good or perhaps neutral, like blank cassette tapes, and that left to themselves, they will inevitably develop and adapt toward the highest good attainable by the group as a whole. (Although it is unpopular to say so, when this is translated into practical reality it means conformity to the lowest common denominator.) This inevitable "upward" development and adaptation is an idea developed from the theories of evolution.

Unfortunately it was developed in the absence of a) other tenets of evolutionary thought, b) common experience and c) traditional Christian/Western wisdom, all of which

contradict this foundational premise upon which our modern ideas of child socialisation are based.

Let us examine these three contradictions to the prevailing thoughts on socialisation:

a) Another tenet of evolution is the survival of the fittest. This is the law of the jungle, eat or be eaten, brute force prevails, might makes right. This is the tendency of children's behaviour on the playground unless there are sufficient adults present to prevent it.

Even though children are infinitely varied, the socialisation at school causes them to conform to the codes dictated by their particular class or group. We have all witnessed the same phenomenon: There are the few at the top who are setting the pace and the codes, there are the vast numbers in the middle who quietly conform and try to keep out of harm's way, and there are those at the bottom of the pecking order who are ostracised, victimised, bullied, teased, etc., because they do not conform in their dress, their size, their looks, their speech, their behaviour or whatever.

b) Common experience tells us this profound truth: Monkey see, monkey do. Children emulate the behaviour of those around them. If they spend most time around their friends, they copy them. If it is with the Ninja Turtles on TV, they will copy them. If they spend most time around their parents, they will emulate them.

Most parents know only too well the immediate results of this "copy cat" form of socialisation. After lengthy play with their friends, children can be "hyper" and disrespectful and try out the unacceptable speech or actions they have just picked up from their peers. How true is the ancient proverb which says, "He who walks with wise men becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm."¹

c) Christian wisdom says that children are not basically good or neutral but are fallen, that is, they possess an inherent tendency toward foolishness which manifests itself in temper tantrums, disobedience, disrespect, dishonesty, destructiveness, etc. Proverbs 22:15 says, "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction will drive it far from him." In other words, children do not need other children to teach them how to be children. Instead they need loving, responsive adults

committed to teaching them, training them, giving them the discipline and setting them the right example in the social graces.

Children do not of themselves learn the social arts of respect, honesty, patience, gentleness, kindness, faithfulness, manners, or self control; they must have conscientious adults to model, discipline, teach and train them to internalise these behaviour traits as habits.

Origins of Modern Socialisation Theories

Critics of homeschooling claim that such children will not be the same as their conventionally schooled friends and will not fit into the peer group. The origins of this concern are somewhat sinister.

First there was Horace Mann, an early leader in the public school movement. He favoured the Prussian patterns of state education because, as he put it, it was devised "more for the purpose of modifying the sentiments and opinions of the rising generation according to a certain government standard than as a mere means of diffusing elementary knowledge."

Then there was John Dewey, the father of progressive education. He saw truth not in absolutes, but in terms of universal ideas developed and agreed to by a group. A "thesis" or proposed truism would emerge from the group. It would at some stage meet with an opposing idea, an "antithesis." Debate and conflict would ensue until a compromise or "synthesis" was reached. This synthesis then became the thesis and the whole process would be repeated. For those who don't recognize it, this is classic Marxist dogma.

Truth to Dewey was derived by a distillation process within the group. To educators like him, the interaction of children with others in order to help distill these universal ideas of truth is education.

Both Horace Mann and John Dewey believed that this type of education needed to be led by an elite, those educators who had been instrumental in the formation of public education policy, who could gently lead others through this "distillation" process. To have children who did not or would not fit in with the group would be to hamper the distillation of truth, as directed by this elite.

We find, then, that this concern over homeschooled children not being socialised is actually a political concern that they will not be as easily manipulated by the elite as those who do fit into this all-important group.²

Group Socialisation

The following comments are by Dr. James C. Dobson who is Associate Clinical Professor of Pediatrics, University of Southern California School of Medicine; President of *Focus on the Family* Magazine and *Focus on the Family* radio programmes which are heard daily on 1400 radio facilities around the world; and author of best-seller, *Dare to Discipline*.

I have been increasingly concerned during the past 10 years about the damage done to our children by one another. The epidemic of inferiority and inadequacy seen during the teen years is rooted in the ridicule, rejection, and social competition experienced by vulnerable young children. They are simply not ready to handle the threats to the self-concept that are common in any elementary school setting.

I have seen kids dismantle one another, while parents and teachers passively stood by and observed the "socialisation" process. I've then watched the recipients of this pressure begin to develop defense mechanisms and coping strategies that should never be necessary in a young child.

Dozens of investigations have demonstrated, (at least to my satisfaction), the error of the notion that children must be exposed to other children in order to be properly socialised. I just don't believe it. In fact, the opposite is true. They need the security and love of parental protection and guidance until their self-concepts are more stabilised and established.

In summary, I believe the home school is the wave of the future. In addition, it provides a third alternative to a humanistic public school and an expensive or non-existent Christian school.³

Socialisation and the Occurance of Genius

In 1960 Harold G. McCurdy examined "The childhood pattern of genius" in a study supported

by the Smithsonian Institution of Washington, D.C. In summary, McCurdy wrote:

The typical developmental pattern includes as important aspects:

- (a) a high degree of attention focused upon the child by parents and other adults, expressed in intensive educational measures and, usually, abundant love;
- (b) isolation from other children, especially outside the family; and
- (c) a rich efflorescence of fantasy as a reaction to the preceding conditions.

It might be remarked that the mass education of our public school system is, in its way, a vast experiment on the effect of reducing all three factors to a minimum; accordingly, it should tend to suppress the occurrence of genius.⁴

Too right! Here's a report from Tauranga that appeared in the *Manawatu (NZ) Evening Standard* of 16 March 1991: "A playground game involving sinking teeth into an unsuspecting school mate's bottom has left five students suspended. In the game, tagged barracuda, victims are forced to the ground and restrained while attackers bite a buttock." Cute.

Socialisation Statistics

Another answer to those critics who argue that homeschooled students are deprived socially is provided by Dr. John Wesley Taylor V. He used the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale, one of the best self-concept instruments available for measuring socialisation, to evaluate 224 home schooling participants aged 9 through 18. Over half scored in the top 10% of the scale. 77.7% ranked in the top 25% of the scale. Only 10.3% scored below the norm.

Home schooled children score significantly higher than their conventionally schooled peers in this measurement of socialisation.⁵

Character Development

Dr. Raymond Moore, Developmental psychologist and early childhood educational specialist from the Moore Foundation of Camas, Washington, has developed a three point recipe for sound character development:

- 1) An academic regimen which takes into consideration the individual child's readiness to learn as effected by the child's physical, emotional and intellectual maturity levels; his aptitudes, special gifts and abilities, learning style,

etc.

- 2) An element of work in the daily programme which may range from simple routine chores to a regular income-generating cottage industry.

- 3) Service to others such as active membership in voluntary service organisations and visiting, baking, running errands for shut-ins, the infirm or hospitalised.

Dr. Moore maintains that the time and logistics of public schools and the need to integrate all three points into a unified lifestyle or "family corporation" indicates the homeschool as the ideal setting for sound, all-round character development.⁶

Some critics of homeschooling paint caricatures of what they say the homeschooling brand of socialisation will produce: introverted whimps and social incompetents. If we ignore for a moment the other factors involved in character development such as family background and support, it must be pointed out that these caricatures are already known in society and that they are products of the public schools. So too in fact are other social blights such as irresponsible hooligans, unmotivated slobs, gang members, vandals, and all the other social misfits who have graduated from the public schools' socialisation programme to subsequently be sent to our country's prisons, fill them to overflowing, and are now spilling back into society producing ever increasing crime rates.

If we now return to what are probably the major factors in character development, namely family background and support, and assert that increased hooliganism and crime is a result of disintegrating families, then we also have to assert that the schools are not able to correct this trend. Homeschooling, however, is an ideal situation for correcting this downward trend as families are of necessity drawn together to strive in unison toward the goal of educating and training each other for the whole of life.

Negative Peer Pressure

Cornell University's Urie Bronfenbrenner points out the negative socialising effects of the peer group. The knuckling under of children to their agemates in habits, manners, finger signs, obscenities, rivalry and ridicule almost certainly infects all children who spend more of their waking days with their peers than their parents, as is usually the case with conventionally schooled children. They will become dependent

upon their age-segregated peer group, and tend to be alienated from adults and others not in their age group. He says that this robs children of 1) self worth, 2) optimism, 3) respect for parents and 4) even trust in their peers.

Furthermore, this does not happen because peers are so attractive, but because the children perceive they are to some degree rejected by their parents.⁷

Here is just one story illustrating the negative side of school socialisation that appeared in the *Manawatu (NZ) Evening Standard* of 19 February 1991: "During cross-examination, defence counsel Les Atkins QC played a rap tape made by the girl and her friend the same year as the alleged (sexual) offences. The tape contained obscenities as well as inferences about the girl's current boyfriend's sexuality. She said the obscenities on the tape sung by her had no meaning. Everyone at school used such language freely."

Early Childhood Schooling

Martin Engle, who then headed the National Early Childhood Demonstration Centre, vowed that parents who insist on early schooling, for all its claimed advantages to their children, are either deceived or deceiving their children; and that in fact, the children feel rejected.⁸

He is supported by the late John Bowlby, London psychiatrist who headed the World Health Organisation early childhood programme. This rejection, suggests Dr. Bowlby, often amounts to a serious form of child abuse. We are depriving them of the security they need when we institutionalise them before they are ready. (Dr. Moore adds that the earlier you institutionalise your children, the earlier they will institutionalise you.) Says Dr. Bowlby, "...mothers who care for their children well are providing an irreplaceable service and one that society should hold in highest regard and be thankful for."⁹

Boys and Girls Mature at Different Rates

The negative socialising effects of age-segregating youngsters into classes, putting all boys and girls of the same age into the same class, is especially damaging to the boys. We require boys to enter school at the same age as girls although we know that boys trail girls in mental and emotional maturity by about a year at

school's start. Boys tend to be more likely than girls to fail, become delinquent or acutely hyperactive.

Michigan State University family ecologist Anne Soderman says, "Our failure to apply in the classroom what we have learned through research is evident in the secondary schools—boys outnumber girls 13 to 1 in remedial classes and by as much as 8 to 1 in classes for the emotionally impaired."¹⁰

Conclusions

Basically, the socialisation argument against homeschooling is one big myth. What statistics are available indicate that homeschool socialisation is in fact significantly superior to that proffered in public schools (Dr. John Taylor's use of Piers-Harris scale.) And the results of the schools' socialisation efforts observable in society today are bemoaned by just about everybody involved.

Notes

- (1) Proverbs 13:20
- (2) Theresa Rodman. *The Teaching Home*, Portland, Oregon: Vol. II, No. 4, Aug/Sep 1984.
- (3) Abstracted from a personal letter to a professional colleague who had questioned Dr. Dobson's stance on homeschooling, quoted in *The Teaching Home*, Portland, Oregon: Vol. I, No. 2, June 1983.
- (4) Quoted in Doctoral thesis of Brian D. Ray, President, National Home Education Research Institute, Seattle, Washington, 29 July 1986.
- (5) John Wesley Taylor V. "Self Concept in Home Schooling Children", Doctoral dissertation, Andrews University, Michigan, May 1986.
- (6) Raymond S. Moore. "The Educated Beautiful", Kappa Delta Pi *RECORD*, summer 1987.
- (7) Urie Bronfenbrenner. *Two Worlds of Childhood: U.S. and U.S.S.R.*, New York, N.Y.: Simon and Schuster, 1970.
- (8) Martin Engle. "Rapunzel, Rapunzel, Let Down Your Golden Hair: Some Thoughts on early Childhood Education." Unpublished manuscript, National Demonstration Center in Early Childhood Education, U.S. Office of Education, Washington, D.C.
- (9) John Bowlby. *Maternal Care and Mental Health*, Geneva World Health Organisation, 1952.
- (10) Ann Soderman. Article in *Education Week*, 14 March 1984.

In Line With Scripture



Take delight in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart.—Psalm 37:4

He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He also will hear their cry and save them.—Psalm 145:19

A poor man had wanted to go on a cruise all his life. As a youngster he had seen an advertisement for a luxury cruise, and ever since he had dreamed of spending a week on a large ocean liner enjoying fresh sea air and relaxing in a luxurious environment. He saved money for years, carefully counting his pennies, often sacrificing personal needs so he could stretch his resources a little further.

Finally he had enough to purchase a cruise ticket. He went to a travel agent, looked over the cruise brochures, picked out one that was especially attractive, and bought a ticket with the money he had saved so long. He was hardly able to believe he was about to realise his childhood dream.

Knowing he could not afford the kind of elegant food pictured in the brochure, the man planned to bring his own provisions for the week. Accustomed to moderation after years of frugal living, and with his entire savings going to pay for the cruise ticket, the man decided to bring along a week's supply of bread and peanut butter. That was all he could afford.

The first few days of the cruise were thrilling. The man ate peanut butter sandwiches alone in his room each morning and spent the rest of his time relaxing in the sunlight and fresh air, delighted to be aboard ship. By midweek, however, the man was beginning to notice that he was the only person on board who was not eating luxurious meals. It seemed that every time he sat on deck or rested in the lounge or stepped outside his cabin, a porter would walk by with a huge meal for someone who had ordered room service.

By the fifth day of the cruise the man could take it no longer. The peanut butter sandwiches seemed stale and tasteless. He was desperately

hungry, and even the fresh air and sunshine had lost their appeal. Finally, he stopped a porter and exclaimed, "Tell me how I might get one of those meals! I'm dying for some decent food, and I'll do anything you say to earn it!"

"Why, sir, don't you have a ticket for this cruise?" the porter asked.

"Certainly," said the man. "But I spent everything I had for that ticket. I have nothing left with which to buy food."

"But, sir," said the porter, "didn't you realise? Meals are included with your passage. You may eat as much as you like!"

Lots of Christians live like that man. Not realising the unlimited provision that are theirs in Christ, they munch on stale scraps. There's no need to live like that! Everything we could ever want or need is included in the cost of admission—and the Saviour has already paid it for us! (From: *Our Sufficiency in Christ*, by John MacArthur, Jr.)

I think Brother MacArthur may have waxed a bit lyrical on that last line when he said, "Everything we could ever want or need...", because it leaves the door wide open for the deceitful heart of even us redeemed Christians to make demands that are totally self-centred rather than Christ-centred. Never underestimate the sinfulness of sin or the deceitfulness of our own hearts. (See Jeremiah 17:9 and I Corinthians 10:12). We have NOT been perfected by our conversion and if we say we are without sin we deceive ourselves (I John 1:8). Our sanctification toward perfection in heaven is a life-long task.

However, we must agree with what Brother MacArthur is saying, because the promises of God prove true, and He has promised us "such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it." (Malachi 3:10). I don't know about you, but I am definitely a starter for THAT kind of blessing.

So how do we cash in? What do we have to do to inherit all these goodies? Perhaps we had better stop right here and realise that I have already asked in the same spirit as the rich young man who approached Jesus and left quickly and sadly when he found the price too high. He didn't want to give up that which he could not keep for that which he could never lose. (See Matthew 19:16-22).

Look at our opening verses. Note that these promises, like virtually every other promise of

God, have conditions attached to them. You see, our Lord and Saviour is not a big sugar-daddy in the sky just waiting to write us out blank cheques whenever we want them. He is King of kings and Lord of lords, Absolute Sovereign of the entire universe. We play by His rules or we are out of the game. Here is the One to Whom it is quite correct to say, "Your wish is my command." But here also is the "secret" to inheriting all He has: When we take delight in the Lord, when what He wants is what we want, when my inmost delights and desires come from seeing His will accomplished in my life, in the life of others, in the society around me, THEN I am assured of receiving the desires of my heart! You see, it is clear that whatever God wants, God gets. Now we know from Scripture that His time frame is not what we would organise, but we know that no person or being or circumstance is going to thwart God's will....He will get, He will accomplish that which He desires. If we are totally in tune with Him, our desires will be same as His....and just as He gets what He wills, so will we! Now we may not see some of these things in our life times. But they WILL come to pass and we can know the joy of having contributed to the accomplishment, the furtherance of His purposes on earth even though we may not live to see some things come to fruition. Have not most of the saints through the ages lived and laboured in exactly such hope? Do not go around praying for or proclaiming that thus-and-so will take place because you've been praying faithfully for that...you may well be setting yourself up for a faith-shattering disappointment. Which of these attitudes are we displaying for our children to emulate? Which of these are we training them to have?

This does not mean we do not plan big or expect big in this life. You bet we do: set goals and have your 5-, 10-, 20- year objectives in mind. And pray about them, that they be in the will of the Lord. One of the biggest mistakes I ever made was to piously "wait upon the Lord" for several years as a young man and let career & educational opportunities slide right on by. Then Proverbs 16:9 came crashing through: "A man's mind plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps." See? The promise has a condition. He will direct our steps, but we must at least make some plans for moving in one direction or the other, not just SIT there. You cannot steer a car, a ship, a horse or anything until it is MOVING. Are we teaching our children to be pro-active in seeking out God's will? Do they see us doing

that?

Since my will is to do His will, when He directs my steps in a completely different direction than I had planned, I don't get all frustrated, bitter and twisted (well, not for long, anyway!) because I know this change of direction is from the LORD! I mean this change of plans may not be the least bit convenient. It may actually cost me money, seem to have wasted time mucking about in this other area I am now leaving, and even make me look a bit inconsistent or indecisive in the eyes of my peers. Well, just call to mind the lives of people like Moses, John the Baptist, and even Christ Jesus Himself.

Years ago, when single, I was planning a trip to South America. I had saved up a nice sum and was praying that God would confirm it. I was also shopping for a car, and had decided on the size of down payment I could handle and therefore what price vehicle I could afford to look at. I found the perfect car: one owner, a little old lady who only drove it on weekends. As soon as I signed the papers it dawned on me that she wanted the full payment not just a down payment. It took all the money I'd saved, plus a withdrawal penalty fee, plus all but \$20 of my next pay to buy that car. Well, God clearly confirmed that I WAS to have that car, but that I definitely WAS NOT to go to South America. Maybe that doesn't sound like too spiritual an experience, but I want you to know, I had total assurance and peace of heart that God had organised every detail. Recall events like these from your own life and recount them again and again to your children.

This is how we are to train up our children, in the fear of the Lord. Note how our other verse above promises fulfillment of desires to those who fear Him. We do what He says not because we are afraid, but because we don't want to do anything else! I've lived long enough now to know that when I obey the Lord I am the one who gets blessed, not the Lord. I am not doing Him a favour. No, No! He is doing me the favour by graciously allowing me to know His will in His statutes, ordinances, commandments and precepts. As parents it is our duty to FORCE our children to do what is right...to so train them in consistent obedience to God and His word that they take delight in it AND KNOW NO OTHER LIFESTYLE. By this we will set them up for a life of true blessedness to themselves and true blessing to others.

Correspondence with Politicians & Educationalists



Issue #1

From: CHomeS

To: NZ Council for Educational Research

Exams commonly in use by NZ home schoolers include the old PAT, the CAT (California Achievement Tests), some from the Educational Testing Centre of the University of New South Wales, and we are just becoming familiar with the NZ Education & Scholarship Trust exams.

Specifically, do you know if the American SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test or is it Stanford Achievement Test) is available here in NZ and where one can apply to sit it? Could you also please advise us of any other exams that would be useful to home educated youngsters seeking entrance to NZ tertiary institutions in the absence of public school qualifications?

Reply: 23 May 1996

I can see that the internally assessed Sixth Form Certificate is unlikely to be available to candidates studying outside the school system and that the internally assessed component of School Certificate and University Bursary will create obstacles for these children. I am not clear whether provision remains for candidates to sit the Bursary examination on a "one-shot" basis in some subjects without an internally assessed component. This is a matter you would need to clarify with the New Zealand Qualifications Authority.

The Progressive Achievement Tests, the Californian Achievement Tests and the Stanford Achievement Tests are not examinations in the strict sense of the word, as they do not incorporate a pass/fail concept typical of examinations. Generally too, they do not cater for students who are seeking entrance to tertiary education.

The Progressive Achievement Tests have been revised during the period 1990-94, and remain available to registered schools or individuals holding recognised teaching qualifications. (Such as the following who are willing to help home schoolers: Peter Butler, 25 Harrisville Rd., Tuakau, ph. (09) 236-8990 and Alan Curnow,

200 Hill St., Richmond, Nelson, ph. (03) 544-7728 and others—Ed.)

The Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) may be available in New Zealand if the Educational Testing Service (the American organisation that develops and administers SAT) agree to this, and if arrangements acceptable to them could be made for the security and administration of this annual examination. An important issue here would be whether New Zealand tertiary institutions recognised the SAT for entrance purposes. This matter would need to be taken up with the New Zealand Vice Chancellors' Committee in the first instance.

I am aware of tests that originate from the Educational Testing Centre of the University of New South Wales. They have no status in this country as entrance examinations. I would see the PAT as being more useful for on-going assessment of students than these measures.

If your prime goal is to achieve entrance to New Zealand tertiary institutions for home educated youngsters the University Bursary Examination would seem to offer most possibilities, but as I have indicated, this whole matter will need to be discussed with NZQA.

Signed: A.C. Croft, Chief Research Officer, NZ Council for Educational Research, PO Box 3237, Wellington 6000, NZ, ph (04) 384-7939, Fax: (04) 384-7933.

Issue #2

On 11 June 1996 I wrote privately to the NZ Qualifications Authority to see if my 3 years of University study in the USA (where I gained an Associate of Arts Degree, but was just short of a Bachelor of Arts) could be translated into appropriate NZ qualifications under their RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning) scheme. Apparently the RPL scheme is not up and running that well yet, but it promises to be a very useful avenue for home schoolers wanting to gain credits on the NZ Qualifications Framework which is to determine ALL qualifications in NZ, be they academic, technical or vocational.

Reply: 1 July 1996

Formal qualifications can not be gained purely from prior learning. Any exemptions towards a qualification which might be granted based on prior learning need to be granted by the institution awarding the qualification. If you

wish to study at university the university which you plan to attend would most likely grant you exemptions based on your overseas studies.

NZQA provides a service for the assessment of overseas qualifications. Only completed qualifications which involved a minimum study of one full-time year are assessed. I enclose an application form for you. (Alas, the form was not enclosed.—Ed.) Signed: Michael Prendergast, Qualifications Evaluator, New Zealand Qualifications Authority, PO Box 160, Wellington, NZ, ph. (04) 802-3000, Fax (04) 802-3112.

Issue #3

From CHomeS

To several politicians: 13 May 1996

We understand there is an amendment to the Teacher Registration Bill the intent of which is to require all teachers in all registered schools, including totally private schools which receive no government funding, to be state registered. This amendment represents an abuse of central government power. Such a measure would effectively remove the independence of private schools and also the choice in education currently afforded to parents.

Because it signals a very serious and ominous change in the direction of education policy in this country, we respectfully ask you to do all in your power and influence to defeat this amendment. (CHomeS felt this issue to be important for home educators because if even teachers in private schools are required to be state registered it will mean we home educators are the only ones left providing education who are not state registered. You can be sure they will come for us next. This is already the requirement in parts of Australia. Would some of our Australian readers familiar with this situation care to comment please? We would be keen to hear from you.)

Reply #1: 21 May 1996

The Government has worked with the United Party to try and ensure that this Bill, although not Government policy, is at least sensible. The Minister learnt just a day or two before the Bill was to be reported back to the House that the Labour Party intends to introduce an amendment that will see the Bill apply to private schools. The United Party has indicated its support for this amendment.

Although the Government is against such an

extension, you will understand that it does not have the numbers to defeat it. The Minister trusts you will make your views clearly known to the United Party and the Labour Party. Signed: Malcolm Bell, Private Secretary to Hon Wyatt Creech, Minister of Education, c/- Parliament Bldgs, Wellington (no stamp required), ph. (04) 471-9979, fax (04) 471-2936.

Reply #2: 5 July 1996

When Trevor Mallard, of the Labour Party, introduced the Private Member's Bill, it became clear to the Government that we did not have a majority in the House to defeat the Bill. The Government then worked closely with the Labour and United Parties within the Select Committee to get a Bill that was sensible and had flexibility.

The Bill as introduced did not cover private schools and the Select Committee did not recommend any extension. However the Labour Party have announced their intention to introduce an amendment to the Bill so that it covers private schools. The United Party has indicated it will support this amendment. The Government therefore will not have sufficient numbers in the House to defeat the amendment.

The Government will continue to oppose the Bill being extended to cover private school teachers. I believe that the Government has no role in intervening in the employment contracts within private schools. Signed: Rt Hon Jim Bolger, Prime Minister of NZ, c/- Parliament Buildings, Wellington (no stamp required).

Reply #3: 22 May 1996

The Christian Coalition is strongly opposed to this suggestion. We believe it will do nothing to improve the standard of teaching and is against the freedom and interest of private schools. We will continue to oppose this amendment. Signed: Graeme Lee MP, Leader of Christian Democrats, Co-Leader of Christian Coalition.

Issue #4

From: Ian Brown, Canterbury Home Educators

To: Ian Revell

(Readers may remember the inaccuracies and negative innuendoes spoken about home schoolers by the Science and Education Select Committee when it met last year to discuss children at risk due to truancy and bad behaviour...the first slur was that home schoolers were even included on the agenda. Ian has been corresponding with the chairman of this

Committee. Here is his latest response.)

Reply: 14 May 1996

Thank you for your letter dated 28 March 1996 on the Education and Science Committee's inquiry into children in education at risk through truancy and behavioural problems.

I note your concern with the committee's comments on the quality of home schooling. However, as the committee has now completed this inquiry and reported it to the House, the committee does not intend to take up your invitation to begin a critical look at the "destruction of countless lives by schools and then compare the results with home education."

You questioned my comment about extra reports on home educated children, asked who will read at least 4500 reports and how they will be compared with those for the previous year. I do not foresee much difficulty with the actual task of reading these reports and comparing them with those from the previous year if these reports are produced. Children's care givers, who home school their children, should want to undertake this task. I assume the Education Review Office and the Ministry of Education would wish to do the same.

The \$800 cost of producing these reports (by the Education Review Office when they used to review home schoolers—Ed.) is not fanciful as you suggest. This cost is the average cost of one reviewer from the Education Review Office spending one work day corresponding with home schooling care givers, travelling to and from the home schooling venue, conducting the review and writing a report. This cost also includes a portion of the Education Review Office's organisational overhead costs allocated to the time spent on review work. It should be noted that there is

really no difference between reviewing one or two home schooled children during one day and a classroom or a school of children. This explains why reviewing one or two home schooled children seems so high.

In closing, may I say that neither I nor the Education and Science Committee wish to meet with home schoolers to pursue further the matters they may wish to raise. However, I appreciate your comments on our report and the view point you have advanced. Signed: Ian Revell, Chairperson, Education and Science Committee, c/- Parliament Bldgs, Wellington (no stamp required), ph. (04) 471-9999.

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weave in and out of the trees. He scampers up and down an eight foot ladder to the fort with no aid. He can catch a football one out of four times. His conversations are fluid now. There are no longer delays in his answers. His memory is often better than mine and when I get sidetracked he is quick to remind me of what I was about to do. He loves to talk about picture books and recently shocked me by picking up three of his younger brother's word cards and reading them!!! He is now understanding the foundations of math concepts as well as matching and sorting. During the last three months he finally took off in visual sequencing and progressed two years.

I'll now address the questions you may have. Has it been easy? No, but if you are receiving this magazine, you are aware that it takes additional time to care for our children. I'm now spending my time enabling him to care for himself. Is it frustrating? Yes, there have been times that we have appeared to stand still as we worked hard. The brain is an incredible creation. Even when we are building new connections in the brain, sometimes the function takes time to show up. This is the dangerous time when many give up.

Could the results be anything other than the specific stimulation that we give? No, due to the fact that we were so stagnant before, I recognize the importance of specific stimulation. Is my child still a hurt and visually impaired child? Yes, but light years ahead of where traditional routes travel. Does all the credit go to Bob Doman? No, but he is certainly the tool that God had provided for my child. Do I get the credit for all the hard work? No, our family is a team and much of our success is due to Evan's seven-year-old brother Phillip and his six-year-old brother Kenny. Has it been worth it? **ABSOLUTELY!!!**

(Reprinted from NATHHAN NEWS, NATIONAL CHALLENGED HOMESCHOOLERS ASSOCIATED NETWORK, Vol 4, Issue 3, Spring 1996, which is a Christian non-profit organisation dedicated to providing resources and encouragement to families homeschooling special needs children. NATHHAN NEWS, 5383 Alpine Rd. SE, Olalla, WA 98359, USA, has an annual subscription rate of US\$15. Published quarterly.)

Statist & Professional Trends

DANGER
ZONE

Australian Overview

(From "Home Education in Tasmania", Report of Ministerial Working Party, October 1991)

In Australia the home schooling movement is not yet as well established as in the USA, but it is growing. Most state governments tend to discourage the practice.

Queensland now has the strictest rules. A home schooling parent must apply each year through the regional Director of Education and must be a state-registered teacher (or must employ a registered teacher to come to the home) and teach an approved course which is appropriate for the child. The only other Queensland option is enrolment in the School of Distance Education at a cost of \$1000 per year, where the parent supervises government lessons at home.

South Australia is similar. Parents wishing to home school must write to the Director of the Open Access College who assesses their application. Exemption from the Education Act may be granted and reviewed on a yearly basis if the parents can substantiate religious or other grounds for home schooling. An Education Department officer visits the home to assess the suitability of the environment and curriculum. If the parent is a registered teacher, some choice is allowed in curriculum. If not, the parent must enrol the child in the SA Open Access College (which charges no fee).

In NSW, Victoria and WA home schooling requirements are less rigid. Parents are not required to be registered teachers, but must apply to the Education Department (NSW) or their regional education office (other states). The Superintendent or Education Department representative personally visits the family to ensure that the surroundings, curriculum and attitude of the parents will be conducive to a good education. NSW and Victorian parents must show that their children will receive "regular and efficient instruction". Christian curricula from the US are allowed provided they

are used in conjunction with other Australian material and cover the core areas of the state syllabus. The home school regulations in WA are under review.

In the ACT the Act provides that "a good defence in any prosecution" for failing to send the child to school is that the child receives "regular and efficient education" in the home, with the onus of proof being with the parent or guardian. There is no requirement for the parent to apply for exemption or permission to home educate.

Tasmanian home schoolers apply to be exempted from attendance at state schools "for any special reason which the Minister may think sufficient". The Education Act states that the children must be "receiving elsewhere instruction which, in the opinion of the Minister after such enquiry as he may think necessary, is regular, efficient and adequate". Usually an agent will visit the parents to assess the curriculum, the capacity of the parents to teach, and the physical learning environment.

Many home schooling parents in Australia do not inform the State government of their situation. They believe that education is the responsibility of parents, not the State. In Queensland, where guidelines are restrictive, it is believed that fewer than 30 families home school their children officially. The actual number is believed to be many times greater. (Phillips, 1990)

Homeschooling a "Phenomenon"

(From *Education Review*, June 96)

The head of the Education Review Office has called for more research on why homeschooling has grown so rapidly this decade.

The numbers have jumped 230 per cent since 1990, to 4886 children from 2841 families in July 1995. The increase slowed in recent years, but last year still grew by a healthy 20 per cent.

Chief Review Officer Judith Aitken called it a fascinating phenomenon which was almost unrecorded in research.

"We know very little about this sector. The MOE has just published the results of a small piece of contract research. But that's tiny. We

need more subtle answers."

Traditionally, analysts have concluded parents have sought exemptions from school because of religious beliefs, as part of an alternative lifestyle or because of dissatisfaction with the school system. Many schools, already defensive about losing pupils, have argued that parents are homeschooling for the wrong reasons and are harming their children's chances.

But Aitken suspected that many parents choosing homeschooling were middle class professional women choosing to have their children later in life and choosing to educate them at home.

"We need to look at the very real possibility that not only are they being moved from a lack of confidence but children are being very satisfactorily educated by highly qualified women."

And she linked that trend to the decrease in private school enrolments. "There's been a decline in the size of the private schools sector at exactly the same time as the increase in the domestic school sector. A shift from private institutional to private domestic schooling would be very interesting.

She said research needed to be done on changes in home life among the middle classes to identify why parents were choosing homeschooling.

She suggested that many homeschoolers had been taken out of religious schools. "Maybe religious schools are not offering the service those parents want."

The Education Review Office chopped its regular reviews of homeschooling when its budget was cut three years ago and now goes into homes only after receiving complaints--about 30 a year.

Aitken said the office assumed that parents were carrying the risk of poor quality education themselves, and the government had little financial interest in homeschooling.

What Are Kids' Rights?

(From *Palmerston North Tribune*, 16 June 1996.)

Our teenage daughter wants to leave home and go flatting, but we think she is too young. Can

we stop her?

This is typical of the many calls received at the Citizens Advice Bureau on the legal rights of young people.

A young person can legally leave home at 16 years of age, provided he or she can keep themselves. However, if they are likely to be at risk living away from home, social welfare can take steps for their care and protection until they turn 17. And there is no legal restriction on the young person signing a tenancy agreement, but the landlord cannot enforce the agreement if the tenant is under 18, if it "would be unfair or unreasonable to do so."

In practice, most landlords renting property to people under 18 years of age require a person over 18 to sign the agreement. That person will then be liable for unpaid rent and any damage to the property.

Contrary to common belief, parents are not responsible for their children's debt unless they have agreed to be a guarantor to the contract. Any contracts or debts incurred by young people under 18, and without a guarantor, are unenforceable.

We sometimes get calls from teenagers wanting to know at what age they can start babysitting to earn some pocket money. The law says a child becomes a young person at 14 and can then be left alone, or be a babysitter. Of course, common sense should prevail as to the circumstances under which toddlers or babies should be left in the care of a 14-year-old.

Criminal responsibility is an area in which there seems some confusion. At 10 years of age a child is deemed to be able to accept criminal responsibility; under that age a child cannot appear before a criminal court or a youth court. Between 10 and 15 years old, a child can only be prosecuted for a criminal offence if the offence is murder, manslaughter or a minor traffic offence and if the child understands the actions were wrong and against the law. In other types of offences, they may be brought before a family group conference.

National is Knuckling

With the pressure on as the first MMP election approaches, the traditionally conservative

National Party, who is currently the government in NZ, seems to be knuckling under to pressure from the liberal quarters. Three separate items from the one issue of the Wellington Dominion of 29 May 1996 give us three causes for concern.

First: "The National Party would not agree to tougher abortion laws as the price of a post-election coalition with Christian parties, Prime Minister Jim Bolger said yesterday. Mr Bolger said abortion law was a conscience issue, 'always has been, always will be'. Asked whether that position was the bottom line for the National Party in any coalition talks, Mr Bolger said it was. Christian Coalition co-leader Graham Capill said his party in particular regarded changes in abortion law as a bottom-line position in any coalition negotiations."

Second: "The Government has announced a wide-ranging review of liquor laws that will open the issues of Sunday trading, the minimum drinking age, supermarket and off-licence sales on Sunday and health warnings. The advisory committee would be chaired by Sir John Robertson, of Wellington, a former secretary for justice and former chief ombudsman. Mr Robertson said New Zealanders had responded maturely to liquor law changes in 1990, which introduced a wider range of drinking establishments and less restricted trading hours. 'We'll be looking to see that freedom is encouraged and expanded,' he said."

Third: "Gamblers will be able to insert banknotes into gaming machines under changes announced by Internal Affairs Minister Peter Dunne yesterday. Under the new rules, gamblers can insert banknotes and \$1 and \$2 coins into gaming machines, instead of having to feed them small change under the old rules. Maximum prizes will increase from \$100 to \$500, and from \$100 to \$1000 for jackpots. The limit on the number of gaming machines in a venue will increase from 12 to 18. Earlier this month Christian Democrats leader Graeme Lee...said they would bring a \$1.6 billion increase in turnover and a gambling addiction 'explosion'. Compulsive Gambling Society executive director Ralph Gerdelan said removing restrictions would result in an extra 6000 machines. The consequence would be equivalent to opening four or five more casinos."

A fourth issue comes from a press release of 24 June 1996: "The Christian Coalition is appalled

at the decision of the National Party at their Conference on the weekend to support the decriminalisation of soliciting by prostitutes. A law change now will apply pressure for the legalisation of brothels as well. Co-leaders Graham Capill and Graeme Lee said it is interesting to see how some politicians immediately seize upon an anomaly in the law to introduce further liberalisation. This does not need to be the way to address the problem. Rather, what is needed are tougher measures to remove the anomaly and to admit that it was wrong all along."

Now THAT sounds like a great way for politicians to approach problems. Let's vote those kind of politicians into Parliament!

Christian Coalition

From the Graeme Lee Letter No. 22, May 96: *Jenny Shipley is at it again. Her statement wishing to get the abortion toll down is very good. If she told the Abortion Supervisory Committee to tell the Certifying consultants to interpret the Act correctly, the abortion toll would be halved—and it wouldn't cost a cent. However, Jenny has plenty of money and is going to spend over \$6 million a year on free or nearly free contraception. The same ideas have been trialed overseas and have failed in every case.*

I have spoken in Parliament recently about the failed policies of the Family Planning Association. I pointed out in my speech that the Family Planning Association was anti-parents, anti-family and anti-commonsense. After an incredibly long time, we think other MPs are beginning to realise just how over-funded and over-rated this organisation is. It was pleasing to talk about new material being available from the Parenting with Confidence Organisation and also an excellent programme by Women For Life. We have balanced material from these groups which does deserve being supported by tax payers funds. Make sure you write to Jenny Shipley and tell her nicely but firmly. (Hon Jenny Shipley, c/- Parliament Bldgs, Wellington [no stamp required].)

Graeme Lee, leader of the Christian Democrats and co-leader with Graham Capill of the Christian Heritage Party of the Christian Coalition, publishes this monthly newsletter for free called the Graeme Lee Letter. His address

is: c/- Parliament Bldgs, Wellington [no stamp required] ph. (04) 471-9550, fax. (04) 471-1198 or the Paeroa Office: ph/fax (07) 862-8176.

I will also unashamedly and unhesitatingly encourage you to vote for the Christian Coalition with your Party vote when the elections come in October. If the CC gets only 5% of the party vote it means Christians will have six MP's in the next Parliament who were voted in on a Christian platform under a Christian name. It seems most of the political forecasters agree that the Christian Coalition MPs would then be required by the other so-called conservative parties to form a coalition Government....they will have to deal with and listen to Christians who were voted into Parliament as Christians who promised a united Christian voice in Parliament. Praise God for this opportunity!

Strengthening Support Groups



Schoolchildren around New Zealand have a new way to learn about traffic safety thanks to an Auckland schoolboy. Learning the road code out of a book can be a "bit drab", said 10-year-old Ben Milsom.

After studying road safety at school, the St Kentigern School (Auckland) student thought it would be more interesting for children to learn through stories and games on computer. His idea was taken up by a family friend who developed a CD-Rom, "Street Sense", with the Land Transport Authority. The CD-Rom has two "living books", a clipboard of pictures which schools can down-load for projects, and a variety of road safety games.

"Street Sense" was launched recently by Transport Minister Maurice Williamson, and a free copy will be given to every primary school in the country.

(This NZPA article was in a recent issue of the *Manawatu Evening Standard*. I would suggest local Support Groups should apply for a free copy of this CD-Rom if it is of any interest. Write direct to: Maurice Williamson, Minister of Transport, Parliament Buildings, Wellington [no stamp required]. He can only say no at the worst, but with so many support groups out there, he will soon get the message and probably make provision for you.)

Theologically Speaking

The Puritan Dilemma



The early Puritan colonists in America of the 1600's, when formulating the types of government each colony should take, came up against what has been called the Puritan Dilemma. The "dilemma" in question arose in the Puritan mind out of two fundamental tenets of theology.

First, the Biblical teaching that man was created in the "image of God," and has been given a mandate from his Creator to advance God's Kingdom and righteousness in every area of life (Gen 1:27-28; Matt 6:33). Thus liberty, peace, and security were seen as highly-prized preconditions for productive social and political life. (cf. II Tim 2:2-3).

Second, the equally important doctrine that man is a fallen creature, and as a sinner must be restrained from working out his evil intentions in society. This restraint is accomplished through several forms of Biblical "government" - family, church, state but ultimately SELF-government. Yet (and here is the dilemma) these governments (and in particular the state) may, in the hands of sinful men, become dangerous enemies of righteousness and freedom.

John Winthrop, the Puritan governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, sought to devise a political system that would adequately take account of both of these human realities—a political structure which would maximize freedom to admittedly sinful men while at the same time holding their evil tendencies in check. Winthrop understood that the "Puritan dilemma" could not be solved in political terms alone. Two other items, a flourishing ministry on the part of the church and a strong family structure would also be required to produce the desired social results. In many ways these latter two elements were the most important.

A century-and-a-half later, in a far less explicitly Puritan fashion, the U.S. Constitution sought to achieve the same balance between liberty for good purposes and the restraint of evil-doing.

The Puritan "experiment" in North America succeeded for a time because it was supported by a cultural consensus which was rooted in the Bible. Despite many differences among the Puritans on points of doctrine and church practice, they shared a common understanding of the Bible's teaching about God, His providential dealings in history, the nature of man, and the role (and limitations) of human institutions ordained by God to provide order in the affairs of society. Civil order was the fruit of this fundamental theological consensus.

Sadly, the "Puritan experiment" did not last. It was not overthrown by a foreign invader, or by domestic crises. It was overcome by means of theological defection—a loss of Biblical faith.

Our social and political crisis is fundamentally a theological crisis. It will not admit of a quick fix. Our Puritan forefathers understood well that political liberty and social peace were fruit which grew on the tree of Biblical faith. To turn our nation back will require a restoration of a Biblical theological consensus which will support social and political reformation. As in Josiah's day, the "Book of God's Law" must be rediscovered, read, believed and obeyed.

A recovery of Biblical preaching, teaching and discipling is absolutely necessary. This includes Christian day- and home- school education and Christian publications which are true to the Word of God. Those who profess Christ must become serious about radical and comprehensive obedience to the Word of God. Piety divorced from obedience plays into the hands of the Enemy (cf. Col 2:20-23). Given the lack of self-government ("self-control," Gal 5:23; "training in godliness," I Tim 4:7) on the part of so many who claim to be Christians, it is small wonder that our civil rulers do not govern well. Lawless people cannot recreate and sustain a lawful political order.¹

So where do we home schoolers go from here? What are we to do? We are already providing education and training far more thorough and consistently Biblical than we ourselves have seen. But this is no reason to relax. We can improve. For His sake we MUST improve. We parents must NOT ONLY continually seek a closer walk with the Lord, BUT ALSO a more conscious conformity to His Word in order to set the example for our children. We must NOT ONLY strive to see Christian politicians and Christian

Political Parties in Parliament, we must ALSO encourage them to be ever more Biblical in their policies and public statements. We must NOT ONLY become serious about comprehensive obedience to the Word, we must ALSO know the Word intimately.

Now here I take my life in my hands and ask readers as sincerely and earnestly as I can: what do we perceive, what concepts come to our minds, when we say, "obey the Word"? I trust we will automatically answer, "The Bible, of course!" Amen! Now let me ask, "Do we mean ALL of the Bible?" Are we like some hyper-dispensationalists I have met who dispense with the Old Testament because it is, well....you know.....it is OLD! Our Lord said that man is to live by EVERY word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. (Matt 4:4). We must never treat the Bible like a smorgasbord.

Now, let me ask, for this is important, and what we believe in these areas we will pass on to our children and set the course for much of their lives, so we had better have it right. Do we believe the Bible ALONE to be the Word of God? Or do we allow for modern-day additions and alterations? What do I mean? Well, Jesus upheld and defended the *Torah*, God's Word as delivered by Moses and the prophets. He constantly ridiculed and condemned the Pharisees because they taught as doctrine the traditions of men, that is, their book of additions and alterations often referred to as the *Talmud*. Do our prayer groups ever wait in silence for a "word" from God? Do the visions and bits of choruses that then come out get woven together as "a word from the Lord for us today"? Do such "words" or "prophesies" from the pulpit stand in our minds on an equal level with the eternal, life-giving Words of the Lord God Almighty? Are we moving toward the position of the Quakers who have dispensed with the Bible altogether because they have this "inner light", claiming John 14:26 as their authority for doing so? Do not allow for additions or alterations to the Word of God! Read Revelation 22:18-19. "Sola Scriptura!" was the cry of the Reformation: "The Bible alone!"

The Westminster Assembly of Puritans (called by the English Long Parliament of 1643 to 1652 to reform the Church of England) consisted of 20 laymen from the House of Commons, 10 laymen from the House of Lords, 121 English clergymen plus a delegation of Scottish Presbyterians. They met in 1,163 sessions to produce comprehensive and definitive answers to questions such as we have raised....to avoid as many future dilemmas as they could. They wrote:

The supreme Judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures.

Notice Who we are to heed: the Holy Spirit of God, not the spirit or voice of mere men. Therefore are we told to test the spirits (1 John 4:1). And also notice the medium through which we hear the Holy Spirit of God: the Scriptures. So let us make the Scriptures, the Written Word, first and last in our home education, just as our Saviour, the Living Word, is to be first and last, the Alpha and the Omega, in every area of our lives.

Note:

(1) Excerpted from article by Rev Roger Wagner in Penpoint, Southern California Center for Christian Studies, PO Box 328, Placentia, CA 92871, USA.



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Resource Review



Step by Step to Literacy by Ruby Corbet

(Dunmore Press, Palm Nth, rrp=\$34.95)
Review by Steven Thompson

Ruby Corbet is a remarkable woman who has devoted her life to helping people escape from the deadening hand of illiteracy. As a teacher with over 40 years of experience, she has developed a unique method of teaching literacy skills. Her methodology may not strictly follow the "current teaching theory" but there is no doubt that her way does produce results, especially in one-on-one teaching sessions, a fact which will be of interest to those who have decided to embrace home schooling.

Step by Step to Literacy builds on the work of her successful book *Looking at Letters*. As the title implies the book takes the reader in easy-to-follow steps from the initial stages of learning through to the acquisition of total literacy for all age levels. Ruby Corbet uses whole sentences in her reading plans, but most of the emphasis is in decoding and encoding using the building blocks of letter sounds, combinations of letters, and the rules governing them, such as the influence of e, i, and y on vowels (short and long) and on c and g (hard and soft), silent letters, and so on.

Concentration exercises to focus the learner on language begin the lessons and helpful background information covers areas in which the home educators themselves may be limited. One important result of her method is the immediate improvement in spelling. Too often children have achieved acceptable standards of reading and comprehension skills but failed to develop essential spelling skills. A section on remedial literacy teaching is useful for those who are concerned about the current level of progress of their children.

As a teaching aid to literacy, *Step by Step* is a most enjoyable book to read. It is written in humorous style with many rhymes being used to illustrate spelling combinations and vowel sounds. With its wide selection of bright, innovative exercises *Step by Step* is a book which all parents involved in home schooling should consider as essential for their teaching library.

Walking Talking Miracle (WTM) Radical Rev-Up for Kids (RU) How to Motivate, Manage & Market Yourself (MMM)

by Lisa McInnes-Smith
Review (Part II) by Craig Smith

Fabrication of Dreamworld

One result of this "I can be/am my own god" attitude is the way readers are encouraged to fabricate their own environment. In WTM we find the following statements:

**I choose to be happy all the time even when people are cruel to me.* This naturally precludes any possibility of wanting to find out why someone would be cruel to you....it may be because you are an arrogant swine and a pain in the backside. But that is not the kind of thing that will make me "happy", so I will avoid it. On top of that is the Biblical command that if someone has something against us, and we come to know about it, it is up to us to go and make it right...to initiate a reconciliation. (Matthew 5:23-24). The end result is happy, but the process can be incredibly painful. But this saying wants to build its own false reality by avoiding the issues.

**I decide my own positive mood for today.*

To do this, one must completely ignore the reality of what is going on around you. At its best it is simply elitism, making yourself out to be above the common rabble, unmoved and unmotivated by the concerns of the everyday man in the street. At worst it is again denying God's commands where He says, "...weep with those who weep...do not be haughty but associate with the lowly." (Romans 12:15-16).

**How I feel is my decision.*

This is total escapism, living in your own dream world. If God points out to you your sin, this book will tell you to deny those negative thoughts and be positive. Why feel guilty (even though you are) when you can decide to feel like a winner instead?

On page 56 and 57 of the MMM book, we are told about positive self-talk, avoiding unnecessary negatives. Again, this is fabricating an unreal world, detached from reality.

Now in the Rev Up book on page 40 & 41 we have escapism for kids. They are advised to

replace bad thoughts with good ones. Yet there is no advice on how to deal with the bad thoughts or determine where they come from or why. The children are told to affirm, "I am happy" to themselves. It seems that reality doesn't count, and if the youngster is miserable, he is just to forget about it and be happy.

Rev Up gets worse on page 46. This kind of advice could inoculate a person from ever becoming a Christian. Jesus said he came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance (Matthew 9:13); not to treat the well but to be a physician to the sick (Matthew 9:12). But Rev Up wants us to never put ourselves down or speak badly of ourselves. Let me tell you, Jesus was talking about finding people who were willing to call themselves dirty, rotten sinners. It will be those humble ones and not the self-righteous puffed up by their own opinion of themselves who He will receive and justify. But this book teaches total escapism. It is secular humanism at its best. It is anti-Christian to the core.

Let me illustrate what I mean. I have here a nice little poem which I think you will agree would make a great "Booster" with which one may treat oneself, as Rev Up page 46 tells us.

*The most glorious beings in creation,
They'd be the pride and joy of any nation,
Why are men such fools they will not realize
The wisdom that is hidden behind those strange
eyes.
And these wonderful people are you and I.*

Juliet Hulm and Pauline Rieper wrote it about themselves. On 22 June 1954, these two lovely young ladies bashed out the brains of Pauline's mother with a brick in Victoria Park, Christchurch. "The trial centred on the question of their sanity. Even after admitting the crime they remained cool and arrogant. They were incredibly rude to examining psychiatrists, Juliet further asserting that they were geniuses and above the law. The insanity plea was based on paranoia. They appeared normal, but in fact the killing could be regarded as proof of their condition. When the paranoid is threatened, as these girls were by what they most feared, separation, he or she becomes dangerous. Any action which removes the threat is legitimate, and even while on trial the two girls thought the killing of Mrs Rieper quite justified.

"They knew that what they were doing was against the law and would be condemned by society, but these facts would not matter to them, because what they did was not an infringement of their own moral code. The law of the land was not their affair. The insanity plea failed, simply because they clearly knew that what they were doing was wrong."

Here is another lovely bit of self-affirmation, a "booster", written by an English working man:

In this truck is a man whose latent genius, if unleashed, would rock the nation, whose dynamic energy would overpower those around him. Better let him sleep.

The writer kept this in the cab of his truck at his workplace, where he could read it over and over each day. It was written by Peter William Sutcliffe, commonly known as the Yorkshire Ripper, who brutally murdered and mutilated at least 13 women in the late '70's.¹

Inaccurate Information

The Rev Up book has a go at explaining God in a couple of places. That makes it a work of Theology. It is a popular theology that is expounded, but one that is condemned by the Bible and specifically spoken against by the Apostle Paul.

On page 26 it says, "God loves you just as you are. He may not like all the things you say and do, but that will never stop Him loving you. You are one of His kids." This false doctrine clearly teaches that we are free to do whatever we please, no matter how horrendous it may be, because this "god" will never stop loving his kids. After Paul explains something of the amazing nature of God's grace in forgiving our sins in Romans 5, he asks the rhetorical question, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" According to the doctrine on page 26 of Rev Up the answer is, "Yes!" But of course the answer of Paul and the Bible is "No!" (Romans 6:1-2).

And we are not all His kids. We are all His creatures, but only Christians who have been born from above (John 1:12-13) and adopted into God's family (Romans 8:23) are God's children.

Page 27 of RU says, "Just like you, God gets lonely." How pathetic! Here is a "god" made in the likeness of sinful man, that sinful man may

manipulate this god by threatening to withhold his friendship! No wonder this false god is said to love you no matter what you do. Read the Bible for yourself and then ask yourself if the God of the Bible (not the one in Rev Up) gets lonely.

The second paragraph on page 45 of WTM proclaims a different gospel than the one in the Bible. It ties in well with the false teachings I have pointed out up to now, but is condemned and the one who spreads such untruths is accursed according to Galatians 1:6-9.

It is plausible because there is a germ of truth in it. "God sent His Son Jesus to Earth to tell us that He loves us (so far so good) and that when we die we'll go and live with God." This last bit is untrue, sadly, for the bulk of earth's population. Nowhere in any of the material that I read was there any reference to the two most important facts which makes the fact of God's love have any meaning: the facts that we are sinners and therefore enemies of God and the fact that Christ voluntarily died for those sinners known to God as the elect. Romans 5:8 is the classic verse on this: "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Christ indicated that most people will go to hell (Matthew 7:13-14). So to tell people, even little children, that we all go to heaven when we die is deceitful and can give them a false sense of security in themselves (God loves me so much, He will never harm me) rather than total security in God ("Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord." -Acts 3:19)

Note:

1) These two tales came from *The World's Greatest Crimes*, by W. Barrington Keith, Hamlyn Publishing Group Ltd., London, 1990.

(To Be Continued Next Issue)

Christianity does not command all things because we have limited it to a faith for the church rather than a faith for the world and for every sphere of life and thought. A limited Christ is no Christ at all.

-RJ Rushdoony, *The Unknown John Calvin*, Chalcedon Report, June 1994.

Teaching Tips



I Can't Spell by Alan Curnow

Why can't you spell? One reason: it is poorly taught. Or, to put it another way, spelling has never been presented to you in a systematic way. You are not alone. Many college students struggle to spell words correctly. Pupils, I find, are often taught to learn lists of words in an unconnected way, without any pattern to them.

How should spelling be taught? 1) The short vowel sounds in 3-letter words. 2) The first 100 basic words. 3) consonant blends at the beginning of words. 4) consonant digraphs: sh, ch, th, wh, thr, shr. 5) The long vowel sounds. 6) Vowel digraphs such as "ai" in train. 7) Dividing a word into syllables. 8) Prefixes, suffixes and root words. And so the progression continues.

Do I imply learning to spell is easy? No, the English language has absorbed many foreign words, and also correct pronunciation of words is poor.

The most common 300 words make up 70% of ordinary reading. These simpler words should be learned by sight. To get an overview of how spelling should be taught I recommend the book, *Reading and Spelling Made Simple*, by Mary Andrew, a NZ teacher. This book is in all large libraries.

(Alan is a learning consultant who may be contacted at 200 Hill St., Richmond, Nelson.)

Keeping Computers "Clean"

Steps Parents Can Take

The issue of children's safety on the Internet is a debate that is heating up. Parents want their kids to be computer literate, but they may not want them surfing through the Internet's sea of smut. It's not an either/or proposition. With a few keystrokes, and some quality-time conversation, it's possible to keep both generations relatively happy—and safe. There are steps which "low-tech" parents can take:

(From Page 1)

will spoil the child. And Dads, it is your responsibility to take loving control of this most vital area!

Well, I don't want to labour this point. There are numerous things written on it. Can I just say two practical things to those of you with very young children: it has been our experience that children understand right from wrong long before they can talk. You often hear the terrible two's referred to. My wife and I talk about the terrible 9 months! or the terrible 12 months! We have found that by clamping down early on eating habits, manners, fighting, and general behaviour, it has saved us many a battle when they're older!

The other thing I would like to just mention is that sometimes there are other factors that one must take into consideration before disciplining a child. It is interesting that when Elijah became depressed and sulky and wanted to die after his contest on Mt Carmel, God gave him sleep and food. The same can be true when dealing with behavioural problems. Of course, one must guard against these things being an excuse for bad behaviour, but, oh so often, a few early nights to bed can work miracles! And again, that is why as Dads we have been made the head of the home looking to the needs of every single person, and prescribing just what is needed at any one point in time.

5.) Love

Perhaps the most dominant Scriptural theme when it comes to the role of fathers is the need to exercise love. And when we see that, it ought to make us sit up and take notice. The Bible is God's Word, and God knows us better than we know ourselves, and hence, His Word usually picks up on our weaknesses and addresses them!

And for husbands and fathers it is this need to exercise love. Paul says in that passage we read in Ephesians 5 and 6 two things: 1) that we are to love our wives as Christ loved the Church, and 2) that we are not to provoke our children. Both of those angles are really addressing the need for sacrificial love, are they not? Love that puts others before ourselves, love that seeks to serve, even if it be to our own disadvantage.

What sort of love did Christ lavish upon the church? My friends, He didn't need the church, did He? He was complete without the

church—perfect, holy, and good. He needed nothing more! And God had warned mankind that if we disobeyed Him we would surely die. God would have been perfectly just to have written us all off and sent every single one of us to hell. But, despite our sinfulness; despite our disobedience; despite our constant rebellion; Christ came to earth, laid aside the glory of heaven, entered the realm of sinners, (and oh how that must have offended His holiness), took our sin on His shoulders, bled and died for us! Why? v 27: "that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless." And Paul says: "So husbands ought also to love their own wives..."

Oh my friends, how different this model is to that presented by the world! The world presents Dads as setting the macho image: it is from Dad that one is supposed to learn not to cry; it is from Dad that one should learn that hard exterior, putting all emotion under control. My friends, not so with the Christian Dad. From the Christian Dad should flow an example of Christ's love, sacrificial love, serving love, love that considers others before oneself.

Dads, are you teaching your children to love their mothers? Are you teaching them what it is to love others? Are you a model of gentleness? Do you show them affection? Is your fathering a demonstration of what it means to be understanding, caring, and warm? You see, your leadership must ensure that the home is shelter from this mad dog-eat-dog world, and for that to happen, it must be marked by love from you!!

6.) Yahoo!

Do you know what yahoo is? It is fun! Enjoyment! Living it up! And I don't have any Bible verse to back this point up, but I can point to the example of Jesus: we are told that Jesus came "eating and drinking", and in John 2 we read of the start of Jesus' public ministry, and what was it that He did? Well, He went to a wedding feast that probably lasted all week and we read that His first miracle was to change water into wine!

The point I'm trying to make is simply this: Jesus was no ascetic, He wasn't some sort of recluse, a monk in a monastery. No, he mixed with people, yes, tax collectors, prostitutes, and ordinary sinners (if there is such a thing); and He came "eating and drinking" Matthew tells us; and

ACTION STATION



- 1) Perhaps an Australian reader could write re Issue #3 on page 21.
- 2) Write to Jenny Shipley about the unacceptably high a) abortion rate and b) Family Planning Association funding; see page 27.
- 3) Write Minister of Transport for free Road Code CD; see page 27.
- 4) If you can help with any of the requests among the "Letters" column, please write.
- 5) Make sure the children enter the Puzzle contest, page 6.
- 6) Write the advertisers for the free catalogues many of them offer.
- 7) Encourage your home schooling friends to subscribe to *Keystone*. We need more subscribers to keep the rates from increasing.

He offered life to all!

And I want to put it to you that it is very easy for us to take our responsibilities so seriously that we forget: how to laugh, how to have a good time, how to enjoy life and live it to the full. I want to put it to you that it is easy for us to conclude that a holy and pious person is one who is always deep in thought, somber, serious, and seldom smiles or laughs. My friend, if I've just described the way you have become, then let me warn you: you will suck the life out of your family and your kids will be looking for that marvellous moment to leave home!

How can children grow up in that atmosphere? How can they see that you have found life to the full in Christ, if you spend all your time moping around as if you were attending a funeral. And so, I close with this last thought: Dads, it is your responsibility to ensure that your family has some fun!

You must lead in Yahoo! And of course, to do that, you will have to spend some time with them, won't you?

Conclusion

Well, now I'll be honest and tell you why I ended with Yahoo. Because what I've been describing for you tonight has been FAMILY life! Family spelt:

F--for leadership in Faith

A--for leadership in Academic development

M--for leadership in Material provision

I--for leadership in Instruction and discipline

L--for leadership shaped and defined by Love

Y--of course, for leadership in Yahoo!

And my friends, if we as Dads are to function well in our families, it is absolutely necessary that we focus on all of these aspects, otherwise our headship will be defective and our homes will lack the balance that God intended from the beginning.

My friends: how's your home life? Have you got something of this balance we have been speaking about? Is your home school marked by development in all these areas? If it's not, then may I plead with you to *determine* to change the habits you have gotten into before the start of this school year!

If families are to survive the stresses and challenges they are now facing, then it will be because husbands and fathers have provided loving leadership in their homes. May God enable us to change where that is necessary and discharge our responsibilities in a God-honouring way!

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