

Keystone

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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

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Family Worship

by A.W. Pink

There are some very important spiritual exercises plainly implied in the Word of God. But how to actually put them into practice we have few, if any, plain and positive precepts. Rather we are left to gather them from the example of holy men and from various incidental circumstances. An important end is answered by this arrangement: trial is thereby made of the state of our hearts. It serves to make evident whether, because an expressed command cannot be brought requiring its performance, professing Christians will neglect a duty plainly implied. Thus, more of the real state of our minds is discovered, and it is made manifest whether we have or have not an ardent love for God and His service. This holds good both of public and family worship. Nevertheless, it is not at all difficult to prove the obligation of domestic piety.

Consider first the example of Abraham, the father of the faithful and the friend of God. It was for his domestic piety that he received blessing from Jehovah Himself, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment" (Genesis 18:19). The patriarch is here commended for instructing his children and servants in the most important of all duties, "the way of the Lord" -- the truth about His glorious person, His high claims upon us, His requirements from us. Note well the words, "he will command" them; that is, he would use the authority God had given him as a father and head of his house, to enforce the duties of family godliness. Abraham also prayed with as well as instructed his family: whenever

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Keystone

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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 acknowledgement 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



NZ Home Schooling on the Internet! A web site has been established, one page for Support Groups, another for individuals, and other bits. Check it out on:

<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/astley/homeeduc.htm>

To be listed as a group or individual contact:

Phil Astley

54 Viewmont Dr, Harbour View, Lower Hutt
ph (04) 566-2873 or

E-mail: phil@astley.gen.nz

Trading Post



Wanted:

Any of Ann Ward's books, "Learning at Home" (Preschool, Kindergarten, 1st Grade, 2nd Grade). Contact: Johanna Redepenny, 104 Darnley Rd., R.D. 3, Amberley, ph. (03) 314-6988 or fax (03) 314-6764.

For Sale:

1 Complete Set McGuffey's Readers and 1 McGuffey's First Reader Workbook as new...\$50 for whole set.

1 Grade 8 A Beka science "Matter & Motion" as new...\$20.

White Sands readers & workbooks full set apart from the Read & Write workbook set 1 & 2. There are 3 readers as well in book form. This is a really good set for new entrants. Full set for \$40. Contact: Mrs Miriam Fryer, 14 Albert St., Kawakawa 0470 or phone (09) 404-1989.

Wanted:

Any old issues of "The Parents' Review" and The Charlotte Mason Original Homeschooling Series If you have any of these things for sale please contact: Denise Walmsley, 35d Salisbury Rd., Birkdale, Auckland 10.

Truly Scrumptious:

Need some new ideas for meals? Want something simple, economical and easy to prepare after a busy home schooling day? Try for yourself our recipes. Contributions from Wellington home schoolers. Great gift idea for family and friends. Orders taken now. Send \$10 (includes p&p), cheques made out to WHSA (Wellington Home Schoolers Assn.), 54 Viewmont Dr., Lower Hutt. Available from December.

Letters



Exemption Approved

Thank you so much for the long, informative and very encouraging letter you sent us with advice on filling out the application form for MOE Certificate of Exemption. Your letter helped me a great deal. I was able to continue with the form with heaps more confidence and I even enjoyed writing it. I finally got it off in the mail and the approval and Certificate of Exemption arrived a bit later on. So thank you -- we really appreciate your labour of love for new home school families. May the Lord continue to bless your ministry in this. Please find enclosed a subscription form for Keystone. We're looking forward to reading your next issue.

Judith Deverell

Whangaparaoa, NZ

Nice To Know

Thankyou for your magazine. It's nice to know there are other home schoolers out there and to "pick up" on common issues. So thanks heaps for the work you are doing. We need the encouragement.

Angela Brown

Great Barrier Island, NZ

The Lord Is Good

This is our first year home schooling and I am finding things are just getting better and better. Of course we all have our days but the bonuses of being a family at home far outweigh them. The Lord is good. Thank you for all the work you do for home schoolers. May the Lord bless you and your family abundantly.

Wendy Kuzman

Wangamui, NZ

He Enables

I thank you for providing this service for us all. I think you must work so hard to get all this done. I praise God that He enables you.

Miriam Fryer

Kawakawa, NZ

Home School Research



The Extraordinary Influence of Family Life on Student Learning

by William R. Mattox, Jr.

More than three decades of research shows that families have greater influence over a child's academic performance than any other factor -- including schools. Much of the early research measuring the extraordinary influence of family life on student achievement was uncovered somewhat by accident.

In the mid-1960s, University of Chicago sociologist James Coleman led a major research study designed to explain why students in certain schools or in certain classes within a school perform better, on average, than students attending other schools or other classes. While several school factors proved to have a modest effect on student performance, they paled in comparison to the influence of family background. According to Coleman, there is a "powerful relation of the child's own family background characteristics to his achievement, a relation stronger than that of any school factors."¹

Coleman's research spawned a number of studies replicating his work and building upon it. A 1984 research review by the National Institute of Education concluded, "Extensive, substantial, and convincing evidence suggests that parents play a crucial role in both the home and school environments with respect to facilitating the development of intelligence, achievement, and competence in children."² A 1993 survey of the research literature by Benjamin Bloom and his colleagues reported, "The home environment is a most powerful factor in determining the school learning of students -- their level of school achievement, their interest in school learning, and the number of years of schooling they will receive."³ And a 1994 report issued by the U.S. Department of Education noted, "Thirty years of research show that greater family involvement in children's learning is a critical link to achieving a high-quality education....controllable home factors account for almost all the differences in average student achievement."⁴

Differences in child learning stem significantly from the values, habits, and relational dynamics at work within the household. A research review published in the Phi Delta Kappan found that the home learning environment has an effect on achievement that is at least twice as great as family socio-economic status (SES).⁵ A study commissioned by the Toronto Board of Education found that parental encouragement at home and participation in school activities have a more significant effect on children's achievement than either SES or student ability.⁶

A Stimulating Home Environment

What characterizes the home learning environment in which children are most likely to succeed? In a 1994 review of the research

Puzzle



Congratulations to Caleb Frink of Taupo for winning the draw among those who sent in the correct answers for last issue's puzzles. Caleb receives a Backyard Scientist Super Crystals Science Experiment Kit. The answers are: 1. Velvet 2. Halal 3. Jersey 4. Samuel Marsden 5. Charles Kingsford Smith

This next puzzle is for your enjoyment as a family. They are easy, yet make you think. Have fun over the holidays.

You are challenged to turn each pair of radically different words, below, into synonyms by taking a single letter from either word and placing it somewhere within the other one, without rearranging any of the other letters. As an illustration, in No. 1 by taking the E from RIPE and inserting it into TAR, you get the synonyms RIP and TEAR.

- | | | |
|---------------|----------|------------|
| 1. Tar (Tear) | 6. Pest | 11. Assets |
| Ripe (Rip) | Cares | Ravers |
| 2. Died | 7. Lice | 12. Boost |
| Ante | Reline | Hoe |
| 3. Whiled | 8. Salve | 13. Ask |
| Spurn | Savage | Lie |
| 4. Grove | 9. Our | 14. Rats |
| Rout | Start | Ranges |
| 5. Curt | 10. Flat | 15. Blare |
| Cave | Pump | Bad |

Home Schoolers Did It



Bathsua Makin (? - 1673)

Bathsua Makin was, like many women reformers, educated at home by a clergyman father. In the Renaissance style, he taught his children sciences and mathematics, as well as ancient and modern languages. Bathsua was drawn to the sciences and also became interested in education. She was influenced by a Dutch educational writer, Anna Schurmann, who asked of women's inferiority, "Is it God's law -- or man's?"

Bathsua's brother Thomas was a courtier of Charles I, and in 1641 Bathsua herself was appointed to teach the royal children. She seems to have been given complete freedom to choose their curriculum. Under Bathsua's tuition the young princess Elizabeth learnt especially quickly and soon became "proficient" in mathematics and many different languages. (Bathsua herself had a celebrated knowledge of three ancient languages: Latin, Greek and Hebrew.)

Bathsua later took charge of a school for gentlewomen in Putney and in 1673 she published an *Essay to Revive the Ancient Education of Gentlewomen*.

In this essay, Bathsua Makin described the decline in educational standards that she had seen in her lifetime. She herself retained the Renaissance ideal of a full education. But she claimed that, during the seventeenth century, standards of education for gentlewomen in England had declined. Girls were, she said, perfectly capable of learning and they deserved better. She was not amused by the old joke that, "one tongue is enough for a woman." She thought that women should learn foreign languages, not just as an "accomplishment" but in order to study foreign ideas.

Bathsua Makin planned to open her own school, which would teach the usual subjects studied by young ladies: religion, dancing, music, and basic

reading, writing and counting. But to these subjects she added a series of choices: courses in Latin, French, natural history, astronomy, geography, Hebrew, Italian, Spanish, philosophy, art and domestic science. Hers was the first girls' school curriculum to give equal value to sciences and arts.

Catherine Macauley (1731 - 1791)

Catherine Macauley was a bluestocking historian and a radical political thinker whose views were not popular in her day. She was privately educated at home and wrote an eight-volume history of England, and political pamphlets which supported the revolutions in America and France.

Catherine was a mother who developed ideas about education by seeing her own children grow up. In 1790, she wrote her *Letters on Education with Observations on Religious and Metaphysical Subjects*. This work was one of the clearest, most original and earliest arguments for anti-sexist education.

In her *Letters on Education...* Catherine challenged the idea that certain forms of flirtatious, spiteful or ignorant behaviour adopted by women were inborn. Moreover, though herself striking in dress, she insisted that women should not feel compelled to dress in ways that caused them discomfort, just in order to make themselves attractive to men. Nor should they "list...totter...and counterfeit more weakness and sickness than they really have, in order to attract the attentions of a male." Girls should be free to study the same sports and subjects as boys, she wrote, but boys too should be free to learn how to sew a button instead of being forced to conform with the masculine expectation that they would prefer hunting. "Confine not the education of your daughters to what is regarded as the ornamental parts, nor deny the graces to your sons," she wrote.

Catherine was an important figure in her day. She gave George III her uncompromising views about his controversial taxation of the American colonies, and Patrice Wright, a "Yankee" woman who had a wax-works in Pall Mall, make a model of her. After the American Revolution, in which the colonies gained their independence from Britain, she stayed as a guest in the home of George Washington, the first president of the

United States. Yet in England her views were always considered too radical for general acceptance.

Hannah More (1745-1833)

Hannah More was educated first by her father and, later, by her elder sisters who ran a boarding school. After an unhappy engagement, she vowed never to marry and became influenced by Evangelical Christianity. She was also a friend of the reformer William Wilberforce, who became famous for his campaign to abolish the slave trade.

In 1789, Hannah and her sister Martha visited Cheddar, in Somerset. The children of the poverty-stricken miners in the area were wild and ragged. The two More sisters set up Methodist Sunday Schools in Cheddar and other parts of the district. In these schools, the poor were taught to read the Bible and to know their Catechism. The girls were taught to spin.

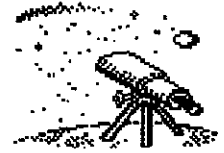
The French Revolution of 1789 had made many people afraid of a similar revolution in Britain. Hannah More did not want to teach poor people to write because she thought reading was enough for them. She was also afraid that revolutionaries might use bloodthirsty "broadsheets" -- the only cheap reading matter available for the poor -- to stir up trouble. She set out to imitate the popularity of these cheap story and news sheets, which were printed on only one side. Her "Cheap Repository Tracts" contained moral stories which were designed to encourage honesty. They were an enormous success and sold in millions.

Hannah More was equally conservative in her views about women's roles. In her "Strictures on the Modern System of Education" (1799) she called for changes in women's education. Yet she did not want women to be so "puffed up with the conceit of talents" that they neglected their household duties.

Hannah More's ambitions seem limited today. But in her own time, many people thought she was endangering the stability of society, and wasting money, by giving even a basic education to the poor.

God's Creation

Darwin vs the Eye



by Tom Wagner

Charles Darwin himself shuddered at the thought that evolutionary processes had to explain human vision. He said, "To suppose that the eye with all its inimitable contrivances for adjusting the focus to different distances, for admitting different amounts of light, and for the correction of spherical and chromatic aberration, could have been formed by natural selection, seems, I freely confess, absurd in the highest degree."¹

Yet he believed it evolved anyway. Had Darwin had the knowledge about the eye and its associated systems that man has today (which is a great deal more than what it was in his time), he may have given up his naturalistic theory on the origin of living things.

One fascinating discovery in the study of modern ophthalmology (eye science) is that, aside from what Darwin was able to observe, there are three almost imperceptibly tiny eye movements. These three, referred to as "tremors, drifts and saccades", are caused by minute contractions in the six muscles attached to the outside of each of your eyes. Every fraction of a second they very slightly shift the position of your eyeball, automatically, without conscious effort on your part, making sight as we know it possible.

Tremors are the tiniest and probably the most intriguing of these movements, continuously and rapidly wobble your eyeball about its centre in a circular fashion. They cause the cornea and retina (front and back) of your eyes to move in circles with incredibly minute diameters of approximately 1/1000 (0.001) of a millimetre, or 0.00004 inch.

This size is about 70 times smaller than the thickness of the paper this article is printed on. Carefully look at this page, edge on, then try to imagine 70 circles of the same diameter (OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO) touching and placed in a row straight across the thickness of the paper. If you can do that, you will have a feel

for the minuscule nature of the tremors along with some appreciation for the Creator who has demonstrated His capacity for designing such a thing.

Amazing Tremors

An even more amazing characteristic of tremors is that the seemingly tireless muscles that produce them wobble your eye 30 to 70 times each second. If sound were involved, that would be fast enough to produce a low-pitched hum. Amazingly, on average, each of your eyes completes one million of these tiny circular motions in 5 1/2 hours. The number of tremors taking place in a lifetime is astronomical.

Even though tremors are not large enough to be visible without great magnification, you could not see properly without them. For example, consider what would happen if these and all other eye movements stopped while you were staring at someone's face. The light-sensing cells in your retina would quickly "stabilize", and cease to send updated information to your brain, causing the image you perceive to fade into a uniform grey within seconds. If the person you were staring at smiled, their mouth, and only their mouth, would momentarily reappear out of a visual field of nothingness! (This has been done in the laboratory,² and was said to have looked like the smile of the Cheshire cat in "Alice in Wonderland.")

The reappearance of only part of the face would happen because only the mouth moved, causing a momentary change in that part of the picture which the retina was seeing at the time. Thus, continued change in the light projected on each retinal cell in your eyes is crucial for constant

vision. Hence the need for tremors that God has made to supply the retina with a slightly shifting picture many times each second. Without the tremors, which are probably the most critical muscular phenomenon for normal vision, you would have to be constantly looking about or continuously altering the light on a subject to see anything for longer than a few seconds at a time.

During drift movements, the eye drifts relatively slowly and smoothly off the target where you are looking until it reaches an angle equal to about 12 times the size of a tremor. At this time the eye automatically jerks, via a "saccade", back to its original position. Saccades, which happen up to

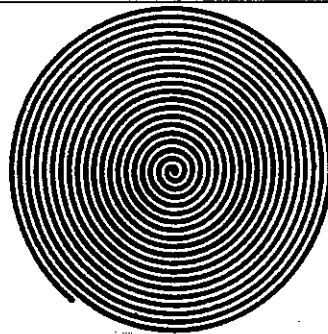
several times a second, are very quick, jerk-type movements that are used to correct for whatever drifts are occurring.

Eyes On The Move

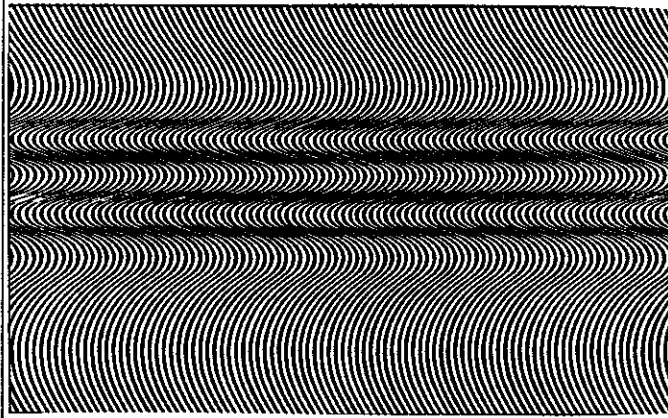
An interesting way to observe the effect that drifts, along with associated saccades, have on your visual system is to carefully study the type of graphic shown on this page. This experiment will show you that your eyes are indeed moving all the time, even when you think that they are not.

Look intently at the centre of the graphic. You should see a slight "shimmering, psychedelic effect" that seems to jump about no matter how hard you work at holding your eyes still. This phenomenon can be enhanced if, while

you stare at the figure, you stand and hold this page at arm's length, then twist or turn your body. Each time a random drift or small saccade takes place, the new picture your retina sees appears to interplay or interfere with a lingering "after image" of what was seen a fraction of a second earlier. That is what causes the appearance of a shifting motion within the graphic.



A fascinating discovery since Darwin's time is three broad classes of almost imperceptible eye movements -- drifts, tremors and saccades. To demonstrate that your eyes are always on the move, even when you think they are not, study these two graphics. An "afterimage" is super-imposed on the image you see, giving a twinkling effect that seems to be moving. Try keeping your eye steady -- the twinkling effect continues.



In this experiment, the tremors are too small and too fast to have a noticeable effect.

Large saccades are employed in scanning motions like reading. As you read this article, you may think your vision is smoothly scanning, letter by letter, or word by word, but this is not so. Instead, the precise alignment of your two eyes is synchronously hopping along, via those "jerk-back" saccades, following each line. During the moment a saccade is occurring, your vision is blurred, so between the hops are momentary stops which give the eye-brain system time to decipher the printed letters into meaningful phrases.

Think of how challenging it would be for a human to create the genetic code needed to produce the fine-tuned nervous system that makes precise, coordinated muscular movements like tremors, drifts and saccades possible. When Darwin made his assumptions about the origin of organs, he had nothing like the knowledge we have today. Had he been aware of the need for the tiny precision humming, hopping eyeball motions that are going on all the time while we are awake, he may have abandoned his theory of evolution as foolish and impracticable speculation.

There is indeed abundant evidence of the Creator's handiwork in all we see around us, and what we see with.

(From "Creation" magazine, Vol. 16, No. 4, Sept - Nov 1994, PO Box 6302, Acacia Ridge DC, Qld 4110, Australia. Used by permission.)

Notes:

1. Charles Darwin, "The Origin of Species", J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd, London, 1971, p. 167.
2. David S. Falk, Dieter R. Brill and David G. Stork, "Seeing The Light: Optics in Nature, Photography, Colour Vision, and Holography", Harper & Row Publishers Inc., New York, 1986, pp. 192-193; Arthur S. Freese, "The Miracle of Vision", Harper & Row Publishers Inc., New York, 1977, pp. 46-49; Tom N. Cornsweet, "Visual Perception", Academic Press, New York, 1970, pp. 399-404.

O God, that I might have towards my God
a heart of flame; towards my fellow-men a
heart of love; towards myself a heart of steel.

--Saint Augustine, AD354 - AD430.

Resource Review



Walking Talking Miracle (WTM)
Radical Rev-Up for Kids (RU)
How to Motivate, Manage & Market
Yourself (MMM)
by Lisa McInnes-Smith
Review (Part III) by Craig Smith

(This has been a rather lengthy review, but I had more in mind than simply warning about these books. We as parents need to learn how to spot faulty thinking, especially that coming from the secular humanist philosophical perspective. In addition, these particular books were dressed up to look "Christian", so I especially wanted to expose the wolf of humanism when it is dressed up in the language of the Lamb. We parents not only need to be able to spot this stuff when we see it, but we also need to train our children so that they too will see it coming, smell it coming, long before they are ever in a position to be taken in by it.)

The No. 1 Priority is Negative

Coupled with the erroneous idea implied in WTM pages 45-46 that negative ideas have nothing to do with God and that spiritual things are only positive, people are encouraged to, as it were, "ignore the elephant in the room", the thing each individual must deal with before he is able to have any real meaningful existence. I am talking about acknowledging your own fallen sinful nature and having it dealt with by Christ in repentance and reconciliation. This is how Biblical, orthodox, traditional Christians view the No. 1 priority in life. But these books would have us ignore negative feelings, those that would force our fallen natures to face reality and cause us to fall at Christ's feet in submission and repentance that we might receive what we really need: forgiveness of sins and a regenerated spirit, a new heart and a new nature. It is then, after this cleaning up exercise, that an individual can experience the joy of living regardless of the circumstances.

But please note that this joy is not the same as the happiness and positivism enjoined in these books. Christian joy is the ability to cope with and love

life even in the midst of excruciating trials because you know God is in control and is allowing this situation in order to refine your personality into something a bit more like that of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Encouraged to Disobey God

Another problem overall is that people reading this material are encouraged to make decisions contrary to Biblical demands.

In the WTM book we are told to say to ourselves, "I ignore people who say nasty things about me." Jesus tells us to love (not ignore) our enemies and to pray for (not ignore) those who spitefully use us and persecute us. (Matthew 5:44). On page 127 of the MMM book, point #6 says to write lists of "What's in it for me". The focus here is 180 degrees out. James, the brother of the Lord Jesus, pointed out that it is precisely this attitude that causes all the problems in the world. "For where envy and self seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing will be there." (James 3:16). The Lord Himself said not to seek those things the typical unbeliever is worried about, but instead to seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness and all those things would follow on. (Matthew 6:25-33). In addition we are commanded to do something quite different than what this book wants us to do: "Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others." (Philippians 2:4)

On page 18 of MMM we are told that we choose our own spiritual goals. This is the only way the humanist could possibly conceive of having anything at all to do with spiritual things: to choose for himself the who, what, when, where and how. To the consistent humanist it is impossible to bow to the spiritual authority of Christ or the Bible....that would be denying his own humanistic doctrine that man (and not God, Christ or the Bible) is the ultimate authority. I Corinthians 2:11 & 14 says, "...no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God....the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Natural man, man using his own wits and resources, cannot comprehend true spirituality because he simply is unable to do so. It is a wisdom which must be revealed to him from the only One Who has this true spiritual wisdom: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit by way of the Bible. This material does not, dares not for marketing

purposes, say such things. To the unchurched reader, any spiritual goals will do....or none at all....all roads lead to heaven....no one faith is any better than the others....these are the logical implications of this material's presentation. But again, this is NOT Christianity: it is a secular humanist's interpretation of spirituality. It is anti-Christian to the core since Jesus said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6).

One of the summary points, No. 8 on page 127 of MMM says to surround yourself with positive people and positive information. This is elitism and a fabrication of a false reality. The Bible gives commands quite different to this: "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself." (Philippians 2:3).

One of the challenges thrown at us in MMM is the worn out line: "It's tough at the top...but the view is worth it." Again this encouragement to go for the top is counter to Christian doctrine. The words of Christ are: "But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be abased, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." (Matthew 23:11-12).

On page 30 of MMM we learn how to foment this "burning desire" for success within ourselves. James 1:14-15: "But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death." What should be motivating and driving us onwards and upwards? Again, the Scriptures tell us plainly: "for it is God Who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure." (Philippians 2:13). "To this end I also labour, striving according to His working which works in me mightily." (Colossians 1:29). "And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward..." (Colossians 3:23-24). For desires to be legitimate and not illegitimate (sinful), they must be centred upon the Lord and not our own selfish pleasures. This idea is not fostered in these materials.

The Bible actually commends one set of desires that I know of: "Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart." (Psalm 37:4). "He will fulfill the desire of

those who fear Him." (Psalm 145:19). But please note the conditions attached before God will fulfill the promises: taking a delight in and fear of the Lord. Again I must conclude that this material is anti-Christian since it does not direct me to focus my desires on God as the Scriptures command me, but instead encourages me to choose whatever I want for my self in terms of however I might define success and make this my burning desire. No thanks.

On page 35 of MMM Norman Vincent Peal is referred to as interpreting the fragments of Bible verses, "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind" and "walk in the newness of life" as meaning to be full of enthusiasm. This goes a long way in explaining why Mr Peal has never had a following among serious Christians of any type whatsoever. Mr Peal's interpretation ignores the context of these verses in the Bible which talks about putting off human ways and putting on God's unique wisdom (Ephesians 4:17-24 and Romans 6:1-14). But it is in line with the thrust of the rest of this material in being totally man-centred rather than God-centred.

On pages 49 & 50 of MMM we have a catechism of a totally humanistic method for dealing with doubts and negative thoughts. The little cartoon character Mr C.E. Ville is easy to identify, but this character Mr U.R. Good is a bit misleading. He cannot be either a little angel-messenger or our own conscience, for they have named him "U-R-Good" when in fact Jesus said only God is good (Matthew 19:16-17). It appears both of these imaginary characters are in fact on the same side, endeavouring to keep the individual focused on himself and not on the One Who alone can accurately identify the person's problems and provide the solutions.

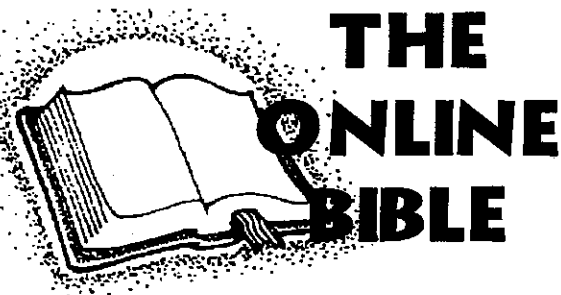
Conclusions

Now I am sure that my contention that this material is at points anti-Christian sounds a bit off the wall. The material surely expresses a lot of empathy toward Christianity, obviously favouring it over any other set of ideas. The problem is that true Christianity really does draw a heavy line in the dirt, and dares people to stand on one side or the other. And that is all there is. One side or the other. There is no neutral or safe zone. There are no sidelines or grandstand or fence upon which one may sit while making up his mind. The Lord Himself made it fairly clear: "He who is not with Me is against Me,

and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad." (Matthew 12:30).

And it is impossible to mix the ideas from the two sides, for then, as pointed out earlier, Christianity loses its identity. Neither you nor I would be comforted, upon discovering a maggot in a sandwich, to be told to just ignore the maggot. The whole sandwich would rightly be deemed completely unfit for human consumption. The analogy is apt, for just as a sandwich goes deep within and becomes an integral part of our bodies, this material is not just facts or techniques that can be stored and retrieved from memory but philosophies and attitudes which are intended to go deep into the heart and mind, to become an integral part of people's personalities affecting the way they think, act and react.

Therefore I must conclude that this material is preaching a false gospel, is guilty of pushing doctrines which are not supported by the Bible, and is in fact working hand-in-glove (either wittingly or unwittingly) with the great enemy of Biblical revelation: the religion/philosophy of secular humanism.



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are now married; their consciences may be palliated by the air of legitimacy given to their marriage. But ultimately, they will begin to question the wisdom of their marriage when difficult times come. Divorce and polarization of the family are often the ultimate outcome.

Another result of fornication is bitterness. The man may come to despise the woman, regarding her as chattel. She has allowed her virgin inheritance to be easily marred. A good example is Amnon, whose lust for Tamar was fanned by the knowledge that she was a virgin. He loved her as a virgin, but after he had forced her to fornicate, he hated her because she was now a non-virgin! (2 Sam 13:2) Lust is not love. Amnon loved "it" more than he loved Tamar.

Dating may also be preparing for divorce. The man or woman who enters into a relationship that becomes physical will search for another such relationship when the first is over - - ad infinitum. When this thinking is transferred to marriage, once the novelty of marriage wears off, the person will often crave for another relationship which is adulterous.

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In Line With Scripture



All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

--II Timothy 3:16-17

To start with, I looked up that first word, "all" in the original Greek. Do you know what it means? It means, "All"! God inspired every word of Scripture, including the 2/3 known as the Old Testament. The term "Old" there doesn't mean obsolete or out of date. Could we use those terms in describing God or His Word? No way! I've heard some say that unless God's Word is re-confirmed in the New Testament, it is no longer binding. I've heard others say that unless the New Testament specifically overrules a portion of the Old Testament, then it still stands! That second option sounds a lot more like what you would expect to find in the Word of the Almighty, Omniscient, Eternal God....Why should He repeat Himself? (See also Matt 4:4).

Notice what God's Word is profitable for: keeping us on the trail of Righteousness (doctrine), slapping our wrists when we stray from the trail (reproof), showing us how to get back on the trail (correction), and training us to stay put! So keep your nose in that Book!

Now, apart from the obvious meaning of the phrase "complete, thoroughly equipped" I decided to look up that word "every" in the original Greek. Do you know what it means? It means "every". Is performing brain surgery a good work? Sure is. Is building a bridge a good work? You bet. How about breeding a better quality wool onto the backs of sheep? Of course. Do you think even the tasks of collecting the garbage and sweeping the streets would fall into the category of "every good work"? Undeniably they would. "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." (I Corinthians 10:31)

While the Bible does not give us all the facts with

which we may perform brain surgery to the glory of God, it does give us the TRUTH about all facts so that we are thereby enabled to perform brain surgery to the glory of God. As the Lord Jesus said in John 8:31-32, "If you abide in my word, you are my disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Not free to do your own thing. But free from the deceitfulness of sin, "lest anyone should cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ." (Colossians 2:8) Once set free from this kind of thing you are now ABLE to do all to the glory of God.

As an example of this principle, journalists and authors who are not committed to serving the God of truth and grace will begin to serve themselves by using their writing skills to produce whatever will sell or promote their position or denigrate their opposition. The medical researcher not committed to serving the God of health and healing will begin to use his skills to generate endless income and notoriety from innumerable experiments, outlandish projects, and sensational (though almost always provisional) results. Or he may just go the route of becoming part of the abortion industry and simply murder for money. The manufacturer who is not committed to the God of excellence and stewardship will use cheaper materials and even build in faults and obsolescence to ensure repeat business for himself.

So really, Christians should not be asking how it is that the Scriptures can have a vital bearing on every educational discipline and every occupational qualification; rather, Christians should be asking how they themselves could possibly do ALL to the glory of God WITHOUT a thoroughly Scriptural perspective on every area of human endeavour. The fact that most Christians perceive a spiritual realm in which Jesus is Lord, as well as a secular realm of work, economics, politics, etc., shows that these Christians do not believe that Jesus is Lord of all, but only of part. Apart from the fact that you may not smoke, drink, gamble or cuss, if your politics, your economics, your concepts of social welfare, education and medicine are the same as the non-Christian down the street, then either your faith is irrelevant to this life on earth, or else you have been trained in such a way that you believe that you are a Christian when in fact you think and act like a pagan.

Let me illustrate. As Christians we say we abhor cursing, swearing, blasphemy, immorality, the denigration of virtues and the glorification of sinfulness. And yet what do we spend a big wad of money on to purchase and then to keep licensed every year? A TV set. This box is so placed in our homes that the maximum number of people may view it at once in comfort. It does not operate itself, but we must ourselves actively switch it on. We often leave it on so that we may hear it while we are out of the room. And what proceeds out of this box? Blasphemy of the worst sort, nudity and immorality. We would never let our children, or even uninvited guests, speak or act or (un)dress the way we blithely allow TV characters to do in the middle of our livingrooms. And yet we actually PAY to have this trash beamed straight into our homes, we actively and willfully switch it on so that we may see and hear these abominations, and nobody is standing over us forcing us to do it! And yet we say we hate blasphemy, immorality, etc. Even non-Christians recognise this for what it is: hypocrisy.

If our theology regarding our involvement in life's institutions of politics, economics, education, medicine, social welfare, etc. amounts to singing a rapturous rendition of the old Animals' hit, "We Gotta Get Outta This Place", then we have a theology of escapism and not victory. It means that we do not believe the Lord Jesus when He says that faith in Him overcomes the world, that He who is in us is greater than he who is in the world. (1 John 5:4-5 & 4:4) We have all heard people say you should not polish the brass on a sinking ship. But what if the ship is not sinking? If I have not trained up my children to be totally committed soldiers of the cross because I do not believe they will need those skills since the end is so close, and the Lord does not return for another 100 or so years, my grandchildren and great-grandchildren will not bless me but rather curse me because I left them unprepared. And what will the Lord say about this dereliction of duty when I meet Him face to face? When Christ said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me," (Matthew 28:18), He meant it. Jesus Christ IS the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. This includes being the Omniscient Master of wisdom and understanding in the areas of industrial relations, law, politics, health, social welfare, art, cinema, journalism and also, yes, the education and training of our children.

Tough Questions People Throw Your Way



What about home schooling solo mums or those with unbelieving or unsupportive spouses?

This is a really tough area. A mother who is on her own or who is basically left on her own in this home schooling task has an extra big challenge and one that may need to be handled with an extra big measure of sensitivity.

On Her Own

The solo mum teaching her children at home during the day is in some respects just the same as other mums: she has to do the job on her own for most of the time. But then there isn't the spouse to come home and, for a while at least, lift the burden of the care of the children off her shoulders. Older children can actually begin to do this for mum fairly early on, and part of their home education is to mind the baby/toddler while mum instructs the other child/ren. But there are other aspects of support (spiritual, moral, emotional, physical, intellectual) which God seems to have purposed should be borne together with a spouse. To bear these alone is really tough, and should serve to drive us to lean more heavily on the Lord and other Christian friends.

Support Groups

Support groups play an invaluable role here. A regular meeting where the mums have the opportunity to mainly talk while the children "socialise" (play) together and require minimum supervision constitutes a first-class support group. There is no need for any official support group committee to come together and sanction, plan, schedule and announce such a meeting beforehand: one person ringing around her friends inviting them to come over from 1pm to 2pm Friday afternoon will get the ball rolling. "Let's do this again next week, and what do you say we talk about 'Reading'?" provides a great excuse for many similar times together as you work your way through the curriculum topics. Word will spread by itself, and it can eventually become an "official" function of the local support group.

The various families within the support group can also at times be relied upon to babysit a solo mum's children so that she can become involved in things outside her own home, and maintain that wider perspective on life which makes coping with her own situation so much easier. And of course she will at times be available to babysit those families' children, a reciprocal deal which doesn't always have to involve the scarce commodity called "cash".

Another issue that may be of concern to some solo mums is the total lack for whatever reason of a Godly male role model for her children within their own extended family. My own dad died when I was 13, and some of the men friends of our family would take me out, just the two of us, on a substitute father/son activity. The gesture was great, but those occasions were always so strained and contrived and uncomfortable. This has been, historically, an area where the men in the church recognised the need and would take the natural opportunities to interact with the children during church activities and socials and those other occasions when families interact or visit one another. It is possibly felt by solo mums that they aren't included in interfamily socialising as much since there is no husband around to match the husbands of other families. My widowed mum felt this very strongly when it came to socialising with just one other family, but as soon as the social activity grew to three or more families, that feeling disappeared. Couples who know solo mums could try to be aware of this and take it into their consideration when planning their own social calendars. The solo mum might want to mention this concern to some close friends, but she can't really push it more than that. If the men around who know the situation are aware of the solo mum's concerns for her children don't respond to the knowledge and challenge of the situation itself, prodding them more than once or twice at most certainly will not have the desired effect. Sorry, but that just seems to be the way men are wired up.

Feeling On Her Own

The issue of unsupportive or unbelieving spouses can actually be more stressful. Much of what was written about support groups above is applicable here. If the husband is actually anti-home schooling, and refuses to discuss it, try for a Christian school, if there is a decent one nearby. If not, for the sake of the marriage bond and family harmony the child/ren better do as

dad wants: go to school. Take comfort in the knowledge that a strong, loving, harmonious, supporting and vitally-involved-with-their-children set of parents will still have by far the major influence in the child/ren's character and social and moral development, even though they attend school. (See the article on Page 5.) Take advantage of dad's natural love and concern for his child/ren and work as a team to do plenty of extra-curricular activities with them. This doesn't have to be a big formalised thing...a simple family picnic with plenty of parent/child interaction helps to build those foundational values and attitudes that YOUR family holds dear into your child/ren in a permanent fashion. Again, it is simply taking advantage of the incredible parent/child bond that God has wired into us all and consciously using it to maximum advantage.

The dad who isn't actively against home schooling, but isn't really for it either but just seems to leave it up to mum should really exercise more leadership and (as we say in our house) "don't just ignore the elephant in the room". Dads tend to be involved in their work and one other thing (not necessarily to do with home and family), and leave all else up to mum. Men like to be good at what they do, and hate making mistakes. Consequently they tend to stay out of areas they aren't familiar with or are not convinced about. Mums virtually ALWAYS end up with a whole list of skills required for running a household, while the dads only have one or two. After a while dads become aware of this and can start to feel a bit insecure about it, which could lead to even more reluctance to do anything new or different.

Well, we men simply have to break out of that kind of inhibiting, strangling, mind-set and force ourselves to get involved. It doesn't mean we have to run everything, but at least to think it through and be supportive of whatever we let the family be involved in. The Lord God Almighty is going to call us to account for how we have managed our families: just bringing home the bacon simply won't pass muster.

This certainly is not the final word on the subject. Please write in, anonymously if you like, with other ideas, tips or experiences or more specific questions. Lord willing, our combined wisdom will help to edify us all.

Correspondence with Politicians and Educationalists



(The information given in this article is the writer's personal opinion and is not intended as legal advice and should not take the place of legal counsel from a qualified, informed solicitor.)

Annual Reports

Well, I guess we have all received the long-awaited yet fearfully dreaded letter from the Ministry of Education (MOE) informing that we have 21 days in which to write a report on each child. (I reckon by the time you read this those 21 days will have passed.) The thing that bothers many of us is that this latest letter does not ask for the same vague 1 1/2 to 2 page report on what we felt the children had achieved, as we were told would be required earlier in the year. No. Now they want 350 words on their progress in Maths and another 350 words on Language and Reading. This seems a bit over the top, and I'm not inclined to fully co-operate, yet I feel they've got us with the legal requirement that they be "satisfied", which could mean anything, including 350 words on Maths.

Why Be Worried?

Several reasons have been put forward:

- a) It sets a precedent whereby the MOE can ask for more and more information in order for them to be "satisfied". They may later ask for inclusion of certain items from the National Curriculum which some home schoolers may find morally or philosophically objectionable.
- b) It seems to be an excessive and intrusive measure. Children in registered schools have no such report on them. What reports are done are composed of one-liners per subject area and are done for the PARENTS rather than the MOE. Registered schools write no annual reports on each child for the MOE. In fact, each school is only reviewed by the ERO once every three years.
- c) It seems that writing such an extensive amount could be self-incriminating. (Indeed, documents procured from the MOE under the

Official Information Act through the efforts of Ian Brown of Rangiora state that all reports will go into one of two piles: satisfactory and unsatisfactory. A national panel of three or four people is being established to further consider those reports deemed unsatisfactory. Some of these will be referred to the Education Review Office (ERO) for their evaluation, and the ERO will decide which families they will visit for an official review.) But in addition, some home schoolers feel that information about attitudes, values and practises they may include in the reports in good faith may later be used against them by persons having access to the reports who are driven by ideologies that expound prosecution of those who they feel do not conform to currently held ideas of political correctness. However, the Privacy Act should come to our aid here, as is explained later.

d) The education of one's own children is first and foremost a responsibility of the parents, a duty given to them by God. The entire routine of asking for an exemption certificate and having to give account to the MOE is seen as a rendering unto Caesar (the MOE) that (accounting) which belongs not to Caesar but to God. But because the law states that home schooling parents must satisfy the MOE that they will teach as regularly and well as in a registered school, most of these parents do not want to break the law. They are generally happy about helping the MOE to be satisfied and about being accountable, as long as the intrusion of the MOE is kept to a bare minimum. These reports are way beyond that.

Let's Review the Situation

The law states that we must teach "at least as regularly and well as in a registered school". Those words are not legally defined, but the MOE has come up with definitions to guide them in their quest to be "satisfied" (THEIR legal requirement) that we are teaching at least as regularly and well as in a registered school.

To the MOE, "regularly" means "a commitment to certain routines appropriate to the maturity level and abilities of the child." The word "well" is defined in MOE policy documents as "some evidence of the planning and balance that we would expect would be a feature of curriculum organisation in any registered school....communicate to the Ministry something of your curriculum vision." (These definitions come from the MOE's "Homeschooling Desk File".)

These definitions are not legal requirements, but only guidelines for the MOE that they have set for themselves. There is no legal requirement for home schoolers to be reviewed, but the MOE is legally required to be "satisfied" with our teaching programme. To help them to be satisfied, they have come up with three review techniques: 1) the questionnaire that comprises the application for exemption; 2) the annual statutory declaration; 3) these annual reports. If we do not comply with any of these we do not break the law, but the MOE will then probably not be "satisfied" about our teaching. In that case we could lose our exemption certificates.

Remember the letter sent to us all from the MOE on 28 February 1996? It stated: "Please understand that this is not meant to be a detailed report covering all the topics that have been mastered in each area of your curriculum. What the Ministry is looking for is a short statement of about one and a half to two pages in which you explain the progress that your child has made during the last twelve months. This report will give you the chance to communicate your successes. You will be asked to concentrate on the particular skills that you feel your child has gained during the past year."

But things changed as time went on. A memo obtained through the Official Information Act to branch offices of the MOE from MOE Head Office dated 31 August 1996 states: "...if we want to make the job of assessment easier for ourselves we will structure the report so that it is as specific as possible....we should seek a report...but should restrict the field of view eg ask for a report on the Maths programme this year, the Social Studies programme next year and so on."

A later memo (14 September) advised that all branch offices agreed to restricting the review to two curriculum areas plus some other points. Consequently this latest letter we all received from the MOE dated 28 October stated: "...your report on each of Maths and Language and Reading should cover about 350 words (one page)(but that means 350 words on Maths and another 350 words on Language and Reading for each child--Ed.). The Ministry will be looking for specific information about what you have done this year in each of the two curriculum areas. We will be expecting your report to answer such questions as..." and there follow five questions which some regard variously as

FOREMOST

P R O D U C T S

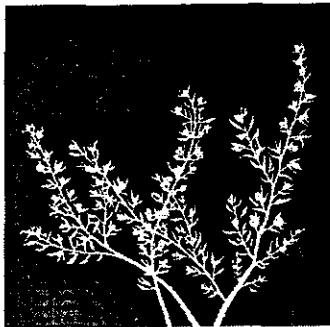
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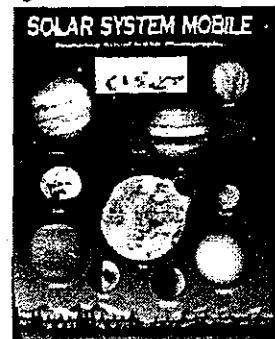
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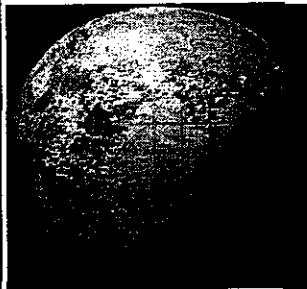
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difficult to impossible to answer; intrusive, irrelevant. Here they are: "What knowledge, skills and attitudes have you concentrated on during the year? What activities have you used to build up the knowledge, skills and attitudes? What progress has your child made and how has this been revealed? Are there areas where progress was unsatisfactory and what do you plan to do about this? What does your child enjoy most?"

Memos from the MOE dated 31 August 1996 and 17 October 1996 both state that the MOE does not expect more than 5% (250) of the reports to be unsatisfactory. I don't know if this estimate includes those who do not send in any reports at all.

On 21 November they plan to start sending a follow-up letter to those who have not yet sent in reports. The form letter I've seen states that the reports are needed so that the MOE can be "satisfied" about our home schooling programmes, and then includes the sentence, "I am sure that you would not wish the Ministry to be uncertain on this point, since it is fundamental to the continuation of the certificate of exemption which you hold."

On 2 December they plan to ring parents who still have not provided reports. Parents and reports that need further follow-up are then referred to the ERO.

So What Are We To Do?

The Education Act gives the MOE the authority to revoke a certificate under Section 21(6). The certificate shall not be revoked unless "1) reasonable efforts have been made to get all the relevant information, AND 2) the Secretary has considered a report on the matter from the Chief Review Officer." The MOE is under financial restraints. They have budgeted to pay for a certain number of Reviews by the ERO. These can take place in your home or at some other venue, whatever YOU decide. If they have more families to review than they have funds available, it could possibly mean that no further action will be taken against those families. The MOE is LEGALLY obliged to make reasonable efforts to get all the relevant information before it can revoke a certificate of exemption. If it cannot make those efforts, it probably cannot revoke the certificates.

What each of us does individually depends

on how we see the situation. Some home schoolers have no problem with these annual reports whatsoever. It is, and I agree, precious little to ask in return for the Supervisory Allowance money that the MOE sends to us each year, although I am told by the MOE that the money is regarded as a completely separate issue.

(That may be so, but other documents in the "Homeschooling Desk File" make it clear that the Supervisory Allowance may be affected by the absence of a satisfactory annual report.) Taken all together, home schooling in NZ is a very straight-forward process with very little state involvement, and is a far more accessible option than in almost any other country in the Western world.

So what can we do? What should we do? Note that it is NOT ILLEGAL for the MOE to ask for these reports. But also note that WE ARE UNDER NO LEGAL OBLIGATION TO WRITE THE REPORTS. We are under no LEGAL obligation to either write the reports in any certain way, or answer any particular questions at all. If we write any kind of report at all, it is a totally voluntary action on our part in response to the MOE's request that we do so.

a) We could write the reports to help the MOE to be "satisfied" that we are still teaching "as regularly and well as in a registered school".

b) If we DO NOT write the reports we are NOT breaking the law. We are merely casting a doubt across the collective mind of the MOE about the quality of our home schooling. This may in turn cause the MOE to wonder if we should still hold an exemption certificate. We could write explaining our non-compliance, perhaps even suggesting an alternative form of review with which we would be happy.

c) We could write some kind of report that we are happy with, but not what they asked for, with a covering letter explaining our non-compliance.

d) If we do send any report we should ask them to return it (plus any copies they may have made) according to Privacy Principle 9 of Section 6 of the Privacy Act, which states, "An agency that holds personal information shall not keep that information for longer than is required for the purposes for which the information may lawfully be used". They only need it to be satisfied for this year. Insisting that they return the reports means they will not have all the personal details

we may include in the reports on file for future reference.

e) Privacy Principle 1(b) of Section 6 of the Privacy Act says that personal information collected **MUST BE NECESSARY** for the MOE's stated purposes, that is, to be "satisfied etc., etc." This may cause us to object to certain questions asked in both the application for the exemption certificate and the letter of 28 October asking for these annual reports.

Accountability

Now none of the foregoing assumes that we home schoolers do not think we should be accountable to anybody. Far from it. We are first and foremost accountable to God for the education of our children, and most of us would fear God a good deal more than we do the MOE.

However, we must also recognise what our Heavenly Father says about us: that we are still sinners. Saved by His wonderful Grace, washed in His precious blood, forgiven by His boundless Mercy, true, true, true.....but we remain sinners nonetheless. And being the weak vessels of clay that we are, the deceitfulness of the sin which dwells in our members can cause us to think we are doing a marvellous job when perhaps we are only mediocre. We should seek out others who will check up on us and keep us accountable, for the sake of our children's educational excellence, for the sake of home schooling's reputation in general, for the sake of our Saviour's reputation if we are known as Christians who home educate, and because we recognise we are weak sinners and that all our best intentions are susceptible to the deceitfulness of sin. (Those who are with certain programmes are automatically accountable, since someone regularly sees examples of the children's work: ACE and Carey College come readily to mind.)

It may not be an inherently evil thing for us to be somewhat accountable to the MOE, and it does help us to keep a more critical eye on our home schooling programmes. However, I would prefer to see some other non-statist Christian organisation that would help me to objectively assess how my home education endeavours are shaping up in all areas: academic, social, character training, spiritual development, etc.

I am aware of two very different networks that are just in the formative stages of development which both aim to provide help, advice and

support in this area to home schoolers. Both are clearly national rather than local in scope, and have the expertise to accomplish their purposes. Keystone will keep its readers advised as these two networks become active. Watch this space!

Strengthening Support Groups



Progress and Achievement Tests

I wrote to the NZ Council for Educational Research recently to ask how home schoolers could get their hands on the up-to-date versions of the PATs (Progressive Achievement Tests). Well, I was personally excited by the reply I got. The tests are normally administered to school children from mid-February to the end of March. Consequently the NZCER collects all the orders NOW and sends them out to 2500 schools in one huge mailout, with the deadline for ordering the 1997 materials being Friday 8 November 1996!

Joan Kirby, Distributions Officer for the NZCER, has told me that home schoolers can order 1997 PAT materials whenever they like at the same prices schools pay for them. And they're cheap!

The complete battery of tests (Reading Comprehension; Reading Vocabulary; Maths; Listening Comprehension; Study skills in use of reference materials; Study skills in using maps, graphs, tables & diagrams; Reading study skills-post primary only) would cost an individual primary student about \$39 and a secondary student about \$50. However, this includes \$36.45 worth of teacher's manuals and tapes which could be purchased ONCE by a support group and all the students could be tested at one time by one or two parents in conditions similar to institutional testing conditions. These tests are more involved than the CATs (California Achievement Tests) that those on ACE will be familiar with, and of course they also allow you to see how your children compare with NZ school children.

For their PAT catalogue and order form write to: Joan Kirby Distributions Officer, NZCER, PO Box 3237, Wellington, ph. (04) 801-5324 or fax (04) 384-7933.

Theologically Speaking



(The articles in this column are offered to expand our appreciation and that of our children for our Christian faith. Its history is incredibly rich. Its foundational contributions to the best of our Western culture are immeasurable. Searching out its implications for every area of our lives will occupy every day of our lives. Use these contributions as they are, as springboards to further family study, or as a catalyst for debate through the letters column.)

Worship

The word itself comes from an old English word meaning "Worth". We attribute worth to God in worship. We worship Him because He is worthy of this. He, and He alone, deserves all glory and praise. In worship we are seeking to give Him the honour which is His due. "How pleasant and fitting to praise Him!" exclaims Psalm 147:1.

Just as the chief end of man is "To glorify God and enjoy Him forever" so too the worship of God is the highest calling of the church. We can, of course, worship God on our own. Yet there is something special, something unique about the gathering of God's people for His praise. Many times over the Psalms call God's people together for the corporate adoration of the Lord. "We can never know the full richness of worship unless we unite in common worship with other members of the body of Christ...God has so created man that there are deeper delights and more intense inspiration in the worshipping congregation than in individual devotion."¹

This is not to deny that the worship services of the church also have some benefit for us as individuals. But the primary goal of worship is not that we might feel a glow, but that God may be given glory.

Christian Paradox

It is one of the paradoxes of the Christian life that a sharp focus on God enables us to get ourselves in better focus. Concentration on God in worship has the effect of lifting us out of our depression and difficulties. A proper view of God helps us to view ourselves and our problems in a clearer light. Coming to worship enables us

to put our lives in perspective.

Another paradox is that we feel better for having felt worse. This is contrary to a current popular emphasis on making people feel good about themselves. Some suggest that in worship we should not discourage people with depressing talk about sin, we should not burden them with feelings of guilt. Instead we should be making them feel happy.

But true happiness comes from a proper recognition of who we are before an Almighty and Holy God. Real blessedness arises out of a sincere acknowledgment of wrong, a heartfelt confession of sin and the assurance that our forgiving God has "tread our sins underfoot and hurl(ed) all our iniquities into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7:19).

The minister is not to be a cheerleader whipping up enthusiasm, nor a psychologist aiming to improve the self esteem of those present. Rather he is a minister of God seeking to lead the congregation into the very presence of the Lord. This in itself has a special effect on us. Martin Luther knew this, for he said, "At home in my own house there is no warmth or vigour in me, but in the church when the multitude is gathered together, a fire is kindled in my heart and it breaks its way through."

Varying Expectations

One difficulty we face in corporate worship is the varying expectations people have concerning the style and format of the service, especially in regard to music. Many churches hardly sing an old hymn, and could thereby lose their sense of continuity with the past. And yet in our singing we can draw from the best of the entire history of the church: Psalms, ancient and modern hymns, modern choruses. Such singing gives us an identity with the church of Christ of all ages and places. Unfortunately there is a tendency for the musical "conservatives" to gather in one church while the musically "innovative" meet in another.

Is this a good thing? I doubt it. Wouldn't it be better if we could consider one another? Let the conservative (and often older) members allow for some change while the modern (and often younger) members be prepared to take things more slowly. If we stayed together we would learn a lot from each other as well as tempering the extremes. "...in humility consider other better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests but also to the

interests of others" (Phil. 2:2-3).²

Music in Worship

When we come together to worship the God who seeks worshippers we come together to worship the triune God, the God of the universe, the God of our salvation and the God who will return to judge the living and the dead. Realising this should determine the very tone and quality of our music and our words.

This casts doubt on the suitability of many popular expressions of "worship": the sentimental type of subjective evangelical songs with highly questionable theology; the full-blast pipe organ sound with the tremulant shaking the very building; the exuberant guitar-strumming of something akin to a catchy advertising jingle; the jolly repetitive sound of a chorus round. All these do not form part of the mature worship of God; indeed all these forms of music-making are contrary to worship.

I want to also deal with the often heard argument that music cannot be divided into good or bad music; after all, some say, music is only a sequence of notes, (you better check that up in your dictionary), music is neutral, not intrinsically good or bad, and so it does not matter what sort of music we use.

Unfortunately, and sadly, this attitude tends to result in the use of all conceivable musical instruments playing all conceivable sorts of music, from the so-called Christian rock to the murdering of traditional Christian hymns and songs, yea, even the psalms.

We need to be reminded here that music is not only a tune or melody -- i.e. a sequence of notes -- it also has harmony and rhythm. That is why I want to make a plea for church music to be music of excellence; excellence in tune, in harmony and in execution (not a haphazard, mediocre combination of all three), music of joy and seriousness, cheerful solemnity, stateliness and majesty to convey worshipful texts.

The church has always been on pilgrimage. At this point in our journey we have available to us 20 centuries of praise and prayer. We can and should select the best out of this treasure trove. Of course the church has been selecting the best throughout the ages and we would be silly -- yes, it would be at our peril -- to ignore that treasure.

Talking about that treasure trove, there is much to learn from the fascinating story of the music of worship: the original Songs of Praise, i.e. the Hebrew "Sefer Tehillim" or Psalms (the Book

of Psalms); the Jewish synagogue chant (based on the temple songs of the Levites); the development of the early church music; the hymns written by the very early church fathers; the development of Gregorian and other chants; the stunningly beautiful cathedral choral anthems of Byrd, Wesley, Lassus, Bruckner; fascinating also to read about the different directions taken at the Reformation by Luther, Calvin and Zwingli; to learn of the various early psalm translations in the languages of the people; and to study the history of the Genevan Psalter. This Psalter is one of the best books of psalm settings, composed (albeit to the French text) by Christian composers at the behest of Calvin, yet now sadly neglected.

In his book "O Come Let Us Worship" Robert Rayburn says: "The hymnbook is not only the repository of the devotion of the saints of the ages, but it also provides materials, gathered from the church universal, for the offering up of the sacrifice of praises and thanksgiving. It is a prayer book as well as a song book. It also provides a popular commentary on the creeds of Christendom. A good hymnbook gives a more balanced view of the Christian faith than do many theological volumes...We are faithful to the highest motivations for corporate worship when we are careful to sing those great expressions of praise and devotion which have stood the test of time in the worship of multitudes of believers."³

All of Life is Worship

For worship is not only that which takes place on Sunday morning, but throughout the week as we live in the presence of God, for the glory of God. Every believer is a priest called to serve and worship God in all he does. To live the Christian life in obedience to God IS worship. When the Apostle Paul urges us to offer our bodies as "living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God", he informs us that this is "spiritual worship".

On the first day of the week the people of God gather to give God what is due to Him. In the rest of the week we scatter into the world as members of Christ's church. We must go to the worship service so that we are then ready to go from it renewed in faith, hope and love, committed to worshipping God in all we do.⁴

Notes:

1. Robert Rayburn, "O Come Let Us Worship", p. 29-30.
2. John Haverland, "Reflections on Worship", from *Faith in Focus*, Nov. 1994, pp. 3-4.
3. Art Snoek, "Music in Worship", from *Faith in Focus*, Nov. 1994, pp. 7-9.
4. John Haverland, p. 4.

Statist & Professional Trends



"Speed" for Kids

To demonstrate the kind of hold the school system has on parents and children, here is a disturbing bit from the *Sunday Star-Times* of 31 March 1996. A top psychiatrist is calling for a national investigation into the amount of a drug known as "speed" being given to hyperactive children to quieten them down. John Werry, emeritus professor of psychiatry at Auckland University, said....it was worrying that every time an overseas expert visited NZ to talk about Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) there was an upsurge in cases.

"We get a whole bunch of parents knocking on our door and saying their kids have ADD and need Ritalin," he said...."The most common reason for parents coming along is because the school has complained, the child is unable to sit still on a mat and things like that," he said.

Normal active fun-loving kids wanting to be mentally and sensory stimulated so that they can learn about their world and move toward fulfilling their God-given task of having dominion over the earth have to sit through brain-dead, non-sexist, non-confrontational, non-competitive, value-free, politically-correct activities of total irrelevance. No wonder they start climbing the walls. So experts suggest they drug the kids to keep 'em in line. We have also had parents come to us to find out about home schooling after the teachers have suggested to the parents they may want to keep their troublesome children out of school permanently. We cannot thank the Lord sufficiently for leading us to rescue our children OUT of such chaos. Please continue to pray for our brothers and sisters who are still blinded to all this and who continue to send their children to these state institutions.

School Gate Chaos

An article in *Education Today* of August 1996, promoting the Kidsafe Week 96 of September 7-13 as New Zealand's first national safety week devoted to child safety, had its focus on child accidents. In NZ each year 20 child pedestrians die and a further 350 are hospitalized. "Pedestrian injuries are the biggest killer of

our primary school aged children -- responsible for more child deaths than all infectious diseases combined. Since many pedestrian injuries occur in and around school -- often while children are being dropped off or picked up, a key focus this year is school gate chaos." I couldn't have coined a better phrase myself: it really sums up the whole institution, if you ask me.

But that isn't all. "Parents delivering and collecting their children are posing an increasing problem for schools." There you go again...those pesky parents getting in the way of their children's education, this time by posing increasing safety problems for school. It seems parents involved in state schooling just can't win. Why do they bother? They should all home school.

One of my favourite dreams is watching all the state schools close down for lack of customers!! This lack of customers would not be due to a nil birth rate, but instead to a free market in education which would allow private and home schools to flourish unhindered, their standards of excellence impossible to resist. Now that I've said it, you know, I don't think the state would ever allow such a situation to occur, since they would have to protect the investment in all those taxpayer-funded schools and taxpayer-funded teaching jobs and especially all those taxpayer-funded Ministry of Education positions. To protect its own existence and their own jobs the state education bureaucrats will have to clamp down on the growth of home schooling somewhere along the line. Just watch how they use these annual reports, the supervisory allowance and the recently amended teacher registration bill over the next year or two.

Feminism: The Big Lie

by Phyllis Schlafly

Feminism is incompatible with truth. It's based on the lie that American women are oppressed and mistreated. We hope that the feminists' trip to the U.N. Conference in Beijing will teach them the truth that American women are the most fortunate class of people who ever lived.

Feminism is incompatible with marriage and motherhood. Women's lib raised false expectations that young women could "have it all" right now. But while the feminists rejected motherhood, not many men changed their attitudes and babies didn't change at all. A Wall Street Journal study showed that 52 percent of

professionally successful women are divorced or unmarried compared with only five percent of men.

Feminism is incompatible with human nature. The premise of the feminists is that God goofed in making us into two different sexes, and our laws should remedy His mistake. They've taken on an impossible task in trying to change human nature and the eternal differences between men and women. Despite feminist attempts to deny it, women do have a biological clock that influences their lives. I went to law school after I was 50 years old, but I'm glad I didn't have my six children after I was 50.

Feminism is incompatible with personal happiness. Its technique of identifying and exaggerating grievances produces a chip-on-the-shoulder attitude toward life as well as a disdain for traditional values and roles. Feminist Anne Taylor Fleming, in her book *Motherhood Deferred*, describes herself as part of the sisterhood of the infertile, a lonesome, babyless baby boomer now completely consumed by the longing for a child of her own. She wrote that she's tempted to shout out loud, "Hey, hey, Gloria, Germain, Kate. Was your ideology worth the empty womb?"

Feminism is incompatible with the private enterprise system because feminists propose government as the solution to every problem. After liberation from husbands, the feminists look to Big Brother Government as a replacement. The lesson of the 1994 elections is that Americans reject the notion that the government can solve all our problems.

Feminism is incompatible with common sense. The disdain for the family flies in the face of all human experience. The family is the proven best way for men and women to live together on this earth. A family provides us with people who care about us, a nest and a shelter from which we can face life's challenges. The family is the original and best department of health, education and welfare.

Young women should be taught that feminism is no substitute for traditional marriage. Liberation is no substitute for fidelity. Political correctness is no substitute for chivalry. Careers are

no substitute for children and grandchildren. Faith, commitment, hard work, family, children and grandchildren still offer the most fulfillment, as well as our reach into the future.

The feminist movement today has an identity crisis. It has no happy role models. Its ideology is sterile and its spokespersons are bitter. But don't expect feminists to quietly fade away, because so many of them hold taxpayer-funded perches from which they continue to promote their agenda. You'll find them in well-paying jobs in government, in the media and in academia, where a handful of determined activists can do a lot of mischief.

(From *Rutherford* magazine, November 1995, p. 11. Phyllis Schlafly is a lawyer, author of 16 books, syndicated columnist and president of the conservative pro-family organisation Eagle Forum.)

Feminism is incompatible with common sense.

This article gives us Christian home schoolers a lot to praise God for. From all the author says, this godless philosophy of feminism is inherently and fatally flawed, doomed to the dustbin of history. So ultimately, we have nothing to fear from it. However, until it is generally scrapped by society, it will have done even more damage.

Therefore, we know that we are right in teaching our children and training them up in Biblical ethics, roles and worldviews. We know that if we, by God's grace, are as consistent in our training as possible, then our children really will be the salt and light of the earth, shining as stars in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, offering them the Word of life. We can train our children to recognise this philosophy when they come across it and work with them to develop a humble and loving yet firm and uncompromising Christian response to it. We can point out the challenge to those of our children so gifted and inclined that the enemy is seated in influential positions in government, the media and academia....just waiting to be displaced, Lord willing, by His people as they pursue careers of excellence and integrity. "Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in His commandments. His offspring will be the mighty in the land." (Psalm 112:1-2)

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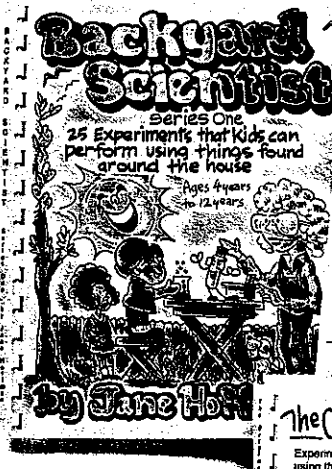
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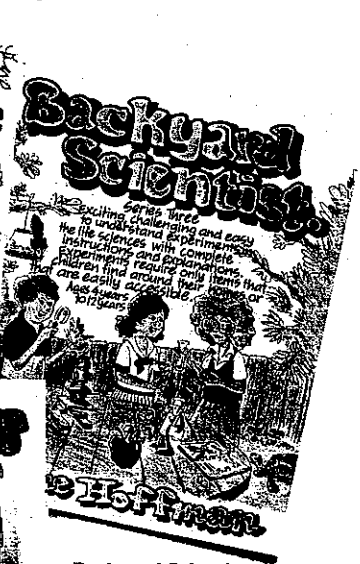
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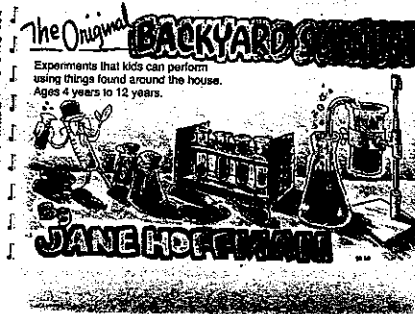
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Teaching Tips



The Dead Boring Society

Jenny Barkley of Amberley, NZ, couldn't resist writing these two book reviews in order to spread the good news. Those home schoolers down there in the wilds of North Canterbury wanted their children to do more creative writing. The children apparently responded with words to the effect that such an activity would be dead boring. Consequently, they have formed the Dead Boring Society. Jenny writes:

"Our Dead Boring Soc. is really fun and it's great to have an outside motivation for the kids' writing -- also a regular deadline. The kids find having an audience stimulating, though the food and play time still rate higher than the writing. They get ideas from each other as well."

I have read three of Susan Richman's books and would heartily recommend them. I was introduced to this Pennsylvanian ex-teacher home schooling mum when a friend lent me "Writing From Home". This collection of home schooled children's writing is organised according to content, with chapters featuring: Observing Up Close, Saving Special Moments, Reporting Research, Imagining, etc.

In the first chapter, "Creating a Writing Environment", Susan explains her rationale for writing, and discusses what has worked with her family of four children, (aged 12 to 2 1/2 years at time of publishing). This is no instant formula, but a consideration of the atmosphere, example and motivation that can encourage children in the direction of writing.

The rest of the book is children's writing which Susan has collected. What I found very useful was the editorial note that prefaced each piece of writing. Here Susan passes on information about the author, why they wrote this piece, what inspires them to write, or maybe comments from the author's mother pertinent to that piece of writing. Susan also points out the particular features that caused her to respond to the writing.

As a "teacher type" I would have been more inclined to read a book about getting children writing than to read children's writing. This children's writing, with the background and critique offered, has inspired me far more than any books I have read previously. They were about it, but this IS IT.

My children and I are now writing and enjoying it more than before. We have begun a writing club -- named in advance The Dead Boring Society -- and if it's still going strong in a year we'll write an article about that.

I followed up by reading "The Three Rs" by Susan and her husband Howard, who has a PhD in education, his specialty being how children learn to read. This book is an account of their early home schooling years and is full of great ideas for incorporating learning into your way of life.

The third book, edited by Susan, is a collection of math problems written by children. Fortunately the answers are included and how to work them out! It has given us a whole new outlook on maths and we are now writing our own problems.

These three books among others are available from Pennsylvania Homeschoolers, R.D. 2, Box 117, Kittanning, PA 16201, USA. A guide to the prices would be: Writing From Home, 372pages, US\$8.95 or US\$16.95 hardback; The Three Rs, 230pages, US\$7.95; Maths by Kids, 74pages, US\$6.95.

A Patchwork of Days by Nancy Lande gives us a look at a day in the life of thirty home schooling families. Each family also comments more generally on their reasons for and ways of home schooling.

The book arose from Nancy's difficulties as a "wanting to" home schoolers, of finding out just what exactly people DO. Seeing curricula was all very well, but how did they DO IT? This book is wonderful encouragement for all home schoolers, as well as a real asset for those keen to start. I was delighted to find that I am in great company, my frustrations are shared by many others; even better, some of them have found workable solutions -- or at least improvements -- that I can use too.

There is a wide variety of families, from unschoolers through to the highly organised. Most are American with contributions also from UK, Sydney and an ex-patriot family in Africa. There is an address should you wish to contribute further publications. Although most parents express some doubt or frustrations, all are convinced of the benefits home schooling brings to their families and long term to their children.

Another helpful factor is a brief update on most families covering the timelag between their contribution and publishing. I got this book through the same Pennsylvania home schooling group mentioned above. It was about US\$14 and has 295 pages.

Action Station



- 1) If you haven't as yet written an annual report for the Ministry of Education, read the article about them on page 18. A lot of information has been gathered to assist you in deciding what to do about them.
- 2) You are invited to write in with any comments about the subject in the "Tough Questions" column on page 17.
- 3) With Christmas coming up it is a good time to order any items you may see among the advertisers or get home schooling T-Shirts or Back Yard Scientist books from CHomeS, pages 26 & 29.
- 4) Either individually or with your support group look at getting the PAT materials for assessing your children's progress on page 22.

bers gather together daily for praise and prayer. "Them that honour Me I will honour" (I Samuel 2:30) is His promise.

An old writer well said, "A family without prayer is like a house without a roof, open and exposed to all the storms of Heaven." All our domestic comforts and temporal mercies issue from the loving-kindness of the Lord, and the best we can do in return is to gratefully acknowledge, together, His goodness to us as a family. Excuses against the discharge of this sacred duty are idle and worthless. Of what avail will it be when we render an account to God for the stewardship of our families to say that we had no time available, working hard from morn till eve? The more pressing be our temporal duties, the greater our need of seeking spiritual succor. Nor may any Christian plead that he is not qualified for such a work: gifts and talents are developed by use and not by neglect.

Family worship should be conducted reverently, earnestly and simply. It is then that the little ones will receive their first impressions and form their initial conceptions of the Lord God. Great care needs to be taken lest a false idea be given them of the Divine Character, and for this the balance must be preserved between dwelling upon His transcendency and immanency, His

holiness and His mercy, His might and His tenderness, His justice and His grace. Worship should begin with a few words of prayer invoking God's presence and blessing. A short passage from His Word should follow, with brief comments thereon. Two or three verses of a Psalm may be sung. Close with a prayer of committal into the hands of God. Though we may not be able to pray eloquently, we should earnestly. Prevailing prayers are usually brief ones. Beware of wearying the young ones.

The advantages and blessings of family worship are incalculable. First, family worship will prevent much sin. It awes the soul, conveys a sense of God's majesty and authority, sets solemn truths before the mind, brings down benefits from God on the home. Personal piety in the home is a most influential means, under God, of conveying piety to the little ones. Children are largely creatures of imitation, loving to copy what they see in others. "He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments" (Psalm 78:5, 7). How much of the dreadful moral and spiritual conditions of the masses today may be traced back to the neglect of their fathers in this duty? How can those who neglect the worship of God in their families look for peace and comfort therein? Daily prayer in the home is a blessed means of grace for allaying those unhappy passions to which our common nature is subject. Finally, family prayer gains for us the presence and blessing of the Lord. There is a promise of His presence which is peculiarly applicable to this duty: "Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:19-20). Many have found in family worship that help and communion with God which they sought for with less effect in private prayer.

Give me one hundred men who fear nothing but sin and desire nothing but God, and I care not a straw whether they be clergymen or laymen; such alone will shake the gates of hell and set up the kingdom of heaven on earth.

-John Wesley