

Keystone

The Journal of Christian Home Schoolers

of New Zealand

Vol. VII No. 4

July 2001

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



Featured Family
Phil & Jenny van der Mespel
Anita (9), Joel (7)

KEYSTONE

is the Journal of
Christian Home Schoolers of New Zealand.
It is published six times a year,
at the end of each odd-numbered month.
Subscription information can be found
on page four.

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KEYSTONE is the journal of Christian Home Schoolers of New Zealand, a part of the Home Education Foundation, a Charitable Trust established to promote the concept of home education to the Christian community and beyond.

KEYSTONE is intended to inform, challenge, encourage and inspire. The Christian faith is being undervalued. Christianity alone is fully able to present a world view that is comprehensive, coherent, consistent and complete.

Committed to scholarship, the free exchange of ideas and the need to stimulate reasonable debate

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*The fear of the LORD is the
beginning of wisdom,
a good understanding have all those
who do His commandments.
— Psalm 111:10*

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It was Henry R. Van Til, in The Calvinistic Concept of Culture (1959) who stated that "culture" is religion externalised. Look at the expressions of our culture today: hatred, violence, murder, infanticide, anti-Christianity, immorality, drugs and other crimes. The religion, the faith which our popular culture externalises is demonic.

Oh, Lord, please give us the wisdom and vision to home educate our children for Your Glory. May they not only live and work honourably as Christ-like role models in the midst of this crooked and perverse generation but also fearlessly, tirelessly, lovingly offer them Your Words of eternal life.

Editorial



As Editor I've never set out to have a "theme" for any particular issue of *Keystone*, but often it has turned out to have a theme. Certainly this issue has a theme: world views, probably since a lot of world view related material has been coming our way recently. And it seems to me that the bottom line for Christian home educators is that they have their worldview sorted out. This entails being able to articulate what you believe, to self-consciously understand what most of your important presuppositions are, and to look inside your own heart and mind and Biblically evaluate the thought processes and priority-ranking activities that go on in there. Obviously none of us can do this perfectly, but as in all things we should strive to do our best.

It is important, not just because we are Christians in a fallen world, but especially because we are aiming to train up our children to be even more committed Christians in a world that seems to have fallen even further, to ensure we are presenting concepts wherein Christ is Lord. If we present ideas as if they are neutral, as if they do not need to confess Jesus Christ as Lord, these ideas are of necessity denying Him. "[E]very spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist." — I John 4:3.

The "secular" school system, the Darwinian science community and the social policy planners in our "pluralist" society have been encouraging the population to believe that they need to take a neutral or non-religious approach to education, science and social welfare for reasons of natural justice, otherwise one group is forcing its religious views on all the others. Having manipulated Christians into this way of thinking that a neutral approach is to be desired, the devil now has the field to himself to work his evil. And as Carol Munroe's article in our new column "World Views in Focus" (page 21) demonstrates, the reality of such a concession by Christians is to see the man-centred religious views of secular humanism, rather than those of Christianity, forced onto everyone. There is no neutrality in the entire universe, for Jesus Christ is Lord of all. To assert neutrality is to assert hostility against Christ. "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad." — Matthew 12:30.

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Imagine This Happening to You

One Sunday morning during service, a 2,000 member congregation is surprised to see two men enter, both covered from head to toe in black and carrying sub-machine guns. One of the men proclaims, "Anyone willing to take a bullet for Christ remain where you are." Chaos ensues and most of the congregation flees. Out of the 2,000 there only remain around 20. The man who had spoken takes off his hood, looks at the preacher and says, "Okay Pastor, now that all the hypocrites are gone, begin your service. Have a nice day!" And the two men turn and walk out.

Do you see yourself remaining in the congregation, willing to take a bullet for Christ? Oh, yeah? Well, the next time your workmate or neighbour blasphemes, how about you take him to one side privately and say, gently and reverently, "One day Almighty God in heaven is going to ask you to explain why you used His Son's name as a cuss word. Please, Friend, give some thought to Judgment Day." Should be a piece of cake.

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

The Home Education Foundation is a charitable trust established to serve, promote and strengthen the home education community in New Zealand. Since November 1998 the Foundation has contracted Craig & Barbara Smith (whose six children are all totally home educated) to serve the home education community full-time. They are continuing to build on their volunteer work since 1986 in the areas of publishing (such as *Keystone* and *TEACH Bulletin*), counselling, correspondence with politicians and educationalists, lobbying, researching issues of concern to home educators, running National Leadership Forums (annually since 1996) and National Christian Home Education Conferences (six since 1987), initiating the National Home Education Awareness Week, moderating five home education email discussion groups, producing media releases, speaking at local seminars, hosting overseas speaker tours, and networking among local support groups and with overseas home schooling organisations. Their efforts are conducted under the eye of the Home Education Foundation's Trustees and a Board of Reference which represents 21 locations all over New Zealand.

The Home Education Foundation, Christian Home Schoolers of New Zealand and the projects they take on are supported entirely by home educators subscribing to *Keystone* and/or *TEACH Bulletin*, investing in a TimeChart or making tax-deductible donations either by cheque, credit card or by automatic bank payment (ask us for a form). The Foundation can also be supported through Telecom and Clear who both give a percentage (5% & 2.5% respectively) of your toll bill to the Foundation, *painlessly and without costing you an extra cent!* Telecom subscribers can ring 0800 724 665 and ask to support the Home Education Foundation, ph. (06) 357-4399, through Telecom's "School Connection" Programme. Clear subscribers can ring 0508 888 800 and ask to support the Home Education Foundation, ph. (06) 357-4399, through Clear's "Friends of the School" Programme. Please ring today!

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Feature Family



Phil & Jenny van der Mespel of Algies Bay

Jen: What can you learn when you are living in a van, travelling constantly, and have no text books or work books with you? A lot! And it is much more fun!!!

“Socialisation -- how are the children going to learn how to get along well with others?” asked a very concerned, grandmotherly friend in the UK who had never heard of home education before. I didn’t answer her, but we continued to talk. A few sentences later she commented, “You’ve got lovely children, and they get on so well with such a variety of people -- adults and children.” I just smiled, and she realised she had answered her own objections.

Another friend who also had no experience or contact with home education asked, “What about text books -- how are you going to keep up with the schools?” A year later, when we spoke of packing up everything, living in a van and travelling around Europe, she changed her tune, “You won’t need to take school books with you, they’ll learn so much.”

Home educating for us has included living under some rather “extreme” conditions -- 4 people living 6 months in a van slightly larger than a Mitsubishi L300!

So to some of our history: we had always wanted to travel and realised that we would drive the Correspondence School dizzy if our future children were to remain with us as we travelled around the nether regions of the Pacific in a yacht. Ah-ha! Home schooling was it! We’d met some Americans who were cruising (living and travelling in a boat), and their children were “real” children with a sense of fun, humour, logical thinkers, helpful, not spoiled brats -- this looked like what we were after.

Yet when it came time to actually start in England, we found we had fallen into the normal mode of thinking: “Which school is going to suit Anita best?” “Is a two room village school more friendly?” and “Will the children be taught better?”... you get the idea. Somewhere along the line the penny dropped, and we recalled our dreams to educate Anita and Joel at home, freeing us up to enjoy life as it came at us, not fitting it into boxes and timetables. Our start was made with “homework” books from the stationers, graduating to Rod and Staff curriculum when the homework books took unexplained leaps, assuming the children were only practising at home. Rod and Staff is published by American Mennonites, and one of its appeals was the lack of American culture; another was the use of realistic illustrations rather than cutesy cartoons. It is a pleasure to work with materials using our relationship with the Lord as the baseline, rather than militant

humanism. And yet, over time we found ourselves using the “school books” less and less, while spending more time immersed in real life -- how strange? Not at all -- my eventual response to this trend is that when I panic and think, “what about xyz?” (some school subject or other), I step back and look for *why* that subject is taught: Home Economics to make sure school leavers can cook and care for themselves -- so why not involve the children in the everyday life of the family, and so on. A bonus in this approach is seeing the children recognising that they are an important part of the functioning of our family -- not just an added extra.

Phil: Two days before Christmas 1997 I was made redundant -- God is great at timing. Were we worried? No! We were enjoying a great Christmas get together with our good friends near Doncaster, England. Then we had an absolutely fantastic few days touring Holland in two car loads by a series of day-trips, with Dutch relatives. We thought that it would be nice to have a quick peep at a few spots around the Continent. Once we decided we could possibly afford to do it, we soon recognised we couldn’t afford not to.

With all the van fitting (curtains, stereo, mattresses, etc.) going on, we hadn’t actually set ourselves a departure date. Then one day we received notification from the landlord’s agents that the rent was to increase. Well, that was it; we had a deadline!

Phil wrote at the time, “The biggest adventure of our lives looms ahead. The kids can’t wait, they adore the van. The preparation is intense, trying to think 6-8 months ahead, and for every likely situation in between. It could be likened to preparing a yacht for an extended ocean cruise. Some of the locals are dumbfounded. Are we going to keep the house on, they ask. That’s like asking the ocean sailor where he anchors at night! The unconscious urge to find security.”

We took the “tube” (underground railway) to explore the museums of London. There are hundreds of them, but the British Museum and Museum of Natural History had several high recommendations. We wormed our way through packs of school kids in the first one to see mummies, statues, jewellery, and everything else from the civilisations of the Egyptians, Greeks, Romans and others from thousands of years ago. It was extensive and fatiguing but free! Mummies in rooms full of real Egyptian artefacts are yucky -- be aware of the spiritual nature of things and pray for the Lord’s protection. The Natural History Museum was something completely different. This was very user-friendly. In here are lots of buttons to press, levers to pull, and touching many displays is welcomed. Dinosaurs weren’t such a big deal, though the display is very good: our kids haven’t seen the relevant movies.

Our first night “on the road” and we got stuck in the mud. Well it was just a soft verge on a little lane really, but it was a good place to spend the night. We spent about five days zigzagging through the very scenic Peak District. Over hundreds of years successive generations of farmers have cleared the fields of stones

and rock and built beautiful walls as fences. Rolling hills and lush green valleys all divided up by those ancient walls create the memorable impression of English countryside. It was a good time of sorting and adjusting to some of the confinements of our new lifestyle. It's the same when just starting the home education journey: don't do too much too soon; enjoy the scenery, learn to enjoy each other's constant company.

One morning we had a beautiful surprise. We had camped on Olivers Mount overlooking the North Sea above Scarborough, and when we awoke there was bright sun shine and 3 inches of snow! It was nearly mid-April and there was more snow than we'd seen all winter.

We headed up into the Lake District, and there met a lady who was in tears of joy at discovering where we were from, as her best friends had moved to the Bullock Track in Mahurangi West, New Zealand. Later we thoroughly enjoyed the working bobbin mill guided tour just as it functioned some 150 years ago. The men there made a couple of wooden bobbins especially for Anita and Joel, and you can be sure that the children still remember that visit.

Belfast is largely full of ordinary folk with ordinary jobs in ordinary lives. Then there are a few lunatics thrown in. We drove through the centre of the city, which has a few nice bits, and then headed out through some suburbs. These were different -- on the ends of the terrace blocks were huge, gruesome war murals.... hair-raising. There seemed to be an abundance of barbed wire about the place, several apartment blocks had plywood sheets for windows, even motorcycle police wear guns. Also very noticeable were the churches -- they have enormous signs at each church stating who they are, like they're running for some political office or something. Northern Ireland boasts more churches per head of capita than any other nation on the planet, and none of them are empty.

Francis Cunningham has lived in the same house for his 57 years. For 40 years he used the front section of the house as the town's grocery store. Now 8 bedrooms are rented out to the students of the nearby catering and tourism college. When we met Francis and Mary they had been praying for quite some time for a carpenter/decorator as all the local tradesmen are caught up in the current building boom. They were astounded that God would meet their need all the way from New Zealand via England. We were very welcomed, and I spent 3 weeks redecorating and fitting new fire doors and hardware. It was a major blessing to them and a generous provision for us. Jenny took Anita ahead in her schoolwork in leaps and bounds. Joel got more enthused and started taking his projects a lot more seriously. We slept in "our place" (the van) and dined with the Cunningham's. And so we had a marvellous time in Killybegs, Ireland's busiest fishing port.

The Irish have a wonderful sense of humour -- it is absolutely hilarious to listen to one Irishman telling his

brother Irish jokes! And we found that a grocery store, a hardware store, a post office and a funeral home can all be pubs in Ireland.

We worked our way around most of the Irish coastline in awe and delight at the captivating scenery. Though there seemed to be enough houses around, the roads were empty -- we had whole beaches and view points to ourselves. The traffic, what there was of it, seemed to congregate around the local pubs, and often places of interest were left open after-hours without charge.

Before crossing the southern Irish Sea we met Pat Murphy; he may seem to be just an ordinary bloke, but in the 6 years since his dramatic conversion he has been mightily used in reconciliation and healing the peoples of his nation. It was precious to me that just as we were about to depart this island, God again revealed His immense love for the peoples of the Earth. Everywhere we went through Ireland, we somehow met people that are vibrant in living out their Christian faith. We learnt so much about the history and people of that beautiful land. The scenery belies the horrid, violent history and current confusion. Even today human sacrifice continues. We knew we were privileged to meet with these folk who had, by God's grace, an understanding and a heart to pray through these difficult times. God is moving in Ireland far more than the media would ever let on, and we have heard many, many wonderful testimonies of His powerful love.

I'd envisioned Wales, especially in the south, to be heavily industrial with little scenic value. How wrong! We delighted in steep, steep roads that took us into one valley after another. One place we stopped the night was next to a small reservoir in the wilderness of Exmoor. In the morning we were woken by "bumpings" against the van and discovered we were surrounded by wild Exmoor ponies and numerous foals.

Jen and I had very much a sense that the next part of our travel through Europe was going to be quite different to previous excursions, with more a sense of exploring and vacation than of opportunities for service. We discussed a course through the Continent which we left very flexible to time and money.

The French village of Bayeux is a pretty little medieval town which is famed for an enormous 80 metre long tapestry -- embroidery actually. It is a fantastic chronological depiction of the events leading up to and including the Battle of Hastings in 1066. It has a slight bias to the English, largely unrealised by the French, but then it was produced by English monks! It was a history lesson just a little over Joel's head, but we enjoyed it all the same as we had visited the site of the battle (at Battle, near Hastings in southern England), and learnt much of the history from the English side. Small children enjoy looking at the pictures, especially if the "interesting" bits are pointed out or suggestions made about things to look for; older ones are awe-struck by the size and work involved, then become interested in the story depicted. Bayeux is also famed

(Continued on page 24)

The Faith of Us Fathers

Jesus is Lord: Lord of *All* and for *All* Time

by Craig Smith

(The following is an email conversation with a friend who sends his children to state schools. My friend's words are in *italics*.)

We still need reminding from time to time... "The end of all things is near; therefore be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer." 1 Peter 4:7 "Watch and pray".

Reminding, yes, but too many folks I've met seem to have allowed this to become a form of escapism from this present world, from dealing with the real issues all around us. The whole area of end times is not an open and shut case, but is fraught with all kinds of controversy. I personally think it comes down to two concepts: be constantly ready, confessed up to date, and at peace with all men, as far as it is possible with you personally; and also preparing yourself and your children as if the Lord were not coming back for another 100 years. It's a "both/and" scenario rather than an "either/or" deal. If I was convinced the Lord was definitely going to return in my lifetime, I would never have gotten married, that's for sure. I Corinthians 7 talks about that. But I believe He should be Lord of all no matter when He returns....that's why we have always been keen on overseas missions as well as a thoroughly Christian education at home. You cannot send people overseas as on-fire Christians who have been trained six hours a day by the agents of paganism in our public schools; the idea is laughable.

A disadvantage, but God is mightily able to heal and change peoples hearts, minds and souls.

So why should we cause our children to be hurt so that God has to heal and change them? Why don't we give them the advantage of a consistent Christian upbringing and training and allow God to make them into Christian witnesses the like of which the world has not seen since Whitfield, Wesley, Edwards and others who were thoroughly trained and nurtured in the faith since childhood.

OK, schools are dangerous, but so are the roads. By prayer and the grace of God they can be protected.

We don't put our children on the roads and pray for God's protection. We teach them to avoid the roads and cross them safely. We don't teach them to play with fire or mess around with hot elements or walk right on the edges of cliffs so that we can pray for God to

protect them. No. *We ourselves* take all the steps we can to protect them from the dangers *we know* exist and then pray that God will protect them from those unseen dangers and those dangers we cannot personally deal with....this is our obvious duty and responsibility as parents. It *is* easy and *within* our power to remove them from the anti-Christian, thoroughly secular state school environment they sit in for hours every day and to replace the secular and political indoctrination they are fed while sitting in that environment with the Biblically oriented and Scripturally based truths they will need to know to take dominion of this world physically as He commanded us in Genesis 1:28 and spiritually as He commanded in Matthew 28:18-20 and II Corinthians 5:17-20. So why don't we do it? Do the Scriptures tell us anywhere that our children will be better Christians, more healthy spiritually, by being trained up in the enemy's camp?

I know that as Christians we should try to alter/influence things. We can't do it by force, and the vote is too small (pity about the Christian Coalition)..., the only lasting way is by changing hearts.

Amen! Salvation is through Regeneration, not Revolution. (Conversions through the message and ministry of the Gospel, not by force or political activity....as if conversions could happen like this anyway.) However, if politics is not an inherently immoral activity, in the way that running a brothel is an inherently immoral activity, then it is right and proper for Christians to be involved, according to their calling from the Lord, endeavouring to bring the principles of God's word to bear upon the public policies of the nation. I mean, the alternative is just to abandon the whole thing to the devil. And why do that?

The devil is "the ruler of this world", but his rule is limited to whatever God's will allows and is also limited by the time he has been given. God is Lord of all. What He says goes. He allows the devil's "rule" for His ultimate good purposes.

I'm not satisfied that the "ruler of this world" is the devil. The early Christians were tortured and executed because they would not compromise on the tiny declaration, "Jesus is Lord". They only had to say, "Caesar is lord", put some incense on the altar, and they were free to go. But they instead insisted that Caesar would one day bow the knee before the Lord Jesus Christ, that Caesar would be answerable to how he executed his responsibilities while in the flesh, on the earth. That is to say, the Christians who were tossed to the lions believed very much that Jesus is ruler of this world, *now*, as well as ruler of the next. Can you find a Scripture to support your idea?

I'm happy to report that I can't find a verse to support it after all. The closest is that he is the "ruler of the power of the air" (Eph 2:2). In fact even now, "Jesus Christ is the ruler of the kings of the earth" (Rev 1:5).

Amen, brother! Amen!! Actually John makes three statements close together which indicate that maybe the devil *was* prince of the world to some degree, but that

Jesus ended that: John 12:31, 14:30 and 16:11. The Lord also indicates that He was entering the strong man's -- that is, the devil's -- house and plundering it, first binding the strong man! (See Matthew 12:29, Mark 3:27 and Luke 11:21-22 and their contexts.) Yes, the devil does appear to hold sway over many (I John 5:19), but it is only through deceit and the fact that the unregenerate heart has a tendency to lean Satan's way. In Matthew 4 and especially Luke 4:5-6 the devil is quoted as saying he could give the kingdoms of the world to Jesus, for they had been given to him (the devil) to do as he would. Now I'm sorry, but I'm really sceptical at this point, for the Scripture tells me that the devil is a liar and the father of all lies and that there is no truth in him (John 8:44). I'm convinced he was telling Jesus a whopper in these passages.

No, the whole idea of the devil being ruler of this earth gives too much power and glory and honour to the devil, it seems to me. He deserves none. He will get none from me. He's just a squatter here, one who knows his time is short. To Jesus *alone* is the power and glory and honour and dominion now and forevermore. Amen.

And anyway, He Who is in us is greater than he who is in the world (I John 4:4). I know the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour (I Peter 5:8), but the Scripture tells me I need only *resist* the devil and he will flee from me (I Peter 5:9). What have I to fear from him? Nothing. What have I to fear from the even less powerful schemes of men? Even less than that. As the Scripture says, who is there to harm you if you are zealous for good works (I Peter 3:13)? And as earlier saints have said, as long as we are walking in the will of the Lord and until the Lord plans for us to go, we are effectively immortal!

I remember people at church used to be fond of saying, "If Jesus is not Lord *of* all He is not Lord *at* all".

What verse is that? Anyway, I think this means Jesus being Lord of all areas of a person's life. Nothing to do with the world.

Oooohhh...I reckon you may have just compromised the Lordship of Jesus Christ. There are plenty of verses that emphatically teach the Lordship of Christ over every atom in the universe. I mean, isn't the earth the Lord's and the fullness thereof (Psalm 24:1)? Were not all things created in Him, through Him and for Him, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities (Colossians 1:16)? Does He not uphold all things by His word of power (Hebrews 1:3)? How about the Great Commission: "*All* authority in heaven and earth has been given to Me. Go therefore..." (Matthew 28:18) Sounds pretty inclusive to me. So are you saying that as long as I keep my personal life

free from worldliness, the world can go where it will, I don't care, 'cause Jesus and I have this wonderful relationship? So if the world includes the schools, is it ok to send our kids to institutions which by law must be anti-Christian (Section 77 of the Education Act 1964, still in force, says all instruction must be entirely of a secular character, and secular is taken to mean without any religious instruction or observance...interpreted to mean Christian instruction or observance, for as we both know, occultic instruction and instruction in immorality is fully accepted)? Are you saying that our little ones, for whom Christ died, can be immersed in a grossly secular environment everyday of the week and yet somehow it is not a challenge to Christ's rightful dominion in every area of their lives, not to mention our Christian duty as parents that our children's every thought be taken captive to obey Christ (II Corinthians 10:5)?

My parents had a hands-off approach to parenting, wanting us to decide things for ourselves. I think they read Dr Spock. It seems some Christians have a similar godless approach. When our Genevieve was 11, the Sunday school teacher was doing a lesson about choices. He told the whole class (it was all printed in the lessons) that they had choices to steal or not to steal, to obey their parents or not to obey their parents, to go to church or not to go to church, to sleep around or not to sleep around. These were 11 year old children, remember. Some of us parents were hopping mad at

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some of this stuff. But Genevieve went to the heart of the matter: she told the teacher that as Christians they should never even be given such options. *Of course* we Christians *don't* have such choices, she said. It's a lie to say that we do, for where God has spoken, the issue is settled. Christians don't have choices because they are supposed to be *slaves* of their Master, Jesus Christ, and He is supposed to be their *Lord*. (I was impressed with her answer and clarity of thought: I couldn't see or think past the reference about kids having the choice to sleep around or not.)

Ultimately they do choose for themselves. We can help them a very great deal with wise guidance and advice.

The point Genevieve was making was, "Why focus a child's attention on the things he *shouldn't* do and then tell him he has a choice to do that? Why not major on all the *right* things to do, which so few people seem to be doing anyway, and keep reinforcing the message that Jesus -- including everything He commands us to do -- is *the only way*?" Why do we keep compromising our message, giving young, impressionable minds (who are actually looking to us adults for clear, unambiguous guidance) mixed messages that, well, we would *like* them to follow Jesus, but we know they will be drawn to this and to that and will want to experiment around a bit, but one day we're sure they'll want to come back, so why don't they just decide to stay here with us, please? Heck, I don't have to tell my children about the sin in the world: they see it all the time, in every TV show, newspaper, magazine, radio show, movie....and they experience sin in their hearts all the time. I don't have to reinforce that message; I need to reinforce the Lord's message and obedience to His word. The Lord told us to love Him with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength. Ain't much left over for messing around in other areas, I reckon. So why do we say, "You get to choose", when the Lord *commands* all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30) and to love and serve and obey Him with everything we've got? If I am sounding an indistinct note on the bugle of warning, who is the Lord going to hold responsible? Yeah, *me*! And this is double so with my children, for they would not be on this earth if it had not been for a deliberate act on my part. As fathers we men perform a conscientious, willful, both-eyes-open act, one that we desired and strove to do...and obviously accomplished....which put our children on this earth. I don't believe we can now hold them at arm's length or remove ourselves even the slightest and say, "Well they ultimately have to choose for themselves". For crying out loud, I will be doing all I can to totally bias my children a certain way, to completely bend their hearts and minds and wills to move only in one direction -- toward submission to Christ -- knowing only too well how much their own natural sinfulness, inherited from me, will be easy to work in the hands of the devil. So I will not do anything to make the devil's job any easier than it already is. No, sir!!

Christians have both the old and a new nature. Sometimes we "give in" to the old nature. Do you not call that a choice? Only robots have no choice.

We adults, or perhaps I'd better say "I", give in because I am so used to sinning. But generally we have been sinning since the day we were born. If we were raised in nominally Christian homes, we were never taught to submit our sinful natures to Christ, to allow Him to crucify the old nature on the cross, to think His thoughts after Him. No, in nominally Christian homes we were taught to be our own bosses, to do our own thing, be master of our own fate, exactly the same as nonChristians, but with this difference: we had to act within a certain prescribed code of acceptability. Our minds and hearts were still in rebellion against God, but we simply did not manifest it by participating in (all of) the gross sins of others round about us. But we were headed in the same direction....straight to hell.

So then we got converted to Christ. *Our* children are being reared in Christ-honouring homes, a far cry from our own experience. We should not expect the same kind of thing from them as what the world got from us. No, their lives *should be miles different* from our own at their age. In fact, if they were to be completely and consistently trained according to Biblical standards (something my past disqualifies me from doing, for I have all this garbage left over from my nonChristian days), but if my children *were* so raised, I believe they would be like nothing we have ever seen on this earth in our lifetimes. Now, Lord willing, my grandchildren and my great-grandchildren should *really* be something, for they will be starting on a much taller and far more solid foundation than what I had. My children will stand on my shoulders, my grandchildren on their shoulders and so on. It would be too easy for me to allow my children to grow up into the Christian mediocrity that was the only option given me as a child. No way! My wife and I have always intended that they be launched into an orbit much higher than that.

Why settle for anything less? Why make it easy for them to choose second best? No, hang on, choosing sin is not second best....it is death. Why make it easy for my children to choose death by making them used to sinful and compromised standards all around them all the time, by allowing them *not* to be shocked by it, by not hating it myself with such a passion that they are likewise horrified by any association with it? Why not make them *love* righteousness (as far as we are able, by God's grace) and be so uncomfortable and ill-at-ease in the tents of the wicked that they flee from it....just as the Scripture tells them to do (I Timothy 6:11, II Timothy 2:22)? And yet all this time we must also be preparing them for an adult life lived in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation to whom they are to be offering the words of eternal life.

As Christian home educators it seems to me our task is not just to train up our children so that they can cope with this sin-cursed and fallen world, remaining faithful until the Lord's return. No. The Gospel would seem to demand that our children make

(Continued on page 10)

disciples of all nations, going as ambassadors of Christ, preaching a message of reconciliation and personally ministering reconciliation in all that they do. That is to say, they will be turning the world upside down! Now that's the kind of task, long-term and with objects in view such as seeing the king of Saudi Arabia so soundly converted he influences much of the Muslim world to do the same.....that is the kind of thing we men can really sink our teeth into. Right dads? Let's get to and do it!

Homeschooling & Preschoolers: Do They Mix?

by Sharon Drinnan

The book basically deals with Homeschooling when you have preschoolers. It is split into 3 sections. The first deals with organising your home

(getting the housework done), organising when a baby is arriving, involving your preschoolers in your school, going with lifes ups and downs, etc. The second deals with ways to avoid burnout and stress through belonging to a support group, setting realistic limitations, recognising your own needs, etc. The third is a list by subject of ideas you can do with your preschoolers that are inexpensive and use materials found mostly at home. It has some of my own amusing stories in there as well! By Gods grace, it has been favourably received so far, with some non-homeschool mums buying copies too! The ideas work well with preschoolers whether you homeschool or not.

Its cost is \$10 +\$4 for P&P

Order from: Sharon Drinnan, 171 Ara-kotinga Road, Brookby, RD 1, Manurewa, Auckland and include a cheque for \$14. If you would like to speak with us first before purchasing the book (manual really) you can email us at drinnan.family@actrix.co.nz or ring on (09) 530-8119.

Learning Disabilities



The Winning Of Little Lynny (Part 2)

By Tom and Sherry Bushnell

Lynny had been with us for 2 years total now. Our family stopped taking Lynny's anti-social behavior personally. She had no spontaneous expressive verbal language, only echolalia. Nor did we feel she understood what we said. She would fixate on sounds or "words" for days, "cursing" under her breath in nonsense phrases over and over. We learned to steel ourselves to do what was good for Lynny despite her protests and incomprehension.

We started using Biblical child training even if we felt it wasn't working that day. We kept at it. We lovingly, consistently spanked her for obnoxious behavior and for pouting, crying or screaming to get her way. We gave her a very simple verbal response that she was to use instead of screaming. At times we would wrap Lynny up tightly in a blanket like a sausage. She seemed to like this and would stop screaming and start looking around.

We taught Lynny to "come". This active choice to obey was a big step for our independent, "I don't need anybody," little girl. She could not walk, but had learned to scoot on her bottom, pulling her useless legs along with her good right arm. It took several days to learn to "come". She resented having to move when we wanted her to. Even if our family tried to make it fun she became angry and pouted. We spanked her just like we would any of our other children with a wrong attitude. She did not respond to our loving verbal praise, gentle pats or hugs. Instead she would start pouting all over again. We learned to use food or simple toys for reward.

Tom was home full time by now, running NATHHAN. This enabled us to truly operate in "team parenting". It was the secret for our family. We were able to be very consistent, giving Lynny the amount of daily training she needed along with the rest of our crew of 8 children, ages 12 to new-born Sheraya.

Lynny was 4 1/2. Life settled into a flexible routine with less emotional stress. Our whole family was on our first NATHHAN trip down the west coast. Visiting a family for a couple days, we decided to try Lynny in their swing. She really seemed to enjoy it, actually smiling for real. Each time I lifted her up letting her go, I would say, "Go!" I stopped her momentarily to talk to our friend, suspending Lynny in mid air. Out of this silent girl's mouth came the word, "Go!" I let her go and stood there shocked. We played this game for another 15 minutes, with Lynny saying "Go," just before I let her go.

Her speech snowballed quickly. Within 1 year she was

obedient to the Lord and bring Lynny back home. Yes, leaving Lynny back east would have solved a very difficult life situation for us right then. Just as abortion has long reaching effects on the hearts of the mother and father after the baby is dead, so we feared the long reaching effect in our hearts if we were disobedient to God by leaving Lynny.

Life did get easier. We had peace in our hearts about what we were doing. The work load did not get easier at first, but we were resolved. We wish we would have had the foresight to ask a family to take her for a while until we could get our hearts straightened out. Perhaps we needed the finality of leaving her so far away to see how we had been struggling against the Lord's will for our lives and Lynny's.

It took a bit of adjustment to the idea that we had not gotten what we ordered from the agency. We know it wasn't entirely their fault and that the Lord had obviously allowed it. God knew we needed to cope with cerebral palsy and autism, despite our fears, to be able to help NATHHAN families. Up till then, our ideas about adopting and special needs had been pretty rosy —sure anybody should adopt a needy child! Our tune has changed. Only adopt a damaged child if you are willing to be pruned, and made to walk through the fire of refinement. You will grow along with your new child.

If the Lord is calling you to take in an orphan, perhaps this story will assure you that it is work, but *very* rewarding. The hardest adjustments are for those of us who are not prepared for the emotional aspect of seeing ourselves in a new light. The stress and relentless presence of a damaged child can bring out sin habits and tendencies that we never thought we had. Truly the Lord has used Lynny to help purify our hearts, making us more useful to Him.

He has filled Lynny's life and ours with joy, turning a really sorrowful situation into a testimony of His greatness. Only He can do that!

(From NATHHAN News, NATIONAL cHallenged Homeschoolers Associated Network, Vol. 9, No. 2, Winter 2000/2001, a Christian non-profit organisation dedicated to providing encouragement to families homeschooling special needs children in ways that glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. NATHHAN News, published quarterly, PO Box 39, Porthill, ID 83853, USA, ph. (253) 857-4257, nathanews@aol.com, www.nathhan.com, has an annual subscription rate of US \$25.)

Bits of Books



The Duties of Parents (Part 3)

John Charles Ryle
of Liverpool, 1816-1900

Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it.—Proverbs 22:6

VIII. Train them to habits of diligence, and regularity about public means of grace.

Tell them of the duty and privilege of going to the house of God, and joining in the prayers of the congregation. Tell them that wherever the Lord's people are gathered together, there the Lord Jesus is present in an especial manner, and that those who absent themselves must expect, like the Apostle Thomas, to miss a blessing. Tell them of the importance of hearing the Word preached, and that it is God's ordinance for converting, sanctifying, and building up the souls of men. Tell them how the Apostle Paul enjoins us not "to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is" (Hebrews 10:25); but to exhort one another, to stir one another up to it, and so much the more as we see the day approaching.

I call it a sad sight in a church when nobody comes up to the Lord's table but the elderly people, and the young men and the young women all turn away. But I call it a sadder sight still when no children are to be seen in a church, excepting those who come to the Sunday School, and are obliged to attend. Let none of this guilt lie at your doors. There are many boys and girls in every parish, besides those who come to school, and you who are their parents and friends should see to it that they come with you to church.

Do not allow them to grow up with a habit of making vain excuses for not coming. Give them plainly to understand, that so long as they are under your roof it is the rule of your house for every one in health to honour the Lord's house upon the Lord's day, and that you reckon the Sabbath-breaker to be a murderer of his own soul.

See to it too, if it can be so arranged, that your children go with you to church, and sit near you when they are there. To go to church is one thing, but to behave well at church is quite another. And believe me, there is no security for good behaviour like that of having them under your own eye.

The minds of young people are easily drawn aside, and their attention lost, and every possible means should be used to counteract this. I do not like to see them coming to church by themselves, — they often get into bad company by the way, and so learn more evil on the

Lord's day than in all the rest of the week. Neither do I like to see what I call "a young people's corner" in a church. They often catch habits of inattention and irreverence there, which it takes years to unlearn, if ever they are unlearned at all. What I like to see is a whole family sitting together, old and young, side by side,—men, women, and children, serving God according to their households.

But there are some who say that it is useless to urge children to attend means of grace, because they cannot understand them.

I would not have you listen to such reasoning. I find no such doctrine in the Old Testament. When Moses goes before Pharaoh (Exodus 10:9), I observe he says, "We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters: for we must hold a feast unto the Lord." When Joshua read the law (Joshua 8:35), I observe, "There was not a word which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them." "Thrice in the year," says Exodus 34:23, "shall all your men — children appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel." And when I turn to the New Testament, I find children mentioned there as partaking in public acts of religion as well as in the Old. When Paul was leaving the disciples at Tyre for the last time, I find it said (Acts 21:5), "They all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed."

Samuel, in the days of his childhood, appears to have ministered unto the Lord some time before he really knew Him. "Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him" (I Samuel 3:7). The Apostles themselves do not seem to have understood all that our Lord said at the time that it was spoken: "These things understood not His disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of Him" (John 12:16).

Parents, comfort your minds with these examples. Be not cast down because your children see not the full value of the means of grace now. Only train them up to a habit of regular attendance. Set it before their minds as a high, holy, and solemn duty, and believe me, the day will very likely come when they will bless you for your deed.

IX. Train them to a habit of faith.

I mean by this, you should train them up to believe what you say. You should try to make them feel confidence in your judgment, and respect your opinions, as better than their own. You should accustom them to think that, when you say a thing is bad for them, it must be bad, and when you say it is good for them, it must be good; that your knowledge, in short, is better than their own, and that they may rely implicitly on your word. Teach them to feel that what they know not now, they will probably know hereafter, and to be satisfied there is a reason and a needs-be for everything

you require them to do.

Who indeed can describe the blessedness of a real spirit of faith? Or rather, who can tell the misery that unbelief has brought upon the world? Unbelief made Eve eat the forbidden fruit, — she doubted the truth of God's word: "Ye shall surely die." Unbelief made the old world reject Noah's warning, and so perish in sin. Unbelief kept Israel in the wilderness, — it was the bar that kept them from entering the promised land. Unbelief made the Jews crucify the Lord of glory, — they believed not the voice of Moses and the prophets, though read to them every day. And unbelief is the reigning sin of man's heart down to this very hour, — unbelief in God's promises, — unbelief in God's threatenings, — unbelief in our own sinfulness, — unbelief in our own danger, — unbelief in everything that runs counter to the pride and worldliness of our evil hearts. Reader, you train your children to little purpose if you do not train them to a habit of implicit faith, — faith in their parents' word, confidence that what their parents say must be right.

I have heard it said by some, that you should require nothing of children which they cannot understand that you should explain and give a reason for everything you desire them to do. I warn you solemnly against such a notion. I tell you plainly, I think it an unsound and rotten principle. No doubt it is absurd to make a mystery of everything you do, and there are many things which it is well to explain to children, in order that they may see that they are reasonable and wise. But to bring them up with the idea that they must take nothing on trust, that they, with their weak and imperfect understandings, must have the "why" and the "wherefore" made clear to them at every step they take, — this is indeed a fearful mistake, and likely to have the worst effect on their minds.

Reason with your child if you are so disposed, at certain times, but never forget to keep him in mind (if you really love him) that he is but a child after all, — that he thinks as a child, he understands as a child, and therefore must not expect to know the reason of everything at once.

Set before him the example of Isaac, in the day when Abraham took him to offer him on Mount Moriah (Genesis 22). He asked his father that single question, "Where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?" and he got no answer but this, "God will provide Himself a lamb." How, or where, or whence, or in what manner, or by what means, — all this Isaac was not told; but the answer was enough. He believed that it would be well, because his father said so, and he was content.

Tell your children, too, that we must all be learners in our beginnings, that there is an alphabet to be mastered in every kind of knowledge, — that the best horse in the world had need once to be broken, — that a day will come when they will see the wisdom of all your training. But in the meantime if you say a thing is right, it must be enough for them, — they must believe you, and be content.

Parents, if any point in training is important, it is this. I charge you by the affection you have to your children, use every means to train them up to a habit of faith.

X. Train them remembering continually how God trains His children.

The Bible tells us that God has an elect people, — a family in this world. All poor sinners who have been convinced of sin, and fled to Jesus for peace, make up that family. All of us who really believe on Christ for salvation are its members.

Now God the Father is ever training the members of this family for their everlasting abode with Him in heaven. He acts as a husbandman pruning his vines, that they may bear more fruit. He knows the character of each of us, — our besetting sins, — our weaknesses, — our peculiar infirmities, — our special wants. He knows our works and where we dwell, who are our companions in life, and what are our trials, what our temptations, and what are our privileges. He knows all these things, and is ever ordering all for our good. He allots to each of us, in His providence, the very things we need, in order to bear the most fruit, — as much of sunshine as we can stand, and as much of rain, — as much of bitter things as we can bear, and as much of sweet. Reader, if you would train your children wisely, mark well how God the Father trains His. He doeth all things well; the plan which He adopts must be right.

See, then, how many things there are which God withholds from His children. Few could be found, I suspect, among them who have not had desires which He has never been pleased to fulfil. There has often been some one thing they wanted to attain, and yet there has always been some barrier to prevent attainment. It has been just as if God was placing it above our reach, and saying, "This is not good for you; this must not be." Moses desired exceedingly to cross over Jordan, and see the goodly land of promise; but you will remember his desire was never granted.

See, too, how often God leads His people by ways which seem dark and mysterious to our eyes. We cannot see the meaning of all His dealings with us; we cannot see the reasonableness of the path in which our feet are treading. Sometimes so many trials have assailed us, — so many difficulties encompassed us, — that we have not been able to discover the needs-be of it all. It has been just as if our Father was taking us by the hand into a dark place and saying, "Ask no questions, but follow Me."

There was a direct road from Egypt to Canaan, yet Israel was not led into it; but round, through the wilderness. And this seemed hard at the time. "The soul of the people," we are told, "was much discouraged because of the way" (Exodus 13:17; Numbers 21:4).

See, also, how often God chastens His people with trial and affliction. He sends them crosses and disappointments; He lays them low with sickness; He strips them of property and friends; He changes them

from one position to another; He visits them with things most hard to flesh and blood; and some of us have well-nigh fainted under the burdens laid upon us. We have felt pressed beyond strength, and have been almost ready to murmur at the hand which chastened us. Paul the Apostle had a thorn in the flesh appointed him, some bitter bodily trial, no doubt, though we know not exactly what it was. But this we know, — he besought the Lord thrice that it might be removed; yet it was not taken away (II Corinthians 12:8-9).

Now, reader, notwithstanding all these things, did you ever hear of a single child of God who thought his Father did not treat him wisely? No, I am sure you never did. God's children would always tell you, in the long run, it was a blessed thing they did not have their own way, and that God had done far better for them than they could have done for themselves. Yes! And they could tell you, too, that God's dealings had provided more happiness for them than they ever would have obtained themselves, and that His way, however dark at times, was the way of pleasantness and the path of peace.

I ask you to lay to heart the lesson which God's dealings with His people is meant to teach you. Fear not to withhold from your child anything you think will do him harm, whatever his own wishes may be. This is God's plan.

Hesitate not to lay on him commands, of which he may not at present see the wisdom, and to guide him in ways which may not now seem reasonable to his mind. This is God's plan.

Shrink not from chastising and correcting him whenever you see his soul's health requires it, however painful it may be to your feelings; and remember medicines for the mind must not be rejected because they are bitter. This is God's plan.

And be not afraid, above all, that such a plan of training will make your child unhappy. I warn you against this delusion. Depend on it, there is no surer road to unhappiness than always having our own way. To have our wills checked and denied is a blessed thing for us; it makes us value enjoyments when they come. To be indulged perpetually is the way to be made selfish; and selfish people and spoiled children, believe me, are seldom happy.

Reader, be not wiser than God; — train your children as He trains His.

Home Educators Did It



Talk about Them When You Sit at Home -- Deuteronomy 6:7

by Rosalind Peterson

In March this year our eldest son David was accepted into the University of Auckland at age 16. In his first semester's exams he got an A+ in one of his papers. But what we consider to be a greater success from home educating for the last 11 years is what a nice person he is. He is cheerful, kind to his 5 younger siblings and gets on well with people of all ages -- including his parents.

How did this all happen? It seems like just yesterday that he was a cute little boy, just turned 6, who asked us to home school him. The years seem to have passed so quickly.

In the Way *He* Should Go - Proverbs 22:6

It seems that for years I either had a difficult pregnancy or a new baby -- and David did not do more than a little bit of Maths and writing each day; but he read lots and lots and lots. (As he still does today.) We are allowed to have out from our local library up to 210 books at one time -- and once we reached the limit! We would get out any books that looked interesting....and they all did! Not surprisingly, David now has an amazing general knowledge. We also (and still do) joke together a lot. Our children have really neat senses of humour, and sometimes it can resemble a circus around here. But I love it!

When David was 11 years old, we started him on a more formal programme of study. He read his Bible (or a BJUP Bible lesson), completed a Saxon Maths lesson, did some of an English Lifepac, and read from a BJUP science textbook. And of course, read widely for pleasure. We also went on any field trip that was organised and talked a lot. (Deuteronomy 6:4-7 is our family motto.) And we enjoyed more jokes together.

Never Been this Way Before -- Joshua 3:4

Then came the time when we needed to choose *how* David would get into university. We decided to go by the "get-Bursary-exams" path for university entry, because most of the courses that David was interested in required high bursary marks for entry. David was not sure of exactly which course he wanted to study at university, but he was *very* sure that he did not want to go back to school!....Ever! (The bullying that he received in his one month at a state school had put him off school for life.) We chose the NZ Correspondence School, to start as soon as David turned 16 (end of

May) and the fees became reasonable.

It's a long story, but David ended up doing Form 6 Accounting and sitting Bursary Biology and Bursary Chemistry last year. He completed the work in just 5 months. By exam time both of us were stressed: me from worrying about what the friends and relatives would say if he failed; and him from the stress of an overanxious mother! He passed. Not by much, but still passes. Both of us were relieved.

At the start of this year we saw advertised a 2 week Maths course at university. It was intended for students going to start university this year, but we thought, "Hey, he can handle the work. Let's send a cheque and see if he's accepted." They sent back a receipt!! David thoroughly enjoyed the course, and on the last day of it David was walking around the university saying to himself, "I don't want to leave here. I don't want to leave here." He had loved his time there so much.

He Makes His Way Firm -- Psalm 37:23-24

My husband and I talked about it and decided to allow David to apply for Provisional Entry to the University of Auckland rather than David going next year, after doing 5 bursary subjects with the NZCS. But this was Saturday, and the first lectures of the semester started the next Monday! Just 2 days away. Aaargh!

We prayed about it, asking that if this was God's will, He would open the "doors" And He did! There were so many miracles along the way, that I'm still marvelling at how God had pre-planned everything. I'm very glad that He's in charge and not me! One amazing thing was that Graham (my husband) had already applied for holiday leave for Monday. That gave me a babysitter (and the car!) so that I could go with David for that first day. Another miracle was finding all-day parking in Auckland city!! And the lady at the university that we needed to see about applying for Provisional Entry usually isn't there on Mondays -- but that day she was!

We needed to see another lady for the interview though. That lady had a poster on the wall of her office of a very wet, angry looking kitten, with the words, "Don't tell *me* what kind of a day to have!" The interview was not easy.

I have heard of other home schooled students getting into university quite easily. But this was the University of Auckland. They have stiff competition for the places. They can afford to be choosy.

My first surprise was that we had carried the (very heavy) Saxon books all the way from the carpark for no reason at all. She was not interested in any textbooks; all she wanted was exam results/qualifications. The university's "Admission Regulations" say that the applicant should have "received secondary schooling to at least NZ Form 6 level, or its equivalent overseas, and been awarded Sixth Form Certificate in at least one subject, or its equivalent." She said that she wanted to see *four* exam results (or Form 6/Level 2 grades) to base her assessment on.

David had passed School Certificate Maths when he was 13 (rather than at the usual 15 or 16)...but that was not Form 6 level or above, so it was “irrelevant” to her. She added up the unit standards that David got in his Form 6 Accounting, and that came to the equivalent of roughly a Grade 1, so that was one “result”. His 2 Bursary passes gave him a total of 3 results...but where was a fourth? She asked, “Did the 2 week Maths course that he’d recently been on have a test?” No. She searched his portfolio for another “result”, but the lab course that he did at a Wellington polytech was only at Level 1, and so was his Open Polytech Small Business Course. She was also concerned about the lack of an English result. And that was even before he misspelled his middle name!! David was applying for entry into the Science Faculty, and she needed to know that both his Maths and English were at a reasonable level. Finally she decided that his Bursary Biology pass was evidence of sufficient English skills because the exam has a 20% essay question. And she also waived the requirement of a fourth result. Yay! Praise God!

God is soooo amazing! Little did David know, when he was struggling away with Bursary Biology and Chemistry work last year, (neither his favourite subject,) that they would be what he needed to get into university to do Maths, Physics and Computer Science, all of which he loves. And praise God that he decided not to bump up the Accounting to Bursary level, for then he would have had three Bursary marks and not been allowed to apply for Provisional Entry! Another thing was that 2 week Maths course. According to the interviewer he should not have been allowed to go on it; but because he did, Graham and I saw that David now had the maturity to organise himself onto the bus in time, morning after morning. God had certainly planned everything perfectly!

How Can a Young Man Keep His Way Pure? -- Psalm 119:9

Many people are interested to know how David has got on at university. In particular, “socially”. Graham and I are both graduates of the University of Auckland, so we know what “the social scene” is like there. (Eg., some students have so many bits of metal attached to parts of their anatomy, I’m sure that they’d set off an airport Metal Detector!!) But we trusted that David’s personal faith was strong enough for him to choose the right path, even though he was only 16 years old. (Eg., he has been a Sunday School Teacher for the past 3 years.) We are grateful that his faith has remained strong, boosted each morning by his daily Bible reading on the long bus trip into the city.

He often talks to me about the range of friends that he talks to and has lunch with at university. None of them are Christians. One day I asked him if they swore or spoke disrespectfully about girls. He said that they didn’t do it all the time, but that “sometimes you have to expect non-Christians to behave like non-Christians”. I was really impressed with the wisdom in that statement. (ie., he is a Christian and he won’t do what is wrong, but he is not “thrown” when a non-Christian

behaves like what he is -- a non-Christian.)

He is also quite confident talking with his lecturers. (I believe that would not be so if he had spent the last decade at school, being conditioned into seeing “teachers” as “the Enemy”, as so many school children do.) And he enjoys talking with the lecturers because he loves learning!

People also want to know how David got on academically. “How did he get that A+?” I certainly wouldn’t have guessed that David would get such an exceptional mark in any of his subjects! He spends so much time reading library books about just about everything. Eg he found that he could never get any work done in any of the 15(!) university libraries because he would just lean over and pull off the shelf next to him whatever book happened to be there and start reading it (it is giving him a very broad education though!) -- until he went to a library floor with books written in French and German (which he can’t read)! And then he also spends up to 2 hours a day running! (He recently came 4th in a half-marathon.)

The paper that he got the A+ in is called Introduction to Applied & Computational Maths. There is nothing like it in schools, so everybody has to “start from scratch” learning the subject matter. It had some programming in it, a lot of mathematical modelling and some maths simulation. The paper required a good Maths foundation and a lot of “outside-the-square” type of thinking, which I think that David enjoys.

“Yes, but how did he get the A+?” Well, the biggest factor is his God-given Maths ability. Next is his love of learning. So he enjoyed reading the textbook, and he found in the libraries other books on the same topics. He also spent hours and hours and hours doing the assignments as perfectly as he could. I think that the simple answer is that he worked harder in it than he did in his other papers.

David does not like for me to tell people about just his A+. He believes that the “true picture” is given only if people also know about his C+ and C- results last semester. (He has a “perfectionist” personality!) But I know how hard it is to get an A+, and I think it is worth celebrating!

He didn’t get the A+ in the Applied Maths paper because he found it particularly easier than the others. In fact he found the C+ one the easiest (and maybe didn’t work so hard). And it wasn’t that he found the Applied Maths paper the most interesting. He actually found the C- one the most interesting, and of his 4 papers this semester 2 are in that same subject. And he is seriously thinking of majoring in it! I think that it makes more sense to major in something that you get your best mark in, not your worst!

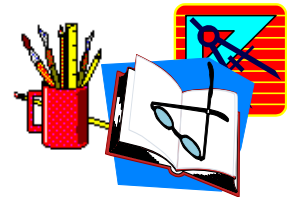
I know how hard it is to be at university, to understand the lectures, to get the assignments done on time, etc. And through all of that to keep your head and not “go off the rails”. So I am really proud of David. Even of his C+ and C-.

Another thing that people want to know is, "Have you ever had any misgivings about where your children were going or how they were doing?" The answer is "Yes". I remember when David was 9, wondering if he would be better off going to school to be taught by a "real" teacher. Two subjects worried me. One was his strength, Maths. He had already started Secondary level work in it. "Was I competent to teach him at that level?" (The answer is, "Get Saxon Maths, and then he'll teach himself.") And the other worry for me was his weakness, English. He loves to read, but he hates to write. (And his spelling is ... aaargh ... just too horrible to describe!) "Surely a real English teacher could do a better job?" (The answer, I believe, is that even if David had been home schooled by a wonderfully gifted-in-English person, he would still hate writing, because God, in His infinite wisdom, made him weak in that area.) I had fewer misgivings when I remembered that the most important "subject" in David's education is his faith — and that is best taught at home.

So, yes, I've had doubts. But God is faithful. One day I was reading Joshua 3:4. It says, "Then you will know which way to go, since you have never been this way before." Isn't that so appropriate for us home schooling parents, especially with our eldest child? We haven't "been this way before"....but God knows the way! Our job is to do today what He wants us to do today. And then to do tomorrow what He wants us to do tomorrow. And before you know it, the years will have passed "all too quickly".

**The Graham & Rosalind Peterson Family.
David is immediately above Rosalind.**

Home Education Research



Homeschooling and the Redefinition of Citizenship

(Part 3)

by A. Bruce Arai
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Citizenship and Citizenship Education

The concept of citizenship is interesting because while there is general agreement about some of the elements which form a core definition of the concept, there is wide disagreement about its final composition, and which elements should receive more prominence than others. Most understandings of citizenship include some combination of five elements: group identification; rights or entitlements; responsibilities or duties; public participation, and; common values (Derricott, *et al.*, 1998; Touraine, 1997; Callan, 1997). Various models of citizenship have been proposed and debated (see Delanty, 1997 for a good review of the major positions), but there is no single vision of citizenship which is acceptable to all. Perhaps this is not surprising given that citizenship is a fundamentally political concept. Similarly, there are many different proposals about the nature and content of citizenship education.

Starting with the earliest ideas of citizenship, there was an important distinction between good people and good citizens in ancient Greece. Good people lived their lives according to a set of legitimate moral principles, but good citizens carried the additional burden of participating actively in the public life of the society (Cogan, 1998). And this participation required a certain level of education.

With the development of industrial capitalism and the rise of public education, the school became a primary site for citizenship education (MacKenzie, 1993). Early versions of citizenship education in most countries stressed several elements including nationalism and national history, individual rights and responsibilities and factual information about a country's geography and systems of governance (MacKenzie, 1993; Wong, 1997). In many cases, schools continued to emphasize one's duty to participate in the public life of the society. In these early years, participation meant not only following political events and voting in elections (if one had the right to vote) but also working within the local and church communities to which one belonged. That is, children were taught that they have a duty to work actively to improve the conditions of life for themselves and others in their immediate environment (Fogelman, 1991; Wong, 1997).

Over time, more and more emphasis was placed on

“civics”, or the facts about a country’s political system, and less attention was paid to participation and community identification, beyond formal political participation in elections. In many countries, citizenship education was confined to history courses and later to social studies courses (McKenzie, 1993; Wong, 1997). This led to the teaching of a more formalistic understanding of citizenship, one which stressed rights and responsibilities rather than participation and group identification. When participation was stressed, the fear was that it was incomplete and did not result in strong bonds between individuals and their communities. As Touraine (1997:146) says, “In today’s mass society, everyone talks of participation; but participation tends to mean dissolving into what David Riesman called ‘The Lonely Crowd’. In other words, in many schools participation was a rather vacuous moral injunction to be publicly involved. This has begun to change with the development of “community service” elements in many curriculums (Cogan and Derricott, 1998; Fogelman, 1991; MacKenzie, 1993). Schools appear to be rediscovering that participation in the daily events of life are important for the education of proper citizens.

Fogelman has shown that although citizenship education has stressed public involvement, there is a clear difference between the attitudes and behaviours of students. In a survey of British students, many of them reported that public involvement, especially in helping others, is important; but very few students were actually involved in these activities. For example, the percentage of students who thought charitable work (e. g., helping the elderly or the disabled, preserving the environment) was important ranged between 37% and 71%, but only 6 to 12% of students were actually involved in these activities (Fogelman, 1991).

Multidimensional Citizenship

Kubow, Grossman and Ninoyama (1998) and others (Cogan and Derricott, 1998) have recently articulated an idea of “multidimensional citizenship”. Multidimensional citizenship for them has four components: the personal, the social, the temporal and the spatial, which encourage students to reflect on their own behaviour, their relations with others both locally and globally, and their relationships to the past and the future. Multidimensional citizenship is based on the principles of toleration of and cooperation with others, non-violent conflict resolution, rational argument and debate, environmentalism, respect for human rights, and participation in civic life. This vision of citizenship, they argue, must become the philosophical foundation for schools of the future.

Kubow *et al* (1998) argue that in the personal dimension, compulsory schooling should develop a personal sense of virtue in all students and that this cannot be done in isolated courses. Rather, the school must be a model of virtue in all respects, from the behaviour of teachers, administrators and students to the place of the school in the life of the community. Schools should provide students with opportunities to integrate into their communities in numerous ways to foster proper attitudes and behaviours. Moreover, other social institutions such as

families, churches and volunteer organizations must help schools achieve this mission by reinforcing the principles of multidimensional citizenship.

The inculcation of virtue through schooling is a theme that also runs through Callan’s (1997) ideas, as well as those of others such as Holmes (1995). For example, Callan stresses that contemporary common schools can and should promote “virtue” in their students, and Holmes wants major changes to the school system so that they can build “character” in pupils. In both cases, these goods cannot be taught simply in history or social studies courses, but must be an integral principle upon which an adequate school is founded. Moreover, character and virtue involve more than adherence to the values of respect for the law, tolerance of others and non-violent conflict resolution, but must also include a belief in the power of rational thought and argument, and a constant search for the good, the true and the right.

The social element of multidimensional citizenship encompasses the active commitment of citizens to participate in “civil society” which is not simply a formal political space. Rather civil society takes in a much broader range of actions including everything from public highway clean-ups to parades, and the use of public spaces to running for political office. The energetic participation of all people in these actions is a primary goal of education for multidimensional citizenship. The spatial element forces us to think of our place in the world, but not giving any one reference an exclusive claim on our identities. Rather, we need to recognize that we are all pulled in many directions by spatial and other affinities, and that we do not have to choose one at the expense of others. So for example, one can be a North American and an environmentalist at the same time, without any necessary contradiction. Finally, the temporal dimension encourages us to think about our place in the march of time. We need to recognize that our actions are shaped by those who preceded us, and that we have a responsibility to those who will come after us.

All four elements need to be developed and explicitly recognized in school curricula, according to Kubow *et al* (1998). One of the interesting things about the idea of multidimensional citizenship is that the four dimensions all involve many different skills and values, and people may combine aspects of the four elements in many ways to produce different, but no less valid, forms of citizenship. For example, citizenship for some people might include a very strong environmental commitment which for them means a focus on internationalization and globalization as the basis of environmental problems. For others, environmentalism means cleaning up the chemical waste from a local factory. In multidimensional citizenship, both of these incarnations are valid. We are not required to agree on one and only one vision of the good citizen.

Homeschooling seems to have little place in any of the above discussions of the relationship between citizenship and education. In all cases, schools are argued to have an important, even primary role in the

cultivation of new citizens, and in some cases, it is argued that parents do not even have the right to exempt their children from this education. Yet the number of homeschoolers in most countries continues to grow. The key issue then is whether homeschoolers pose a threat to citizenship because they do not go to school. That is, do homeschoolers make good citizens? In the following section, I will argue that the answer to this question is “yes”, but there are important differences between the vision of citizenship promoted in schools and that found among homeschoolers.

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Teaching Tips

Our Co-op Group

by Robyn Smith

A couple of years ago, a friend approached me about perhaps working in together for our homeschooling one day per week. As my schedule was fairly full at the time, I thought about it but declined. Shortly after that, I went through a bit of “burnout” with a ruptured disc in my back, moving house plus a few other trials. My husband, Grant, suggested perhaps looking again at my friend's suggestion; so we prayed about it, and thought we would give it a try.

We started the new term with my friend's two daughters, aged 11 and 13, arriving at my house at 7.45 Monday mornings with their dad on his way to work. They joined my four children, then aged 2 - 12. We began with a unit study on “The Hobbit” that I had previously bought second hand through *Keystone*. The children loved it! I taught them until lunchtime, and then took them out to my friend who taught them art in the afternoon, then brought my children home at 5pm. A whole 4 1/2 hours to myself! What a blessing!

Since that time we have flexed, with other children being added, my friend's eldest daughter going to school this year, and her youngest son joining us. Last year another friend wanted to join us, so we split the morning session into two age groups, and she taught the younger group while I taught the older group. I loved that, as I was able to focus on a higher level, e.g. we did the NZ 5th form geography topic of “Natural Hazards”, visited the “Buried Village”, etc. The younger children could have done that, but I don't think we would have achieved so much.

This year we have returned to the original two of us working together, but another friend's two eldest children are joining us at the beginning of next term.

Now I know that homeschooling is about teaching your own children, and I agree with that. However, I have found that those free Monday afternoons, to visit a friend, read my Bible, plan or mark schoolwork, clean the house, spend time with my husband (who works from home) or whatever, have really helped keep me emotionally on an even keel and be a better wife, Mum and teacher.

A word of caution: if you are interested in doing the same -- be sure that the friend you work with has the same ideals, expectations, etc., and that you talk things through. Sometimes a child will misbehave, complain, or set someone up for flak. It would be terrible if something like this was the end of a good friendship. Keep the communication lines open, and above all - have fun!!!

Home Discipleship

by Barbara Smith

Matthew 28:18-20: *And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age."*

We find that we are not home schooling or even home educating our children now but are discipling our children. We began back in 1985/6 by bringing school into our home. This current movement of home schooling began to mushroom back in 1983 in the States after an interview between Dr Dobson and Dr Raymond Moore on "Focus on the Family". So we were there near the beginning. There was not much in the way of curriculum back then, only what was used in the schools. Local head masters gave out exemptions in those days, so the government had no idea how many children were being home schooled then.

We knew God was calling us to home school, but it was a new thing, there was not much information around at the time and the curriculum available was designed for schools. I thought that my education was lacking but Craig's was good. His job was such that he was available to teach the children, so he taught our oldest three. For two years we struggled using a curriculum that our children were not responding too well to. Finally Craig took a child on his knee and worked through the workbook verbally: doing it this way caused them to get through it in a much shorter amount of time. We found that our children loved to be read to and to read. They especially loved to hear stories and would listen for hours, for Craig and the children would discuss all sorts of things from the reading they were doing. Gradually we realised that the school curriculum was not helping us at all, so we jumped ship and put together our own programme and began home educating our children instead of home schooling them.

I thought that you had to be one step ahead of your children. That meant you'd have to know everything you were teaching them and spend hours preparing each lesson. With the large numbers of families beginning to home educate, many more minds were exploring these issues. Home educators soon worked out (or perhaps simply rediscovered a principle lost when compulsory schooling took over in most countries) that one did not have to be one step ahead but could be more effective when learning along with the children.

As our personal circumstances changed, I also gained the confidence that I could home educate the children, so took on the task with our youngest three in 1997. I was challenged and have been influenced by the Charlotte Mason and the Christian Classical approach, and later on by Diana Waring and family.

Our concern is that there are about 1000 children beginning home education every year in New Zealand and nearly 1000 children going back into the schools. We reckon this is largely because of stress and burnout of parents trying to keep too much of a school routine at home. This does not have to be. In a United Kingdom study of learning methods, Alan Thomas found that "Families starting out on home-based education who at first adopted formal methods of learning found themselves drawn more and more into less formal learning. Families who started out with informal learning at the outset found themselves drawn into even more informal learning. The methods that both groups grew into had much more in common with the method of younger children. The sequencing of learning material, the bedrock of learning in school, was seen increasingly as unnecessary and unhelpful." Then he goes on to say, "This study challenges the almost universally held view that children of school age need to be formally taught if they are to learn. In school this may be the case, but at home they can learn just by living."¹

When do children learn the most? Yes, during the ages of 0-5. Do parents need a curriculum for this? No, although some within the teachers' unions are trying their best to change this. Children ask lots of questions during this time which very effectively fills their current learning gaps. Tell me, do you have no learning gaps? Of course you do. When we began home schooling, we thought we needed to use a packaged curriculum so that we would not miss anything that our children should be learning, so that they would keep up with everyone else, so that they would have no learning gaps. Do the curriculums teach our children everything? No! So even the best curriculum will still leave learning gaps!!

How exciting to read Alan Thomas's research and to put it together with our own experience and that of other home educators around us. What we find we are doing now is to extend the "natural" learning atmosphere we have with our 0-5 year olds through to our 9 year olds. "You don't need 15 years to educate somebody but you need 15 years to socialise somebody," says Sir Neil Waters, past vice-chancellor of Massey University and NZQA's Board Chairman.² Yes, he is right...you can teach your child all the tools they need for learning in 2-4 years. (More on this in a future article.)

Since the home schooling movement has been around for 18 or so years, there are children now in their 20s who have been totally home educated. There are a lot of parents who have learned a great deal over this time about what home education is and isn't. Some are even writing books and curriculum from their experiences, meaning for the first time ever there are books and curriculum written by home educators for home educators who understand what home education is all about. On top of that there are home educators who have written these materials from a Biblical Christian worldview.

One of these books is *Educating the Wholehearted Child* by Clay and Sally Clarkson³ who say, “You may ask how we know we are cooperating with God’s design when home schooling, per se, is never mentioned in Scripture. It’s because home education is not our primary goal at home - home discipleship is, and home education is simply the natural extension of home discipleship....God designed the home for discipleship, and when we follow God’s patterns and principles, the natural and normal fruit will be not only spiritual growth and maturity, but intellectual growth and maturity as well.... Your home is a dynamic living and learning environment designed by God for the very purpose of raising your children to become mature, useful disciples of Jesus. When you begin to understand the dynamic, you will find a freedom you never knew was possible in your home education. Home-centered learning helps you discover that dynamic so your home will work for you in discipling and educating your children.

“Home-centered learning is not just a new perspective on your home and family, though, it is also a new perspective on your children. Not only did God design home and family to be a learning environment, but He also designed children to learn naturally within that environment. Because children are made in God’s image, they are already intelligent, creative and curious. No matter what you do (or don’t do!), God has already put within them the drive to explore, discover, question and to learn....Your role as a home educating parent, then, is to provide a rich and lively living and learning environment in which your children can exercise their God-given drive to learn, and then to train and instruct your children within the natural context of your home and family life. It’s that simple.”

Discipling our children is a whole-of-life activity, not necessarily confined to a strict timetable, text books or so many pages in a workbook per day. Such an approach we have found to be far less stressful as well as a lot more fun, and we suspect that if more home educating parents caught on to this idea, fewer would be inclined to chuck it in after only a couple of years.

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World Views in Focus

Worldviews — It All Depends on Your Grid

by Carol Munroe, North Shore City, NZ

I used to think that only Christians, Muslims, Hindus and others who adopted a specific body of thought with reference to God were “religious”. There was a division between the secular and the sacred. Being an atheist or agnostic was rejection of religion. I had been a Christian for almost 10 years before hearing Os Guinness (author of *The Dust of Death*) put forward the idea that all of life was religious. There was a Christian view of literature, a Christian view of science, business, politics — I had never thought of that before. Morals were religious, yes, the family, yes, the church, definitely. But *all of life* being religious? Was there really a specifically Christian view of all of life’s different areas??

Up until about the nineteenth century, Christians generally believed that they should be involved in their culture, seeking to preserve what was good and be light and salt to the lost. As we rolled into the twentieth century, however, that view had changed. Bible believing Christians were teaching that “secular” pursuits (business, politics and the like) were under Satan’s domain and should be avoided. A number of factors caused this shift in thinking. Intellectuals influenced by Darwin and the German philosopher Hegel produced destructive theories and creeds, and caused people to turn away from the Bible. To the conservative Christian mind, the culprit “...was not just Darwinism, but the whole movement of what leading intellectuals called ‘reason’. Reason, for some academic leaders, meant opposition to the Bible...some deliberately turned away from intellectual activities because intellectualism seemed to be the cause of the problem... ‘Leave the conduct of worldly affairs to the worldly.’”¹

This view is still a dominant way of thinking. In 1999, our last election year, Frank Grover MP joined the Christian Heritage Party because he wanted to speak out and be consistent with his Christian beliefs, and he felt he was muffled in the Alliance Party. Not long after he did this, my husband and I were at a function and were talking to a Christian who knew Frank Grover personally, who said, “I told him that he was wasting his time. He would have far more influence if he devoted himself to making disciples.” Inference — politics is no place for a Christian. But people, we are in the very mess we are today because Christians have piked out of those areas and opted for more “spiritual” ones! Can we really say that Isaac Newton, Robert Boyle, William Wilberforce, etc., etc., had no influence

in the world and that they would have been better spending their time “making disciples”? The greatest scientists, inventors, social reformers the world has ever seen have been thoroughly committed Christians who lived their lives seeking to glorify and honour God in the areas to which He called them, in which He also gifted them. They would weep to think that Christians of today regarded their work as “secular” and therefore of limited value.

A new eschatology was also part of the problem. If Christ is coming soon, and He is, why polish brass on a sinking ship? The way to deal with the problems in society is get out and wait for the Lord -- and the wait won't be long.

Also significant was the teaching of another philosopher called Immanuel Kant. Kant taught the concept of dualism -- that there is a physical, material world which can be known through the senses, and there is a spiritual world. There is a division between the two worlds. Christians thought this was a good idea. Some people have a secular job, others are in Christian work. Herbert Schlossberg comments in detail on this: “It’s astonishing that Kantian dualism came to dominate not only the pagan society around us but Christian thinking as well, because there is no Biblical basis for it. You can’t even find the word “secular” in the Bible. The word secular came from a Latin word that means ‘of an age or generation’. The implication was that secular things relate to time, whereas spiritual things relate to eternity....The idea was that Christians should concentrate on ‘spiritual’ items, while anti-Christians took care of....the schools, government, economic life and other trivial pursuits”.²

When Christians abdicated from involvement in these so-called worldly areas, godless ideas came to the fore. Whereas in previous times the Bible had been accepted as the standard for morality and all of life, now it was relegated to the “religious” domain and only for “religious” people. What they didn’t tell you, however, was that everybody, every single person who has ever walked this planet, has a religion of some kind.

Why is that, you ask? Because the way you view life is dependent on your answer to certain questions, and these are determined by your presuppositions. Big word, loaded with meaning. Your *position* is your belief about something. Your *presupposition* is what you assume to be true about a situation *before* you even start to investigate or debate it. Note, NOTE, NOTE!!!! A presupposition cannot be proven. It is based on faith. Everybody has presuppositions and all those presuppositions are based on faith. It doesn’t matter if you are a Christian or not, an atheist or a humanist, a new ager or whatever. To get to what you believe, you make certain assumptions, presuppositions, about the nature of the world around you, and you exercise faith in those assumptions. Presuppositions deal with these questions:

What/Who is God?

What is man?

What is reality?

How do you determine right or wrong? etc.

The answers to these questions cannot be proven. We

believe our answers to be true, but it depends on faith.

When I discovered this truth, it was liberating. Christianity is a religion, sure, but humanists are just as religious. They just don’t like to admit it. After all, they have laughed at religious people for being naïve because they exercise faith in God. So they are not likely to come clean about having a faith of their own. Too much is hanging on it.

David Noebel in *Understanding the Times*, probably the definitive work on worldviews, proves substantially from humanists’ own writings that humanism is a religion, a religion often referred to as “secularism” or “secular humanism”. But since state-funded education is supposed to be “secular” in the sense of being “religiously neutral”, they have to hide their own religious beliefs. Christianity was rejected because it was a religion. But what a farce! All they did was substitute their own religion. Secular humanism is now the religion taught and accepted as truth in the state schools and universities, even while state education is supposed to be “religiously neutral”. Religious neutrality is, in fact, a logical and philosophical impossibility. We all have our presuppositions, our grids, our religions, our worldviews.

At the beginning of the 21st century, our society is no longer dominated by the Christian worldview, which was rejected for reasons discussed above. What we have in our society today is a direct result of that rejection. In the 1960s, they threw out God. John Lennon’s hit song “Imagine there’s no heaven, and no religion too.. imagine all the people, living life in peace”. But there was no peace. Christianity had taught that there is an Author. In the 1960s, they said there is no Author, but there are ideals. In our current, postmodern world, there is no Author *and* no ideals. Nothing. Christians taught we live in a Grand Story, the triumph of God’s plan for the ages. The ‘60s also taught a Grand Story — the triumph of reason, evolution, the progress of the human spirit. Now, there is no Grand Story. Christians taught Hope. The ‘60s taught Progress. Now, there is no hope.³ In the 1960s we sowed to the wind. In the twenty-first century we will reap the whirlwind.

But because of this we have a tremendous opportunity in a climate of despair and the failure of other worldviews to bring the message of the gospel. In adopting pietism (rejecting legitimate worldly pursuits as being ungodly), as opposed to piety (living with the sanctifying aroma of Christ in all these areas), Christians have lost their savour. The time has come to reclaim the influence we have lost.

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3. Lael F. Arrington, *World Proofing your Kids*, Crossway, 1997, p. 81.

Letters



I really enjoyed the article about families in the latest *Keystone*. One of the biggest blessings for our family has been the active presence of grandparents. Next month we are meeting in Taupo with John's brother's family and Grandma and Granddad to celebrate Grandma and Granddad's 60th wedding anniversary. What a record. My parents were married 44 years when mum died. My paternal grandmother came from a family of 7 children, all of whom celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversaries. These are people who stayed together through a depression, wars, deaths of children, all manner of things. Our children have been privileged to know three great grandparents as well as having grandparents who play an active part in their lives. The best part is seeing all our lives enriched by special family times together. For John's parents it is truly special to them that they have two sons whose wives and children enjoy being together and think that a family get together is a great way to celebrate an anniversary. We have regular Sunday night dinner together with my brother and his family and Dad. Dad frequently tells people that it is his grandchildren who have kept him going since Mum died. In our busy lives we have to plan to make family events happen, otherwise it is too easy to let things drift. Thanks for the reminder in the article about the importance of family relationships.

John & Dorinda Duthie
Auckland

Thank you so much for the magazine. It is so encouraging. I have been homeschooling for about seven years and stopped getting the magazine, going to support groups etc., as I felt like everyone else was competent and confident except me. Now I am back on the mailing list again, I find the articles so encouraging, especially the feature family ones. Many thanks for all your work.

M. O., Tokoroa

Just a quick note to tell you how much T... enjoyed the session you took at the North Shore home education workshop. T... came away so inspired and would have liked to listen to you all day! I hope to be able to meet you in person one day. Thank you for all the encouragement via the pages of *Keystone*.

T & F, Auckland
Bluntly, I personally

think that the state [high school] curricula are not worth the paper on which they are written...[S]cience is very much "a jack of all trades and expert in none"; they touch on a lot of things but never get to do anything in any depth, and the depth is where the real learning about the scientific process occurs. My 8 year old son has been using a 4th form science module, and it is pathetic! Read a few paragraphs, copy out a few definitions, etc etc. That is not science nor a good background for university study of science.

1. Most first year university courses do not require specialist knowledge on a subject. You can take most first year courses without having studied the subject matter prior to university study. Studying such material can be a help in some cases (such as in physics) and may actually be a hinderance in some cases (one study showed that students who studied economics at high school did worse at university level economics than those who hadn't studied it!)

2. My experiences suggest that the most important attributes students can have are the following: good preparation in English and mathematics (ie. they are literate and numerate); the ability to argue logically (ie. gather relevant information, make arguments and formulate hypotheses based on the evidence, and to reach a conclusion based on the evidence using logic); an understanding and exposure to "the scientific method"; be knowledgeable concerning world history and geography. Of these, the first two are the most important.

3. Students need to be self-disciplined, realistic, and be able to work.

NZ University Lecturer, 3 August 2000

(Continued from page 6)

for being the first town to be liberated by the Allied forces in June 1944; and quite by accident, in heading for the coast, we found ourselves at Omaha Beach with acres of cemeteries and the ruins of a battle-field scattered around us. We only headed that way because Anita wanted “desperately” to see a beach, and yet after the tapestry and Omaha I found myself reflecting on how many have given their lives in brutal warfare while all my life I’ve enjoyed peace and security. Such reflections cause us to be thankful and complain little.

Our day at Mont St Michel was just brilliant. We spent nearly 8 hours walking in and around the tiny island village, the island itself, and the most amazing abbey built on this high rock. Joel (4) and Anita (6 ½) were so taken with the staggering structure that they didn’t complain at all about being on their legs all day. At the foot of the impressive island we met an American couple and had a good time sharing God’s love with them.

We headed inland through the Loire Valley, finding a riverside stop each night at which to bathe. Each morning we would breakfast and read the Word, committing our day to the Lord. One morning we’d discussed at length what the fruit of the Spirit might mean, then later that day, Joel obviously having grasped the morning’s discussions was heard saying, “Anita’s doing a bad fruit Daddy!”

Jenny had mapped out a direct course for Andorra, and in so doing we started upon the most amazing chain of events. She spotted a small name on the map which rang a bell; the place being such a small detour we decided to visit it. A climb along a small country road, only 3km off our course, brought us high over a valley. Small, skinny oaks clung to the hillside between rocks and dusty orange soil. The sun beamed warm from a clear blue sky. We found the hamlet of very old houses, a scattering of traditional barns, and a few small fields recently harvested of their crops. While asking for the school teacher (usually knows local history) we met a delightful woman with a reasonable grasp of English who was immediately intrigued by our situation, especially once I produced my Dutch passport. The name of the hamlet was Mespel! Anne-Marie was astonished that we had travelled from New Zealand, just happened to be cruising through France and chanced upon the place, not even knowing it existed. We were astound at meeting a person with so much knowledge and interest in the history of the region. We could have met none better. Anne-Marie has for years had an interest in the persecuted peoples of Europe. She has read hundreds of books about various groups and can rattle off the history and journeys such as the Jews, centuries ago, who fled from Catholic Spain to Portugal and then dispersed throughout Europe. She has a wealth of knowledge about the persecution of the Reformers (Protestants) and their very long and dangerous travels scribing an arc from southern France across the Italian frontier to the east, through Switzerland and finally coming to safety in the north. Meeting her was a divine appointment. Anne-Marie immediately began to rattle

off the history of the area and how it was possible that my fore-fathers may have come from this little cluster of homes. The name Mespel is that of a fruit tree which we saw growing in wild abundance near the hamlet. Mespel is the Italian name for the fruit; in France they are called “nafla”. So the name of the fruit is not locally understood to be the same as the name of the hamlet. In fact it was quite a surprise to an elderly man, who had been born there, when this was pointed out. “Van der” literally means “from the”, and in times past, as people travelled they were often named by where they had come from. There are not many people with the name van der Mespel; in fact any you may meet are related to me. The hamlet would have been bigger then, more than its current grand population of eleven. The area was famed for its glass-workers, but once the persecution of non-Catholics really got under way, these and many others fled and dispersed across Europe. Interestingly some of the Huguenots landed in Chiddingfold, where we had lived in England, and continued in their highly skilled glasswork to make the stained-glass windows for Westminster Abbey. Others took flight around to the east of France to avoid persecution hot-spots, and some even made it to the haven of Delft, far to the north in Holland, then under the reformist protection of William of Orange. (Three years previously we visited Delft because of it’s beauty and because my father had told me that that was where our forefathers had come from!) We all delighted in our “chance” meeting. As we parted, Anne-Marie left us with a rather insistent invitation to visit her town. Driving down toward the tiny mountainous country of Andorra we marvelled at our visit to Mespel and meeting Anne-Marie. It was all quite exciting. We were fascinated with the whole chain of events. For the map readers, Mespel is about 25 km due east of Montauban.

At Barcelona, on the north east Spanish coast, one of the nice discoveries was the beach: beautifully kept and with excellent showers. Joel’s first comment on swimming in the Mediterranean was, “It’s very peppery!”. Discovering the showers became very important to us, and all along the Mediterranean coast we were on the hunt for beach showers. Always after our numerous swims we would shower to rinse the salt off, and often I’d be back after dark for a good cooling down before bed.

We spent the best part of a day in Monaco, mainly to enjoy the fantastic views and an exceptionally brilliant marine museum complete with huge aquariums of sea life from all around the world. The kids loved their natural history lesson.

All along the Alps we’d heard the enchanting tones of the cow-bells, and we were keen to claim some real ones (not the painted, over priced tourist gimmicks) as a treasure for NZ. That is the chief reason we went a bit further, into Austria. We figured the farmers should know where to buy the “real” thing, so with my usual directness I walked over and asked a couple of lads tossing hay into the barn. Their English was as good as my Austrian! But with pen and paper and some

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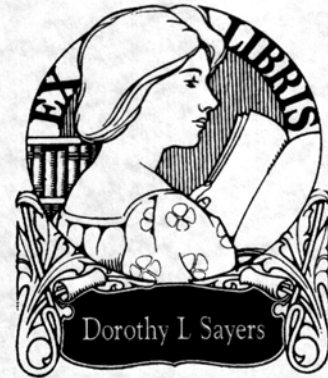
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comical illustrations they got the idea. The farmer bloke and I went for a search in his old, old barn, and if he'd found one I think he was going to give it to us. All we found were old stirrups and broken horse stuff. His mate jumped on a motorbike and lead us to the main farm complex, which was really interesting, and then to their local suppliers, which were closed. Still, living above shop proves good for gaining a little extra business. A good English speaker soon re-opened for us and was so delighted at having her first Kiwi customers that she gave us an extra bell for free. We asked our happy shopkeeper person where we might find a nice river to park near and thereby found an area of profound beauty. After the low river flats we started to climb up a most interesting single lane road that took us through 12 tunnels and over 4 bridges in only a couple of miles. Just off the road we found a great spot right on the riverbank: we loved it. I think it was the best place we ever found, and we found some beauties. "Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find...."

Eventually we got back to London, emptied the van, sorted and packed everything that was to be shipped to New Zealand, and gave away the rest. During this time home-schooling took on a more traditional school form as we strangely felt we needed to "catch up"; spending time reading together would have achieved as much and been more fun.

A comment from Phil at the time: "Parenting is the most exciting and challenging blessing God ever gave man. Home-schooling is like parenting in a glass-house."

A few concluding thoughts from Jenny:

Life is learning -- to really enjoy life you need to enjoy learning. Travelling with children is worth it -- people are more open, welcoming and helpful. We originally took some "school work" with us, but it is not worth the weight and space -- used only to give the children something "familiar" when they were feeling unsettled. When you load a van use stackable, plastic bins with lids. After you have packed everything you need, unpack half of it and leave it behind. Buy and try out different foods at the markets -- ask about what they are, how they are used.

History is interesting if you get to touch it, climb it, walk around it and view it rebuilt....the people who have lived before us become much more real. Don't try to read every interpretative label or explain everything you look at -- let the children get interested, answer their questions and ask a few yourself. Find the steepest, most winding roads and drive them -- slowly, enjoy the views....learning doesn't have to happen within a certain timetable....and its effectiveness can be compromised if rushed when the learner can't keep up.

Those cute stone cottages one sees all over Britain are cold unless you keep a good fire going.....and so a home furnished with the best educational resources is

not pleasant if mum and dad are not there physically and emotionally to warm a child's heart toward them. A heavily industrialised area like southern Wales (coal mining towns and factories) still has lots of lovely open space and scenery on back roads, outside the towns..... in the same way, a subject in your curriculum may seem initially uninteresting, until you start investigating it more thoroughly. Give yourselves an occasional "bath/shower and real bed" stop at a cheap chain motel....and likewise have a look at a normally-avoided curriculum resource or teaching method and take note of what stands out to you about it.

To bring the journey up to date, we have now been living back in New Zealand for the last 2 years 8 months (yes, I am counting), having lived in my grandmother's spare room for 6 months before moving next door to a 3 bedroom house. Our home educating is continuing, with parents learning as much as children, although usually something different. Anita (9 going on 10) is involved in a local Jazz Ballet class, but if the teacher continues to insist on exams (which we haven't given in to) that will be dropped for something that is still fun. Joel is 7 and proud of having just learned to ride his bike and still loves mud, water and making things. Phil is a founding member of the newest volunteer Fire Brigade in New Zealand, and still waiting for their first call out, but continues to go to work during the day. I (Jenny) answer millions and billions and zillions and jillions of questions (as Joel likes to say), try to sort out the computer so the children can play games on it, and cook meals. We tend to share our household chores, including feeding our bantams and our black and white spotty dog Blue (Border Collie X Dalmatian) and love living in New Zealand again. This will always be home, but you can be sure we are still open to travelling some more. Joel asked me the other day, "When can we go to Loseley again?" Loseley is a house (in which we flatted for a time) built in 1562, before Cook sailed around New Zealand; and, yes Joel remembers it, though he was only 4.

So did we learn anything while travelling, apart from what we didn't need to learn in school? Yes!!! Heaps! Thanks for travelling with us, and may you enjoy your journeys as much as we have ours.

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(Extracted from *Home School Researcher*, Vol 11, No 3, 1995, p. 1-6, Brian D. Ray, Ph.D., Ed., National Home Education Research Institute, Western Baptist College, 5000 Deer Park Dr., S. E., Salem, Oregon 97301, U.S.A.)



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