

Keystone

A Bi-Monthly Journal for Christian

Home Educators

Vol. X No. 6

November 2004

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
Lloyd & Sonya McGarvey
Jonathan (16), Jessica (18), Samuel (5),
Matthew (8), Olivia (13) & Benjamin (8wks).

Editorial



Greetings to all for the last time in 2004! Isn't this millennium going fast!

There have been a couple of news items this year that just stunned me in regards to our vaunted public school system. In an article published April 30th by Stuart Dye, education reporter for the *NZ Herald*, it was claimed, "Every primary school principal contacted by the *Herald* agreed there had been a significant increase in anti-social behaviour, particularly among younger children beginning school." Carolyn Osborne, deputy principal of Elm Park School in east Auckland, said the biggest increase in troublesome youngsters was among five-year-olds starting school. "There's a big difference between a naughty child and one with severe emotional problems. It's the latter we are seeing increasing." According to the NZ Principals' Federation (NZPF), teachers are spending an increasing amount of time and energy dealing with "crowd control" and behaviour management, rather than in actually teaching. The situation is so bad that NZPF President Kelvin Squire came out with the incredible statement that normal, well-behaved children are the new "at-risk" group!! In effect he is saying state schools are bad places to send normal children. We home educators have been implicitly saying this for years, but you know the situation really is bad when they come out and say so themselves. Yet our Christian friends and neighbours still send their children to these temples of secular humanism to be trained up by the Philistines. (*NZ Herald*, 30/4/04, " 'Normal' pupils new at-risk group, say principals", <http://tinyurl.com/23lcd>).

In early March Minister of Education Trevor Mallard said in a speech to the Tauranga Chamber of Commerce, "We need an education system that provides our children with the highest possible standard of teaching and learning...As a minimum, every child should leave school with the ability to read, write and do maths...we need to start early. That's one of the key reasons why I'm placing such a high priority on early childhood education..." He is declaring for all the world to hear that the NZ state schooling system is aiming at minimums: after ten years — *ten years* — of compulsory schooling, being able to read, write and do maths is the hurdle over which they'd be happy to push the kids. And just to make sure, he's spending millions to encourage parents to dump their children in these waste bins at an even *earlier* age. This is the best he can hope for after 127 years of compulsory schooling? Yes, it is. See the Ministry of Social Development's Social Report of August this year, <http://tinyurl.com/462ow>, and read there that a whopping 46% of adult New Zealanders are functionally illiterate! This is a total disaster. But do we hear anything about it from the MoE? No. One has to ask why. I am personally convinced that the reason the MoE says nothing is because this disaster of illiteracy is precisely what the MoE is aiming to achieve. That is, they do not complain when their real mission — dumbing us down — is being so well accomplished.

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

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

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Lloyd and Sonya McGarvey

of Hokitika on the West Coast of New Zealand's South Island

Warm greetings from the West Coast of the South Island!

The "Feature Family" article is always the first item read in our house when the *Keystone Journal* arrives. It is always fascinating to read about other home-ed families' adventures together. To be completely honest though, often times feelings of inadequacy and incompetence can swamp us as we read in amazement the achievements and successes of other home-ed families. Of course, this is far from the purpose of the article, but nevertheless, it can be very difficult not to compare and very easy to forget that each family is unique, specially designed and put together by God for His purpose and glory.

It is with this in mind that we introduce ourselves and share our home-ed journey thus far with you. We give thanks to God for the successes and look to Him as He leads us through the doubts and uncertainties.

Lloyd is an import to the Coast, from the North Island, and although he has been living here for the past 23 years, is still not considered a "Coaster". Sonya is a 4th generation West Coaster, making Jessica (18), Jonathan (16), Olivia (13), Matthew (8), Samuel (5), and Benjamin (8wks), 5th generation "Coasters". We have been living in Hokitika for 10 years after moving from Greymouth to be more involved with a small local church here. Lloyd is a land surveyor and owns a surveying business in Greymouth. Sonya trained as a hairdresser, working for five years, before marrying Lloyd in Greymouth in 1984, then beginning her new career as wife and mother.

We love the pace of life on the Coast. Hokitika is a beautiful small town to live in with a population of about 3,000. Our home is a 10-minute walk from the town centre. The children can walk to their friends, the beach, the river, the park, SPCA, library and swimming pool. Sonya has many relations in Greymouth, and family gatherings play a big part in our lives, along with our church family and our ever-growing home-schooling family. At present there are 15 home-ed families in Hokitika, and seven in Greymouth, which is interesting as Greymouth's population is about 10,000.

We were aware of the home-ed option before Jessica started school 13 years ago, but as far as Lloyd was concerned, only radical alternative lifestylers did that sort of thing. (Perhaps that had something to do with both of his parents being school teachers!)

It's hard now to think of any one thing that changed our view of home-ed, but we can think of several influences that were important in the process. After initiating a parenting course called "Growing Kids God's Way" at our church, we subsequently led the course three more times. This material does not advocate home-ed at all, but it really made us think about how we could raise our children in a Christian environment

with Biblical principles while they were being taught contrary principles at school.

In early 1995 the local newspaper published an article about a home-ed family, Brent and Delwyn McAlister, in Greymouth. We knew of them, and they didn't strike us as being radical weirdos. Sonya recalls Lloyd's comment after reading the article that "these people are doing everything we want to do but are too scared to do." Sonya visited with Delwyn and came home greatly encouraged and inspired.

Not being impulsive people, we took the rest of that year to consider, investigate, pray and talk before deciding to get exemptions for Jessica and Jonathan (nine and seven at the time) and begin teaching them at our home from the start of 1996. A small Christian school in Hokitika closed down in 1995, and several of the families started home-ed at the same time as we did. The mutual support and encouragement provided was invaluable.

So we joined the ranks of radical weirdos, or that's what most of our extended family and friends thought anyway. We did not experience any strong opposition, but we could tell by people's reactions that they didn't understand why we were being so "irresponsible". The usual concerns were voiced – socialisation, formal qualifications, lack of professional training, isolationism, etc. The most vociferous objections were from those who were professionally committed to the state school system, who seemed to take our rejection of that system personally.

Like many of you, it seems, we started our home-ed journey using a very formal approach. We used the Carey College Correspondence programme for three years, mainly because we were very scared about not doing things the "right way", and especially in regards to Sonya's lack of confidence. We thoroughly appreciated the input, personal help and encouragement given to us by Dianne Eastwood, the primary school correspondence teacher, and the many good habits their system introduced us to. Looking back, the three years with them was more valuable to Sonya, than it was to the children.

ACE came next with the arrival of our fourth child. The workload of Carey College was pretty intense, so we felt using a programme with less input from Sonya would be the answer. This individual approach, with each child working independently, appealed to our two eldest children but not our third child Olivia, who was just beginning to read. By halfway through the year, Sonya discovered that not only was Olivia not enjoying learning with ACE, but Sonya was not enjoying it either. She seemed to be missing out on so much of what the children were learning and felt somewhat distant from them. We decided to stop using ACE with Olivia, and because at that stage she was interested in horses, Sonya began reading her "Black Beauty" during her lesson time. That was all we did.

This approach proved to be the turning point in our home-ed experience. As Sonya continued to read aloud to Olivia, she became more and more interested in the story. We would discuss the characters, the places and anything else that interested us. By the end of the story, Olivia was showing a real enthusiasm for books. This participation in Olivia's learning was what Sonya had been missing with the children, and this led us to look for something that encouraged this type of learning together.

At this time Sonya was also introduced to some Charlotte Mason material and was delighted with what she read, particularly *The Charlotte Mason Companion* by Karen Andreola.

After trying a variety of resources, we finally settled on the Sonlight material. These American-based Christian curricula allow for much interaction and reading aloud from great books together. Sonlight provides a major proportion of the children's reading material, which would be very difficult to source ourselves, and the detailed weekly plan lends itself well to those inevitable disruptions. The packages we have purchased have covered Bible, history, geography, poetry and reading.

Saxon Math, the *Teaching Writing Structure and Style* programme, *Simply Grammar*, the *Writing Road to Reading* programme, and science (using a mixture of resources and approaches including *Abeka*, *Apologia* and keeping a nature journal) conclude our formal academic subjects.

At some stage of the year we also try to do some art appreciation in the form of organised art classes with an art tutor, and a study of an artist and his work. Music appreciation is something else we are trying to do, although other than Jessica and Olivia learning the piano a couple of years ago, we haven't really achieved this yet. We have recently purchased Nathaniel and Hans Bluedorn's book, *The Fallacy Detective* (a great resource), and are reading this together once a week.

Matthew's and Samuel's lessons are Bible, math, science, spelling and handwriting (using *Writing Road to Reading*). Math is still basically learning addition and subtraction tables with a little bit of text book work. These lessons are each less than 15 minutes. Science consists of Sonya reading to them and adding to our nature journals occasionally. Matthew is not reading confidently on his own yet but is showing a great deal more interest in books than he was some months ago. Both Samuel and Matthew listen in on anything Sonya reads to the other children during their lessons, and they pick up on things that interest them.

An encouraging example of this "informal learning" happened one day when Sonya was reading a chapter from *The Fallacy Detective*; entitled "Red Herrings", while Matthew and Samuel were quietly playing in the same room. Some days later as she was busy with those end-of-day / before-tea activities, Sam interrupted by asking for a lolly. She didn't want to say no or have to deal with any potential upsets, so she tried a distraction by answering, "Well, it's nearly tea time, and you need to help me get ready for that." Immedi-

ately Sam's hand shot up into the air, and he shouted, "Red Herring! You didn't answer my question." He was right, and he knew it. Sonya was amazed and promptly gave him the direct answer of, "No". We had a good laugh about it and praised him on his listening skills. Another very helpful resource from the Blue-dorns is found on their web site, www.triviumpursuit.com, regarding teaching younger children. It is an article entitled, "Ten Things to Do with Your Child before the Age of Ten".

Children's Profiles

This year has been very busy for **Jessica**. Mornings are used for lessons such as French, Bible, Writing, History and Geography. Continuing Math into the 7th Form was not high on Jessica's list of priorities, so she is Math-less this year. Jessica loves to write; mainly poetry, but she has a few stories on the go at the moment. Keeping tropical fish and constructing a model house out of Popsicle sticks are two of Jessica's hobbies. She has had an aquarium for over two years now and has even managed to breed some cichlids. The model house has always been a dream of Jessica's. Building it was quite an achievement, and she is now finishing the window frames and fitting the furniture. Eventually she plans to have a small garden (fake of course) around it. Jessica has been working at the local library one hour a day for nearly three years now. The job consists of shelving books, returning them, issuing them, searching for them and constantly telling tourists that there is no bathroom/toilet/loo in the building for public use. She is also the librarian for the local Toy Library, working two hours each Tuesday. Managing a local primary grade hockey team and working as a volunteer at the SPCA fills in much of the rest of her time.

Jonathan's primary passion is books: collecting, reading, and enjoying them. Tales written by Captain W. Johns, Brian Jacques, J.R.R. Tolkien and *Calvin & Hobbes* comics by Bill Watterson are by far the most popular. His latest hobby (thanks to a fellow homeschooler and former work mate) is collecting and hand-painting *Lord of the Rings* miniatures for a complicated battle game. Jonathan has managed to get his younger brother Matthew hooked on the figures too. *Settlers of Catan* is a favourite board game of Jonathan's and the rest of the family. Designing structures out of Lego is something Jonathan is good at. In the past he has built huge towers with intricate motors and cogs sticking out everywhere. This year Jonathan has worked for his Dad on a number of occasions. This has given him a taste of surveying and the money he needs to keep up with his various hobbies. Jonathan also used to work at the Toy Library as the returns officer but has handed this over to Olivia. Much of the manual work around our section and the lawns and window cleaning of our neighbour's house is undertaken by Jonathan. This doesn't require much work in the winter (except wood chopping), but the summer is a different story!

As mentioned above, **Olivia** has taken over Jonathan's job as returns officer at the Westland Toy Library. She and one of her home-ed friends work there on Tuesday mornings for two hours with Jessica. Their job is to ensure that all the pieces of toys have been returned



and are all clean and unbroken. Olivia also plays hockey for a Greymouth club in the collegiate grade. Robyn, one of her friends who she played with last season, is in the team too. Sewing is one of Olivia's primary pastimes, other than being out with her friends. She creates all sorts of dresses for her dolls and has made some clothes for Benjamin, either by hand or with the sewing machine. Although she doesn't always enjoy baking, she is very good at it, and her chocolate cakes are extremely popular. Olivia also helps out at the SPCA twice a week.

Both **Matthew** and **Samuel** love to play hockey in the winter and backyard cricket in the summer. These two are great mates and really do have a lot of fun together. In fact, much of their time during the day is spent playing. Right now, because the older children have been studying the Middle Ages, Matthew and Samuel have developed a fascination with bows and arrows and the Crusader Knights. Consequently we have to be on guard the whole time as their arrows (the plastic, sucker kind) are constantly whizzing through the air. Of course, when the plastic shields and swords come out, big brother Jonathan is drawn into the battle and the rest of us dive for cover.

After nine years of home-ed we can't imagine life any other way. Having the children at home and experiencing so much together has been a wonderful blessing. This is not to say that it has been or is easy, though. Colossians 1:28-29 says, "We proclaim Him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labour, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me." Taking complete responsibility for our children's academic and life education is very demanding and is a struggle for us at times. It is only in His strength that we labour to do the best we can for His glory.

Letters



Carpetbaggers

I just wanted to say that it's a wonderful job you are doing for us. The article in the latest *TEACH Bulletin* on the letter from the minister was well researched, logical and down-right honest. Keep up the great work you are doing. Thanks for reminding me that the Lord has a plan for all our families' lives and that it's not a plan mapped out by Helen and her friend Trevor or the suits in Wellington, who at times think they are knights in shining armour rather than carpetbaggers in grey flannel suits as we know they are! May the Lord bless you and all the family

A Grateful Home Educating Father
NZ

Father/Son Conference

I would just like to thank you and Barbara for putting on the Fathers and Sons Workshop [put on through Family Integrity]. It was great, and I would like you to pass on my thanks to Geoffrey and David Botkin. You and Barbara have done so much to help Sharon and myself in bringing up our family through workshops, *TEACH Bulletin*, books and *Keystone* and by example. As a first generation Christian who comes from what was a dysfunctional family and from a Church background that put no importance on family, we have learnt so much about raising a godly family. So thank you both very much!

Murray Drinnan
Mangakino, NZ

Expand article into a Book!

Congratulations on the new edition of the magazine. You have surpassed yourselves, yet again! I particularly like the "Bringing up Teenage Boys" article. It would be great if it could be expanded into a book (hint, hint!). It is also wonderful to see Gatto's book popping up, even if it is in instalments.

Merrin Larsen
ACT, Australia

Great article!

Thank you for an excellent *Keystone*. We especially liked the "Faith of Us Fathers" article.

Anne-Marie Mullan
Forest Hill, VIC, Australia

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

Colossians 2:2-3 states well our purpose in doing what we do: "My purpose is that they (*our children*) may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Educating our children at home has allowed us to introduce Christ to them on a daily basis in a variety of ways. This has been and continues to be a blessing indeed.

The Faith of Us Fathers

Incisive Questions for Serious Dads

by Mr Geoffrey Botkin



(In October 2004, Geoffrey Botkin spoke at a Father and Son Conference put on by Family Integrity in Palmerston North. During the conference he presented the fathers with this list of questions to ask their sons and has kindly given permission for the list to be reprinted here. The additional introductory comments in this column are by Craig Smith.)

As we look through these questions and anticipate asking them of our own children, we will surely notice once again that, just as it is with the rest of home education and child rearing, the acid is on us parents, and on dads in particular, rather than on the children.

We bring so much baggage to the task and then let the baggage get in the way when it shouldn't. For example, some of these questions appear to be pretty heavy and rather demanding in the expectations implied in them. They are only heavy and demanding in our eyes, not in the eyes of our children when they first arrive. We are the ones with expectations and memories. The children have none when they are born, but they sure start collecting them early and rapidly.

It usually happens that by the time we start to seriously consider what standards we'd like to build into our children, we've already built into them a fairly comprehensive foundation of what they can expect:

- they've seen the kind of pace at which we expect life to proceed;
- they've observed the degree of excellence we require of ourselves and of those under our authority;
- they know whether you the instructor will model the same as you instruct or whether you will expect the child to do as you say while ignoring what you do;
- they are familiar with whether projects begun are brought to completion or whether there is generally good intention but little follow-through.

These things are a real source of concern for us dads just starting out to train up our children. But there is real hope: Jesus Christ the living word is sharper than any two-edged sword and can bring order out of our chaotic lives. The parent / child relation is incredibly resilient and can take a fair bit of abuse. When we repent from laziness and fuzzy thinking, ask the Lord, our spouse and children for forgiveness, and promise to do a better job with their help and reminding, we will find them rising eagerly to the challenge: our challenge is to remain constant and fixed and consistent and focussed on the path of righteousness before us.

Questions for Sons

- 1 Do your sons aspire to be godly men or worldly men?
- 2 Do your sons know what they believe?
- 3 Under what circumstances would they die for the faith?
- 4 Can they defend the faith verbally?
- 5 Can they defend good doctrine verbally?
- 6 Can they articulate a comprehensive statement of faith?
- 7 Have you disciplined them or neglected them?
- 8 Do your sons show you proper respect when you lead worship/teaching at home?
- 9 Do they respect other authority according to Biblical standards?
- 10 Do they receive discipline and instruction with all reverence?
- 11 Can you guide and correct them with your eyes?
- 12 Do you tolerate insolence or passive rebellion?
- 13 Do your sons have holy affections?
- 14 Have your sons given you their hearts?
- 15 Are there any Canaanites educating your children?
- 16 Is your church's teaching Biblical or confusing?
- 17 Does your teaching represent an accurate worldview in every way?
- 18 How accurately do you represent God to your sons?
- 19 Is your family a Biblical example of a family?
- 20 Do your children know their purpose in life?
- 21 Do they know who will love them?
- 22 Do they know who will protect them?
- 23 Do they know who will save them?
- 24 Do your sons have a vision of patriarchal leadership?
- 25 Do they look forward to being fathers and providers?
- 26 Will they be ready for marriage and fatherhood at 18? 21? 25? 35?
- 27 Will your sons be trustworthy arrows when you send them forth?

Bonus Questions for Daughters

- 28 Do your daughters love being girls and women?
- 29 Do they love being under their father's protection and guidance?
- 30 Are you preparing them to be devoted wives and mothers?
- 31 Do they know about the dangers of recreational dating?
- 32 Do they understand what it means to help the leader of a dynasty?
- 33 Have they embraced your vision? Do they know the extent of your commitment to them?
- 34 Do they understand how their service to you will prepare them to complete their husband?

Questions for All Your Children

- 35 Do your children have brotherly affection for one another?
- 36 Do they disciple one another constructively or do they act like competitors or enemies?
- 37 Do your children have personal messages they can entrust to others?
- 38 Can you give your children your blessing knowing they have been trained to be worthy of a blessing?

Home Education Research



a light switch. I demand that they become totally involved in my lessons, jumping up and down in their seats with anticipation, competing vigorously with each other for my favor. But when the bell rings, I insist that they drop the work at once and proceed quickly to the next work station. Nothing important is ever finished in my class, nor in any other class I know of.

The Six-Lesson Schoolteacher

*by John Taylor Gatto
New York State Teacher of the Year, 1991*

Call me Mr. Gatto, please. Twenty-six years ago, having nothing better to do, I tried my hand at school-teaching. My license certifies me as an instructor of English language and literature, but that isn't what I do at all. What I teach is school, and I win awards doing it.

Teaching means many different things, but six lessons are common to schoolteaching from Harlem to Hollywood. You pay for these lessons in more ways than you can imagine, so you might as well know what they are:

First Lesson

The first lesson I teach is: "Stay in the class where you belong." I don't know who decides that my kids belong there, but that's not my business. The children are numbered so that if any get away they can be returned to the right class. Over the years the variety of ways children are numbered has increased dramatically, until it is hard to see the human being under the burden of the numbers each carries. Numbering children is a big and very profitable business, though what the business is designed to accomplish is elusive.

In any case, again, that's not my business. My job is to make the kids like it — being locked in together, I mean — or at the minimum, endure it. If things go well, the kids can't imagine themselves anywhere else; they envy and fear the better classes and have contempt for the dumber classes. So the class mostly keeps itself in good marching order. That's the real lesson of any rigged competition like school. You come to know your place.

Nevertheless, in spite of the overall blueprint, I make an effort to urge children to higher levels of test success, promising eventual transfer from the lower-level class as a reward. I insinuate that the day will come when an employer will hire them on the basis of test scores, even though my own experience is that employers are (rightly) indifferent to such things. I never lie outright, but I've come to see that truth and [school] teaching are incompatible.

The lesson of numbered classes is that there is no way out of your class except by magic. Until that happens you must stay where you are put.

Second Lesson

The second lesson I teach kids is to turn on and off like

The lesson of bells is that no work is worth finishing, so why care too deeply about anything? Bells are the secret logic of schooltime; their argument is inexorable; bells destroy past and future, converting every interval into a sameness, as an abstract map makes every living mountain and river the same even though they are not. Bells inoculate each undertaking with indifference.

Third Lesson

The third lesson I teach you is to surrender your will to a predestined chain of command. Rights may be granted or withheld, by authority, without appeal. As a schoolteacher I intervene in many personal decisions, issuing a Pass for those I deem legitimate or initiating a disciplinary confrontation for behavior that threatens my control. My judgments come thick and fast because individuality is trying constantly to assert itself in my classroom. Individuality is a curse to all systems of classification, a contradiction of class theory.

Here are some common ways it shows up: children sneak away for a private moment in the toilet on the pretext of moving their bowels; they trick me out of a private instant in the hallway on the grounds that they need water. Sometimes free will appears right in front of me in children angry, depressed or exhilarated by things outside my ken. Rights in such things cannot exist for schoolteachers; only privileges (which can be withdrawn) exist.

Fourth Lesson

The fourth lesson I teach is that only I determine what curriculum you will study (rather, I enforce decisions transmitted by the people who pay me). This power lets me separate good kids from bad kids instantly. Good kids do the tasks I appoint with a minimum of conflict and a decent show of enthusiasm. Of the millions of things of value to learn, I decide what few we have time for. The choices are mine. Curiosity has no important place in my work, only conformity.

Bad kids fight against this, of course, trying openly or covertly to make decisions for themselves about what they will learn. How can we allow that and survive as schoolteachers? Fortunately there are procedures to break the will of those who resist.

This is another way I teach the lesson of dependency. Good people wait for a teacher to tell them what to do. This is the most important lesson of all, that we must wait for other people, better trained than ourselves, to make the meanings of our lives. It is no exaggeration to say that our entire economy depends upon this lesson being learned. Think of what would fall apart if

kids weren't trained in the dependency lesson: The social-service businesses could hardly survive, including the fast-growing counselling industry; commercial entertainment of all sorts, along with television, would wither if people remembered how to make their own fun; the food services, restaurants and prepared-food warehouses would shrink if people returned to making their own meals rather than depending on strangers to cook for them. Much of modern law, medicine and engineering would go too — the clothing business as well — unless a guaranteed supply of helpless people poured out of our schools each year. We've built a way of life that depends on people doing what they are told because they don't know any other way. Let's not rock that boat!

Fifth Lesson

In lesson five I teach that your self-respect should depend on an observer's measure of your worth. My kids are constantly evaluated and judged. A monthly report, impressive in its precision, is sent into students' homes to spread approval or to mark exactly — down to a single percentage point — how dissatisfied with their children parents should be. Although some people might be surprised how little time or reflection goes into making up these records, the cumulative weight of the objective-seeming documents establishes a profile of defect which compels a child to arrive at certain decisions about himself and his future based on the casual judgment of strangers.

Self-evaluation — the staple of every major philosophical system that ever appeared on the planet — is never a factor in these things. The lesson of report cards, grades and tests is that children should not trust themselves or their parents but must rely on the evaluation of certified officials. People need to be told what they are worth.

Sixth Lesson

In lesson six I teach children that they are being watched. I keep each student under constant surveillance and so do my colleagues. There are no private spaces for children; there is no private time. Class change lasts 300 seconds to keep promiscuous fraternization at low levels. Students are encouraged to tattle on each other, even to tattle on their parents. Of course I encourage parents to file their own child's waywardness, too.

I assign "homework" so that this surveillance extends into the household, where students might otherwise use the time to learn something unauthorized, perhaps from a father or mother, or by apprenticing to some wiser person in the neighborhood.

The lesson of constant surveillance is that no one can be trusted, that privacy is not legitimate. Surveillance is an ancient urgency among certain influential thinkers; it was a central prescription set down by Calvin in the *Institutes*, by Plato in the *Republic*, by Hobbes, by Comte, by Francis Bacon. All these childless men dis-

covered the same thing: Children must be closely watched if you want to keep a society under central control.

It is the great triumph of schooling that among even the best of my fellow teachers, and among even the best parents, there is only a small number who can imagine a different way to do things. Yet only a very few lifetimes ago things were different in the United States: originality and variety were common currency; our freedom from regimentation made us the miracle of the world; social class boundaries were relatively easy to cross; our citizenry was marvelously confident, inventive and able to do many things independently, to think for themselves. We were something, all by ourselves, as individuals.

It only takes about 50 contact hours to transmit basic literacy and math skills well enough that kids can be self-teachers from then on. The cry for "basic skills" practice is a smokescreen behind which schools pre-empt the time of children for twelve years and teach them the six lessons I've just taught you.

We've had a society increasingly under central control in the United States since just before the Civil War: the lives we lead, the clothes we wear, the food we eat and the green highway signs we drive by from coast to coast are the products of this central control. So, too, I think, are the epidemics of drugs, suicide, divorce, violence, cruelty and the hardening of class into caste in the U.S., products of the dehumanization of our lives, the lessening of individual and family importance that central control imposes.

Without a fully active role in community life you cannot develop into a complete human being. Aristotle taught that. Surely he was right; look around you or look in the mirror: that

is the demonstration.

"School" is an essential support system for a vision of social engineering that condemns most people to be subordinate stones in a pyramid that narrows to a control point as it ascends. "School" is an artifice which makes such a pyramidal social order seem inevitable (although such a premise is a fundamental betrayal of the American Revolution). In colonial days and through the period of the early Republic we had no schools to speak of. And yet the promise of democracy was beginning to be realized. We turned our backs on this promise by bringing to life the ancient dream of Egypt: compulsory training in subordination for everybody. Compulsory schooling was the secret Plato reluctantly transmitted in the Republic when he laid down the plans for total state control of human life.

The current debate about whether we should have a national curriculum is phony; we already have one, locked up in the six lessons I've told you about and a few more I've spared you. This curriculum produces moral and intellectual paralysis, and no curriculum of

"It is the great triumph of schooling that among even the best of my fellow teachers, and among even the best parents, there is only a small number who can imagine a different way to do things."

content will be sufficient to reverse its bad effects. What is under discussion is a great irrelevancy.

None of this is inevitable, you know. None of it is impregnable to change. We do have a choice in how we bring up young people; there is no right way. There is no “international competition” that compels our existence, difficult as it is to even think about in the face of a constant media barrage of myth to the contrary. In every important material respect our nation is self-sufficient. If we gained a philosophy that found meaning where it is genuinely located — in families, friends, the passage of seasons, in nature, in simple ceremonies and rituals, in curiosity, generosity, compassion and service to others, in a decent independence and privacy — then we would be truly self-sufficient.

How did these awful places, these “schools”, come about? As we know them, they are a product of the two “Red Scares” of 1848 and 1919, when powerful interests feared a revolution among our industrial poor, and partly they are the result of the revulsion with which old-line families regarded the waves of Celtic, Slavic and Latin immigration — and the Catholic religion — after 1845. And certainly a third contributing cause can be found in the revulsion with which these same families regarded the free movement of Africans through the society after the Civil War.

Look again at the six lessons of school. This is training for permanent underclasses, people who are to be deprived forever of finding the center of their own special genius. And it is training shaken loose from its original logic: to regulate the poor. Since the 1920s the growth of the well-articulated school bureaucracy, and the less visible growth of a horde of industries that profit from schooling exactly as it is, have enlarged schooling’s original grasp to seize the sons and daughters of the middle class.

Is it any wonder Socrates was outraged at the accusation that he took money to teach? Even then, philosophers saw clearly the inevitable direction the professionalization of teaching would take, pre-empting the teaching function that belongs to all in a healthy community; belongs, indeed, most clearly to yourself, since nobody else cares as much about your destiny. Professional teaching tends to another serious error. It makes things that are inherently easy to learn, like reading, writing and arithmetic, difficult — by insisting they be taught by pedagogical procedures.

With lessons like the ones I teach day after day, is it any wonder we have the national crisis we face today? Young people indifferent to the adult world and to the future; indifferent to almost everything except the diversion of toys and violence? Rich or poor, schoolchildren cannot concentrate on anything for very long. They have a poor sense of time past and to come; they are mistrustful of intimacy (like the children of divorce they really are); they hate solitude, are cruel, materialistic, dependent, passive, violent, timid in the face of the unexpected, addicted to distraction.

All the peripheral tendencies of childhood are magnified to a grotesque extent by schooling, whose hidden curriculum prevents effective personality development.

Indeed, without exploiting the fearfulness, selfishness and inexperience of children, our schools could not survive at all, nor could I as a certified schoolteacher.

“Critical thinking” is a term we hear frequently these days as a form of training which will herald a new day in mass schooling. It certainly will, if it ever happens. No common school that actually dared teach the use of dialectic, heuristic and other tools of free minds could last a year without being torn to pieces.

Institutional schoolteachers are destructive to children’s development. Nobody survives the Six-Lesson Curriculum unscathed, not even the instructors. The method is deeply and profoundly anti-educational. No tinkering will fix it. In one of the great ironies of human affairs, the massive rethinking that schools require would cost so much less than we are spending now that it is not likely to happen. First and foremost, the business I am in is a jobs project and a contract-letting agency. We cannot afford to save money, not even to help children.

At the pass we’ve come to historically, and after 26 years of teaching, I must conclude that one of the only alternatives on the horizon for most families is to teach their own children at home. Small, de-institutionalized schools are another. Some form of free-market system for public schooling is the likeliest place to look for answers. But the near impossibility of these things for the shattered families of the poor, and for many on the fringes of the economic middle class, foretell that the disaster of Six-Lesson Schools is likely to continue.

After an adult lifetime spent in teaching school, I believe the method of schooling is the only real content it has. Don’t be fooled into thinking that good curricula or good equipment or good teachers are the critical determinants of your son and daughter’s schooltime. All the pathologies we’ve considered come about in large measure because the lessons of school prevent children from keeping important appointments with themselves and their families, to learn lessons in self-motivation, perseverance, self-reliance, courage, dignity and love — and, of course, lessons in service to others, which are among the key lessons of home life.

Thirty years ago these things could still be learned in the time left after school. But television has eaten most of that time, and a combination of television and the stresses peculiar to two-income or single-parent families have swallowed up most of what used to be family time. Our kids have no time left to grow up fully human, and only thin-soil wastelands to do it in.

A future is rushing down upon our culture which will insist that all of us learn the wisdom of non-material experience; this future will demand, as the price of survival, that we follow a pace of natural life economical in material cost. These lessons cannot be learned in schools as they are. School is like starting life with a 12-year jail sentence in which bad habits are the only curriculum truly learned. I teach school and win awards doing it. I should know.

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Tough Questions People Ask

How Do You Conquer Burnout? (Part 3, Final)

by Ellyn Davis



Chris & Ellyn Davis of www.ElijahCo.Com with sons James, Blake & Seth.

Sin and Unbelief in Our Lives

No discussion of frustration and stress would be complete without examining whether there is any sin or unbelief in our lives that may be contributing to our feelings of being overwhelmed and under-supported. The primary relationship that undergirds all of our other relationships is the relationship we have with God. If our relationship with God is out of balance because of sin or unbelief, all other relationships suffer and no amount of time management, household organization, self-help, spiritual friendships, mentors or counsellors will help. These measures may seem to provide temporary relief but will never address the root problem, which is our disobedience to or lack of faith in God.

Let's look at the three most common areas of sin that cause women to be stressed-out. First, there is the area of proper discipline and training of children. When we do not "nurture and admonish" our children in the ways God requires, we are not only creating children who make our lives miserable, but more importantly, we are sinning against God. Next is the area of the husband-wife relationship. If your attitude toward your husband stinks, it will be impossible to achieve a sense of peace and order in your home no matter how hard you try. Finally, there is the area of personal sin. Maybe your house is a wreck because you feel it's unfair for you to have to do so much work, or you feel cheated of your potential by being a mother and home-maker. Or maybe you're caught up in some secret sin like over-eating or sexual fantasies or whatever. No matter what your personal sin, it clouds your relationship with God, with others and with earthly things like time and money.

The bad news about sin is that it is like a disease

that weakens every part of our lives. The good news is that God freely forgives and heals us if we confess our sins and turn from our wicked ways.

Unbelief is a form of sin. God has provided everything we need through many precious promises, and through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. This "everything" includes strength and vision to enjoy the privilege and endure the demands of home schooling our children and running a household. The Bible says, "The wise woman builds her

house, but the foolish woman tears it down with her own hands." We are foolish women when we let our sin and unbelief tear down our houses.

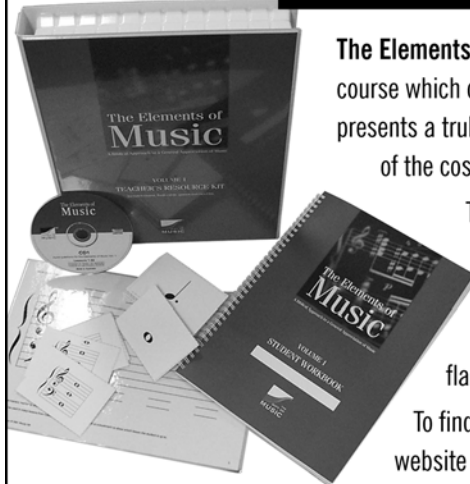
Reaching Ground Zero with God

When you're in the midst of a crisis, when you've reached the end of your rope, when you can't seem to find the inner resources to keep going for another day, you often will reach a place of "ground zero" with God. Ground zero is a term used to designate the immediate blast area of a nuclear bomb, and sometimes life sends "bombs" that leave you feeling like you are in nuclear winter. The nuclear winters of life are times when you must come to terms with Who God really is. So in one way these times are extreme challenges, but in another way they are "gifts" from God because they give you a true perspective of what is valuable and what is not, they show you who your real friends are and they force you to accept God on His terms.

Here is the story of one of my "ground zero" experiences. In January, 1994, due to a freak accident, a piece of metal fractured my skull and destroyed my

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right eye. Just before the accident occurred, Chris had resigned from the pastorate, and the lease was up on the house we were renting. This meant we had sixty days to find another place to live and another source of income. The Elijah Company at that time certainly was not capable of sustaining us financially.

While I was recovering from surgery for removal of my eye, well-meaning Christians came and counselled me. Most of their counsel was variations on five themes: either (1) there must be some sin in my life for me to have been injured, or (2) I had somehow “come out from under my covering of authority” for this to have happened, or (3) I would never have been injured if Chris hadn’t decided to leave the pastorate, or (4) God was teaching me a powerful lesson through this or (5) I must be a very special person for God to have let this happen to me. All of this conflicting counsel further unravelled me emotionally, and I began to feel like I would throw up if I ever heard Romans 8:28 again.

After my release from the hospital, I had to be very careful in standing and was not supposed to lift anything or do any physical work for six weeks. The only comforting aspect of that six weeks was a tape my sister sent me with the chorus, “I’m going to walk right out of this valley, lift my hands and praise the Lord!” I don’t know the name of the song, but I played it over and over.

But a remarkable thing happened. Some people I had thought were good friends vanished, but people I hardly knew started packing up the house for me. They brought meals and offered to watch the children. A church group from another part of town came over the day we had to move, rented the moving van, loaded it, drove it to our new place, unloaded it and cleaned up the old house. Then they presented us with a “love offering” of enough money to help us get started in the new direction we felt God was leading us.

The challenges continued. Losing an eye meant losing depth perception and balance, so I had to re-learn how to do many, many things I had never before realized relied on hand-eye coordination, balance and depth perception. This was a very long, fearful process, but I had to keep going because life didn’t slow down just because I had been injured. Children needed caring for, a household needed managing and a business needed me to write catalogs, speak at conventions and exhibit at book fairs. There were times during those first years after the accident when I was hanging on emotionally and spiritually by the thinnest of threads.

But you know what? As trying as these times were, something “ground zero” about God was being formed in me. Francis Shaeffer always described our relationship with God as a series of “bows.” Well, I had to bow to God’s god-ness. This meant I had to acknowledge that He is God and I’m not. It’s hard to explain, but I realized that God is God, so He’s always right, no matter what happens and no matter what I might think about what He does. It may not make sense, but it was very freeing to know my life was out of my control and in the hands of a God whose “work is perfect and all His ways are just.”

Several months after the surgery, I went for one of my monthly doctor’s appointments and happened to sit in the waiting room next to a man who had also lost his eye. I asked him what had helped him get through it, and he told me his story. He had been a telephone workman repairing the line when the pole he was attached to snapped at the base and fell over on him. The whole right side of his body had been crushed and he had undergone multiple surgeries to regain limited use of his limbs and to reconstruct his face. This is what he said, “For the first few months to a year, all you will be able to think about is what happened to you and how bad off you are. Then, after about a year, you’ll only think about it a few times a day. After about another year, you’ll only think about it a couple of times a week, then a couple of times a month, and then you’ll get on with your life and hardly ever think about it anymore.” It’s been over six years now, and the man was right.

There is one final “gift” I want to mention. One of my greatest private griefs in losing an eye was that I found I couldn’t ride a horse anymore because I would get dizzy and lose my balance. I struggled with feeling like one of the things I loved to do most had been stripped from me. Then, in the fall of 1999 I went to a Cowboys for Christ service at the All-American Quarter Horse Congress. One of the men who spoke at the service (Steve Heckaman) had been a famous horse trainer who was involved in a horrendous traffic accident that crushed the right side of his body, killed his wife and injured his young son. He had to undergo multiple surgeries and extensive rehabilitation. On that day in Cowboy Church he shared how the accident had totally transformed his life and brought him to Christ. He had learned to walk again, but one of his biggest challenges had been riding again because he had lost his right eye and no longer had the balance and depth perception he needed to stay in the saddle. With the help of friends, he learned to ride again and came back to the show ring and won at the largest Quarter Horse show in the world.

So guess what? I’m starting to ride again. I’m still scared, and it’s still a struggle, but I’m going to do it.

So what’s the point of all this. Well, one point is that your “ground zero” experience may be the turning point in someone else’s life. Another point is that “ground zero” experiences will eventually enter the “This too shall pass” phase and life will move on. The third point is that there will always be someone else whose “ground zero” experiences make yours look like a piece of cake. The fourth point is that, after a “ground zero” experience, life’s everyday hassles don’t seem so hard to bear. And the final point is that these experiences can be “gifts” in disguise, gifts that bring you face to face with Who God really is.

In Closing

I know this article is way too long, and I’ve turned it into a testimonial, but before closing I want to share a recent experience. My father died unexpectedly in No-

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

Over a Cuppa

The Myth of Socialization

by John Loeffler



Every time I run into a public school teen it happens.

“Hi, Ryan.”

Unintelligible grunt response.

“Whatcha doing?”

“Nuthin’.”

“Anything happenin’?”

“Naw.”

Whereafter Ryan hurries off to pursue his active life of nothing happening with his friends, and I check to see if I have acquired dengue fever without knowing it. So tell me, where is this socialization the government school crowd always promotes as a reason for not home schooling?

When home schooling took on serious momentum two decades ago, educrats chanted the mantra that home schoolers couldn't *poooooosibly* get the same quality education that students in public schools had; nor could their parents teach them because they weren't qualified to do so. However, as home school scores on standardized tests soared above public school scores and home schoolers took top positions in national academic competition, that argument went down in flames; although some ideologues will try to resurrect it every now and then.

Stupidity Masquerading as a Virtue

Needless to say, home school's success was *tres* embarrassing for the educrats, who then contradicted their earlier arguments by complaining it wasn't fair to allow home schoolers in national competition because they had an unfair advantage over public schoolers. After all, those educated at home had more one-on-one time from those same parents the educrats originally said were too incompetent to educate their children.

Time for a New Mantra

The latest mantra asserts that home schooled kids — although possibly better educated — just can't be socialized in a home school set-

ting. Once again experience is showing just the opposite.

Every week I go out of my way to speak to teenagers just to see what's going on in their minds. Too often the answer is nothing. Public school students seem to have this glassy, disorganized, disoriented look about them. They're preoccupied with things that don't matter, especially image and conforming to peer pressure. I really do keep trying to argue myself out of this observation, but it grows inexorably the more teens I interview.

Changing Students' Attitudes, Values and Beliefs

This lack of social presence is a direct result of the “socialization” of our educational system. Thanks to the elitists, today's public school students are taught dialectically rather than didactically. This means they are taught there are no absolute facts or morals, and a thought process based on feeling and collective thinking has been substituted for individuality and logical, rational thought. History has been revised to match politically-correct guidelines and the basis for belief in one's culture destroyed.

A large part of public curriculum is devoted to shaping attitudes and beliefs into a relativist, socialist mind set rather than educating the students in the solid education and the classics which served a previously-literate country well for generations. This accounts for the

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glassy look that so many public school students exhibit — nothing going on upstairs. In talking with them, many of them would like to have something going on but just don't know what or how because their dialectic public education didn't teach them to achieve it. The bottom line on the dialectical is group think. Without a group, the individuals can't think.

Home schoolers on the contrary have escaped the morass of public educational theory and returned to the traditional form of didactic education: facts, phonics, mathematics, self-responsibility and logical thought. It shows. Colleges are soliciting home schoolers because they can think uniquely and out-perform their public school peers. Three years ago when virtually everyone in my daughter's college speech class did speeches on global warming (even the professor yawned after the X-number speech on hot air), she did a blockbuster speech on the coming biological terrorism — two years before anyone had ever heard of Osama bin Whatshisname — which held the whole class that listened in stunned silence. An "A" on that one, by the way.

Home schoolers are bringing fresh creative air into an otherwise stuffy academic environment, which is why it represents such a threat to the education establishment.

Oh, But the Children!

Ok, so what about socialization? It doesn't really happen in public high schools because those are abnormal environments. Nowhere in life — not even the military — will one be associating strictly with people of one's own age or be subjected to massive amounts of mind-numbing, conformity-inducing peer pressure totally preoccupied with image and having nothing to do with real life. Moreover they will be confronted with a myriad of moral and sometimes physical hazards which their relativistic education leaves them singularly unprepared to face. "Just say no" doesn't cut it without a solid absolute moral basis for saying "no."

The stratification of students into age-related peer groups has choked off the ability of teens to model from and communicate with those older than one's self, which is how maturational development is supposed to occur. It used to happen that way when students were educated at home or in small schools where the ages were mixed. One learns to be an adult from adults; not from other teens pretending to be cool, uh in, uh hip, uh groovey, uh rad, uh....what's the latest buzz word? In any stratified school situation, the students are forced to model after each other — the blind leading the blind.

Combine deprivation from normal inter-age interaction with the imposition of values and beliefs contrary to their parents and one finds the adult-teen "communication gap" so widely posed as "normal"; another problem created by socialization in public education. It is also the source of the "normal" teen rebellion, which isn't normal at all. It's one thing to teach youth to be independent and self-sustaining but that doesn't require rebellion. Teen rebellion is the product of communication cutoff between teens and parents

because they spend the majority of their days apart and in the case of teens in an artificial environment called public education.

Reality Shock

The moment teens leave high school, the majority of the so-called socialization in an artificial environment is found to be worthless. No one cares about their feelings, socialization or image. "What can you do?" and "what do you know?" are the real questions. Once public schoolers emerge from high school, they discover that all the socialization skills they learned in dealing with peer pressure don't apply in the real world. Meanwhile the inter-age communication skills they need are sorely lacking. Most government schoolers I have met can't read, think, express themselves clearly and concisely, have little knowledge of anything from history to politics, and have a very distorted view of both history and society imposed upon them by a radical leftist curriculum.

Home schoolers don't suffer from the strictures of peer pressure and other artificial structures of public schools. They are, I have found, much better integrated than their public school counterparts, being as conversant with adults as with peers on a wide range of topics. They are skeptical of much of the peer-pressure nonsense their public school peers accept so readily because they have found they can truly be individuals without fear.

Socially, home schoolers congregate in soccer leagues, football leagues, baseball leagues, special events, ski trips, astronomy clubs, church groups, on the internet, etc. So please, Mr. Sociologist, can you help me find this appalling lack of socialization among home schoolers so we can stamp it out and stop depriving them of this most important asset? But you know, the more I think about it, home schoolers don't have to learn to put condoms on bananas, suffer from peer pressure, be introduced to illicit drugs, be subjected to one-sided radical leftist curricula, be taught moral values contrary to their parents or religion, be beaten up by bullies or even stabbed, shot and killed. Maybe we can do without that type of socialization for a while. What do you think?

(John Loeffler is host of the nationally-syndicated radio news program *Steel on Steel* heard at www.steelonsteel.com. This program was broadcast on 13 September 2002. Used with permission.)

School Is a Prison

*by George Bernard Shaw
winner of 1925 Nobel Prize in Literature*

. . . and there is, on the whole, nothing on earth intended for innocent people so horrible as a school. To begin with, it is a prison. But it is in some respects more cruel than a prison. In a prison, for instance, you are not forced to read books written by the warders (who of course would not be warders and governors if they could write readable books) and beaten or otherwise tormented if you cannot remember their utterly unmemorable contents. In the prison you are not forced

to sit listening to the turnkeys discoursing without charm or interest on subjects that they don't understand and don't care about, and are therefore incapable of making you understand or care about. In a prison they may torture your body; but they do not torture your brains; and they protect you against violence and outrage from your fellow-prisoners. In a school you have none of these advantages. With the world's bookshelves loaded with fascinating and inspired books, the very manna sent down from Heaven to feed your souls, you are forced to read a hideous imposture called a school book, written by a man who cannot write: a book from which no human can learn anything: a book which, though you may decipher it, you cannot in any fruitful sense read, though the enforced attempt will make you loathe the sight of a book all the rest of your life. ["A Treatise on Parents and Children," preface to *Misalliance* (1909), reprinted in *Bernard Shaw: Collected Plays with Their Prefaces, volume IV* (1972), page 35.]

The NZ State School Socialisation Programme

The social environment of public schools is certainly nothing to commend if one takes at face value the extremely negative reports the schools and teachers say about themselves and their own system. In the last couple of years we've read that the average class has several disruptive students, teachers abuse their students just as students abuse each other and that parents are being unrealistic to expect schools to be drug free.

Post Primary Teachers Association president Jen McCutcheon said, "There's been a growth in dysfunctionality in society, and a lot of these issues are being brought into the schools...There's also been an increase in drug culture and in ADD (attention deficit disorder) . . . commonly three, four or five kids are severely disruptive in every class, creating a lot of extra pressure on kids who just want to go on and learn."¹

According to the NZ Principals' Federation (NZPF), teachers are spending an increasing amount of time and energy dealing with "crowd control" and behaviour management, rather than in actually teaching. Growing numbers of unruly primary school children are not only destroying teachers' resolve but also paralysing the education of their better-behaved classmates. The situation is such that NZPF President Kelvin Squire has come out with the incredible statement that normal, well-behaved children are the new "at-risk" group. In an article by Stuart Dye, education reporter for the *NZ Herald*, it was claimed, "Every primary school principal contacted by the *Herald* agreed there had been a significant increase in anti-social behaviour, particularly among younger children beginning school." Carolyn Osborne, deputy principal of Elm Park School in east Auckland, said the biggest increase in troublesome youngsters was among five-year-olds starting school. "There's a big difference between a naughty child and one with severe emotional problems. It's the latter we are seeing increasing."²

Victoria University educational psychologist Anna Piekarska studied 287 university students and found

46% of them had suffered from abusive teacher behaviour while at school. The abuse ranged from being shouted at and called names to inappropriate sexual touching. Dr Piekarska said this behaviour could leave students demoralised and humiliated and possibly prepared to retaliate with violence. Dr Piekarska, who has studied "teacher abusive behaviour" throughout Eastern Europe, said the rate of abuse reported in New Zealand was "very, very high". Just over 3% of reported abuse by teachers against students occurred every day, 24.8% a "few times a week". Now this adds up to 28% of the 46% who said they suffered from abusive teachers. That means 12.9% of students are being ill-treated by teachers at least a "few times a week." Asked how they dealt with it, more than a third said they fought back by reporting the teacher, physically fighting the teacher or retaliating in some other way. About a third simply tolerated the abuse, Dr Piekarska said. In defense of teachers, Palmerston North Boys' High School rector David Syms said he was shouted at every day.³

Eleven teachers had their registration cancelled between July 2000 and April 2001 for offences ranging from sexual molestation to arson. A further 96 were dismissed or resigned while being investigated by schools. Of these, 33 left for incompetence, 31 for misconduct, 11 for sexual offences and five for holding pornographic material. At that time, the Teacher Registration Board (TRB) was investigating a further 20 teachers for misconduct. Offences by men mostly involved some form of physical abuse from sexual offences to assault. Offences by women involved drug use, fraud and theft. Board director Dr John Langley said some schools chose to keep misconduct by teachers quiet for the TRB could only investigate teachers if a possible jail term of more than 12 months was involved or if principals requested action.⁴

"Any secondary school that reckons they don't have a drug problem is probably burying its head in the sand. Every secondary school in New Zealand has a drug problem in my view," said Mr Hocking, principal of Kawerau College in the Bay of Plenty.⁵

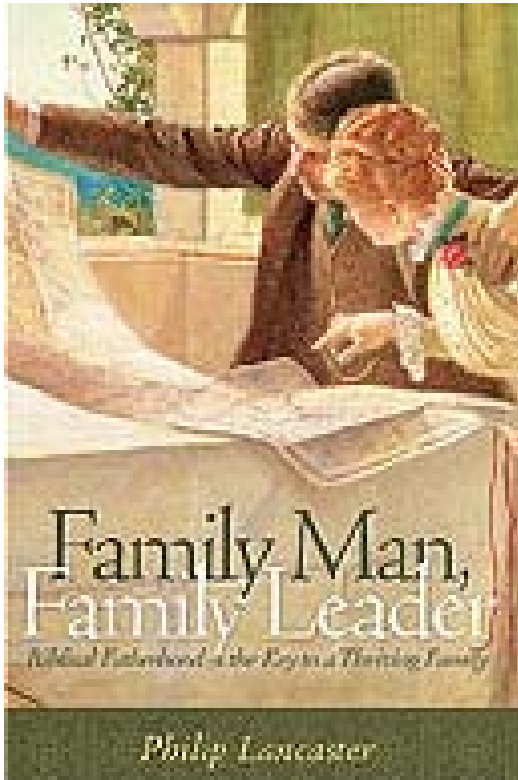
In fact, at their annual conference of 25 September 2002, the Post Primary Teachers' Association Executive said parents are being unrealistic if they expect their children's school to be drug-free.⁶

Notes:

1. *Dominion*, 16 May 02, "Five disruptive kids a class", <http://www.stuff.co.nz/inl/print/0,1103,1203494a1701,FF.html>
2. *NZ Herald*, 30 April 2004, " 'Normal' pupils new at-risk group, say principals", <http://tinyurl.com/23lcd>
3. *Manawatu Evening Standard*, 5 June 2002, "Academic's claims of abuse 'bizarre'", <http://www.stuff.co.nz/inl/print/0,1103,1225408a1900,FF.html>
4. *The Press*, 5 April 2001, "Registrations wiped for 11 teachers", <http://www.stuff.co.nz/inl/print/0,1103,733605a1934,FF.html>
5. *Stuff*, 14 May 2002, "All schools have drug problems - principal", <http://www.stuff.co.nz/inl/print/0,1103,1201748a1801,FF.html>
6. *Stuff*, 25 Sept 2002, "Drug-free schools unrealistic goal: PPTA", <http://www.stuff.co.nz/stuff/0,2106,2060921a11,00.html>

The

Home Education Foundation presents...



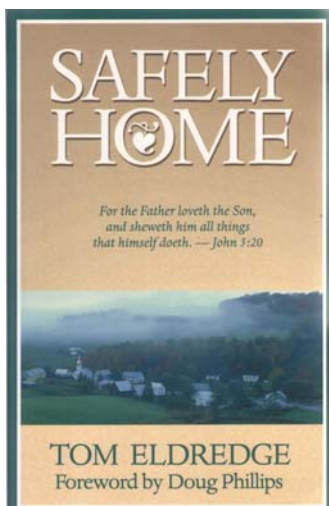
its 2004 feature title:

Family Man, Family Leader

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

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

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

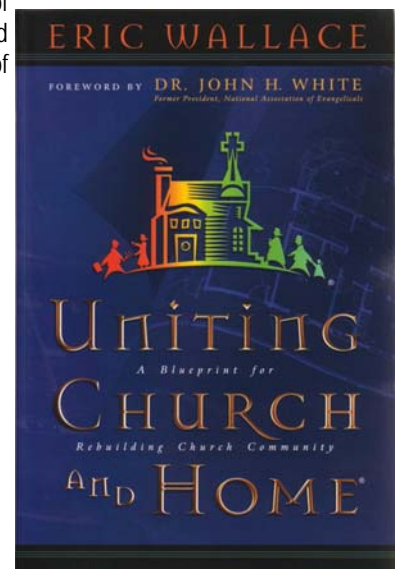
Here are Biblical solutions. Paperback, 110 pages.

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

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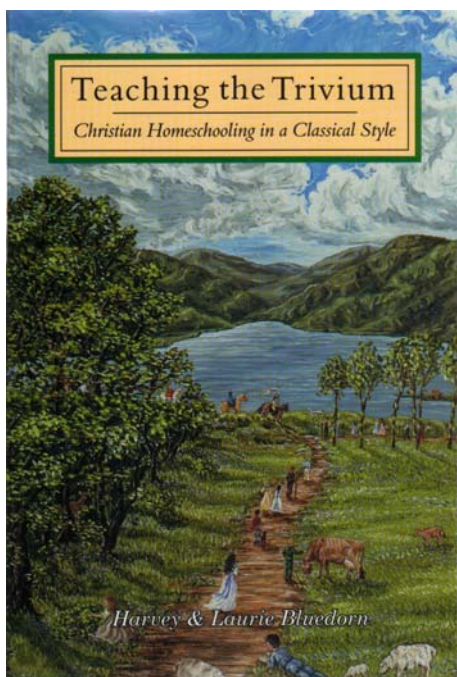
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Books by the Bluedorns

Books by the Bluedorns



Teaching the Trivium

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

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

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

ON FAMILY WORSHIP

Biblical Facts,
Biblical Foundations
and
Practical Suggestions

by
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A Christian's Guide to

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Proverbs 4:7

Learning Logic at Home

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

Learning Logic at Home

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

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

35 pages, A5.

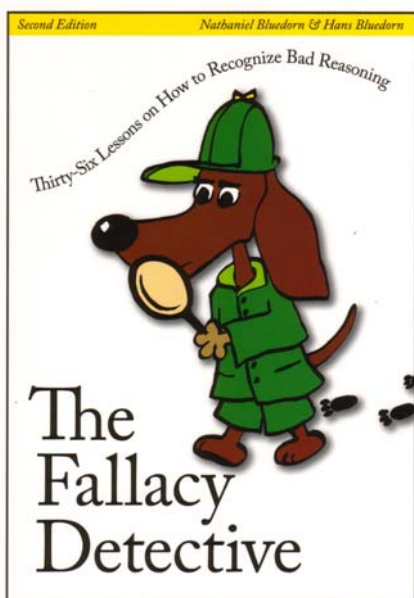
The Fallacy Detective

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

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

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

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



More Books...

The Heart of Homeschooling

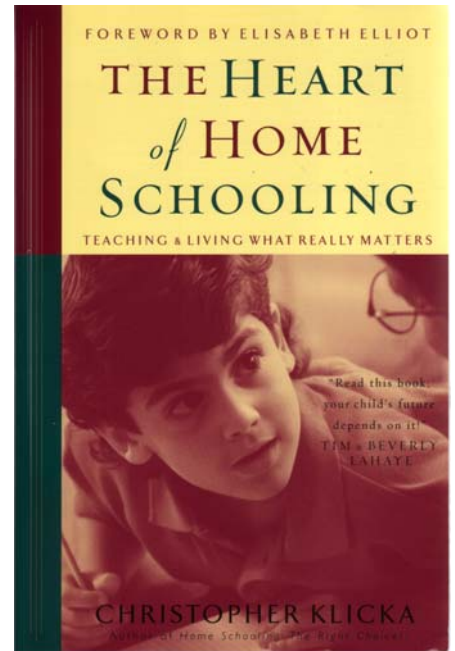
Raising children is hard work. Raising children *and homeschooling* is really hard work!

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

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

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

Softcover. 218 pages.



A New Zealand Home Educator's Guidebook

Preparing for an ERO Review

Craig S. Smith

Preparing for an ERO Review

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

Be prepared for your review! Read this booklet!

20 pages, A5 size.

Training Children and Youth to be

Pure

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

Prepared by Barbara Smith
(70+ A4 pages)

Training Our Children and Youth to be Pure

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

72 pages. A4 size.

Training Our Children

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

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

35 pages. A4 size.

TRAINING OUR CHILDREN

by
Craig & Barbara Smith

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

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Teaching the Trivium	\$59.95	\$59.00	\$44.95	£28.00		
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Learning Logic at Home	\$10.00	\$11.50	\$6.95	£4.50		
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Graduates Speak



Finding Fulfillment in Home Schooling

by Wesley Strackbein

I talked to a home schooling mom on the phone recently who was frustrated because she was uncertain if the time she spent teaching her kids was paying off.

She spoke of several of her children, noting their lack-luster response to much of her instruction. One son enjoyed his science textbook, but didn't seem motivated to study anything else. Another didn't like schoolwork that took very long to finish; he hated unit studies.

She said she had tried several different methods of teaching, but none seemed to work. None seemed to capture her children's attention, despite her careful planning and continued persistence.

Then she read an article which heralded *classical education* as the way to go because of the many great men in America's past who had benefitted from this method of instruction—and she felt even more discouraged. Was this just another approach, that if adopted, would lead to abysmal results? Could her children really become as great as our founding fathers?

This mom felt like a failure. She felt like neither she nor her children were being fulfilled by home schooling.

I am sure that most home schooling parents, at one time or another, have harbored similar thoughts—and have thrown up their hands and wanted to throw in the towel. I know my parents did.

In times like these, only God's Word can bring solace. The Bible speaks to every problem we as finite, fallen creatures face, providing comfort and wisdom.

Turning to the Scriptures, we see Solomon, who in today's world would be described as the quintessential success story, struggling with fulfillment. He seemingly had everything anyone could ever want: wisdom, wealth, women and fame—yet he had no happiness. Amidst his struggle, he voiced a telling cry: "Of making books there is no end, and much study is wearisome to the flesh" (Ecclesiastes 12:12).

Home schooling parents express the same frustration in similar terms: "Which of the kazillion available textbooks do I choose for my children? How do I keep both my kids and myself from burning out?"

Tough questions. But there is something more fundamental at stake. Fulfillment only comes when a more important issue is resolved: What constitutes education? What are its basic building blocks? Solomon

broke down education into two simple elements which define the purpose of life: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

Sound too simple? Can fulfillment and educational success really come by following these two directives? Let's look to the Proverbs: "Happy is the man that feareth [the Lord] always . . ." (Proverbs 28:14). Fulfillment comes by fearing the Lord; education begins here: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of all wisdom . . . the fear of the Lord is the beginning of all knowledge" (Proverbs 9:10;1:7). As a man fears God, he discovers wisdom and consequently experiences joy: "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding" (Proverbs 3:13).

Teaching your kids to reverence God should be the first defining principle of their education. Teaching them God's law should be the second. Moses recognized the importance of this principle long before Solomon ever came on the scene. In his final words to the children of Israel, he explained:

Set your hearts on all the words which I testify among you today, which you shall command your children to be careful to observe—all the words of this law. For it is not a futile thing for you, because it is your life. . .

(Deuteronomy 33:46-47).

Solomon struggled with life's meaning, longing for fulfillment. Over and over he said, "Vanity, vanity, all is vanity." Finally, after much anguish, he realized his assertion was wrong. He grasped Moses' words and found true contentment.

If you are a home schooling parent who is struggling, I challenge you to teach your children after the Scriptural model: to fear God and keep His commandments. Sure, you will still have to make curriculum decisions, but if your method of teaching is founded upon these two principles, you will find true fulfillment and ultimately succeed.

(Wesley Strackbein began his home school journey in 1985 when his parents, Roger and Jenny, began teaching him and his sister Sherena at home. Wesley is the oldest of seven children, hailing from the coastal town of Aransas Pass, Texas. After finishing his high school studies at home, he spent two years (1996-7) with the Home School Legal Defense Association, first as an intern and later as project manager for the Communications Department. While at HSLDA, Wesley took part in a mentorship program lead by HSLDA attorney Doug Phillips. Providentially, soon after Wesley moved back to Texas, Doug Phillips relocated his family to the Lone Star State and started Vision Forum. Wesley became a full-time member of the Vision Forum staff in May of 1999, and he currently serves as their marketing director. Visit Vision Forum online at www.visionforum.com. This article originally appeared in The Harbor, copyright 1998. Used with permission.)

Home Educators Did It

The von Trapp Family Singers

by Genevieve Smith



L-R: Amanda, Sofia, Justin and Melanie

It was the 23rd of August 2004 in Wellington. During the day the *Enough is Enough* march had made its way to Parliament with a message of family importance and holding a multigenerational vision for preserving Christianity in New Zealand for their children and grandchildren. That evening a most remarkable event was taking place just metres from where the *Enough is Enough* march started. Four children were performing live folksongs in the Wellington Town Hall. Why was this such a remarkable event? Because these four children are the great-grandchildren of Captain von Trapp.

In 1965 the world was a buzz after the release of the film *The Sound of Music*. This movie chronicled the lives of Captain Georg von Trapp, his children and their relationship with their governess Maria who later became the captain's wife and the children's step-mother. Set in Austria, the family had to flee the country after the Nazi invasion. They fled to the USA where the real life von Trapp family toured for



many years singing folk songs to support themselves. The real life von Trapps (like the cast in the movie) were very talented singers. And now, the family heritage and talent is being preserved through the great-grandchildren of Captain von Trapp! Sofia (16), Melanie (14), Amanda (13) and Justin (9) are the children of Steffan and Annie von Trapp. Steffan is the son of Werner von Trapp, Georg von Trapp's son. Incidentally, they changed Werner's name to Kurt in *The Sound of Music*! On the 23rd they performed many of the famous *Sound of Music* songs along with various folksongs and favourite ditties of their grandfather. Their performance was wonderful, their voices beautiful, their story inspiring and the night "one to remember"!

But what makes this a fit story for our "Home Schoolers Did It" column? The von Trapp family is a home schooling family! The family has been singing and touring for a long time, but even before this, they were a home schooling family. Sofia was in preschool when her parents got a note from a school saying that a place was available for her in 1st grade but that it wouldn't last long since a lot of folks were after it. Steffan and Annie had been dissatisfied for awhile with the idea of sending their children to school since they didn't consider schools to be very nice places at all. So when they received the letter, Steffan was put off, thinking they didn't need that kind of pressure to put Sofia into the school. At the same time, and what tipped the scales to cause the von Trapps to start home schooling, was a 15 year old lad with whom Steffan was working. The boy's father was employing Steffan at the time while Steffan was setting up his own business. The 15 year old was so pleasant to be around. He was a lot of fun and a regular conversationalist, not like normal teen-aged mutes. He was also a home schooler. Steffan figured if home schooling helps to produce this kind of teen, it's got to be good! And so the von Trapps entered into the ranks of those who teach their children at home.

Once the family started home schooling they found a lot of good support networks where they were in Montana. It was not an easy thing to home educate, what with the commitment and the separation. But Steffan believed that he was called to it. The family understood that home education was a lot more than

Photo to the left:

Top, L-R: Steffan von Trapp and Craig Smith holding Kaitlyn Smith
 Next row: Annie and Sofia von Trapp and Barbara Smith
 Next row: Melanie, Amanda and Justin von Trap, Charmagne and Jeremiah Smith
 Bottom: Genevieve and Jedediah Smith

just academics. This helped as they experienced some alienation from family and friends when they started.

They've really appreciated how well home educating has worked with all the singing and touring they do. Wherever they go, they like to promote homeschooling and spread the gospel. This is evident in their performance. In between their songs the children provide a running commentary. They talk about their costumes (which are authentic Austrian outfits. Melanie's dress used to belong to her great-grandmother Maria!) and about their songs and they give glory to God. The children are all so confident and such good performers. Steffan commented that likely in school the children's singing and performing on stage would have been thought of as goodie-two-shoes and tall poppy stuff leading to the children being teased, scoffed at and maybe bullied. And so, Steffan is thrilled that home educating has allowed them to develop without all the negative peer pressure at school.

The 23rd of August 2004 in Wellington proved to be a day of multigenerational significance. Marchers converged on Parliament with the message that they were standing for the next generation to preserve Christian virtues in New Zealand. With a similar generational significance, a group of four children sang to and edified a crowded concert hall. To borrow from Doug Phillips, "For parents and children alike, here was an opportunity to connect with a family who touched all of our lives through the remarkable story of the Captain and Maria. More importantly, these families were able to witness the



L-R: Sofia, Melanie, Amanda and Justin von Trapp

generational impact of God working in the life of a family of great historical significance, bringing them to the evangelical faith and turning their hearts one to another as the Holy Spirit blessed their home education."

For more information on the von Trapps see these websites: www.vontrappchildren.com and http://www.visionforum.com/hottopics/blogs/dwp/?archive=2004_06_01_index.htm (there is an article about them in Doug's May 2004 Blog).

Teaching Tips

Gaining Confidence in Reading

by Nina Lawgun



Although I'm no expert, I thought I would share about an incident that recently occurred to us that has proved to work successfully in getting my children's confidence up to try again. Hopefully others will learn from my mistakes just as I have.

At the beginning of this year my oldest son, who was nearly seven at the time, was causing us great concern because he seemed to have forgotten all I had ever taught him about reading and phonics. It was a daily battle to get him to read and write, and I could see no end in sight. So I enrolled him with a tutoring company called Kip McGrath.

After his initial assessment they informed me he had a reading age of 5.5 and a writing age of 5.3. I was devastated that all *my* hard work (and may I emphasize the word "my"!) had done nothing to help him learn. The enrollment was for a 50 minute session once a week for ten weeks. They required him to sit at a desk and do sound association work sheets, story writing from scratch and spelling drills. (Totally wrong for a visual-spatial learner like my son.) They also informed me he was difficult to teach because of his lack of classroom experience and his easily distractible nature, typical of visual-spatial learners. But I dragged him there kicking and screaming each week, and he hated every minute of it. I finally decided to listen to my poor child and withdrew him after he had endured eight weeks of torture. He was *soooo* discouraged and down about his abilities that he had lost all confidence to even try. So we stopped everything and just played and did fun stuff together for a few months. Meanwhile I read up on learning styles and teaching techniques and slowly introduced a few ideas in a very subtle manner.

To encourage the learning of new words, I typed out some basic sight words in a big bold font, onto bright cardboard flashcards and stuck them on our notice board and pantry where they would be easily seen. He learnt these words easily just by seeing them every day without any prompting from me, and so I put up five new ones each week for the next couple of months. Gradually I introduced harder less common words which he learnt in the same way.

We did lots of art and craft but no writing to go with our unit studies, and he developed stronger hands for his pencil grip through this. We also withdrew from all extra curricular activities and just enjoyed spending time together for a couple of months.

I made sure I read lots to my children collectively and individually and expected nothing in the way of written work.

After a few months my child was brimming with confidence, and so one day on our travels we went to a book shop and I found a chapter book called *Captain Underpants* and showed it to my son who thought it looked cool (his words). I bought it for him, and we went home, and I read the first two chapters, after which he was hooked. I then excused myself to make dinner and suggested he read the next chapter to himself while I was making dinner. I told him that I was so proud of his effort that for every chapter book he finished, I would give him \$5 towards the Game Boy that he was saving for and \$5 for him to put towards a new book. Little did I know how expensive this would become. He finished the entire book with hardly any help three days later and since then has finished about eight more in as many weeks. Remember how he was assessed with a reading age of 5.5? Well, these books are for 8-10 year olds. So when he is interested, he can read!

He has since started writing little bits of his own accord. They are mostly “Knock-Knock” jokes, but that is fine by me. I also got him a *Spell Write* dictionary and just left it on the table explaining that if he was ever stuck on how to spell a word then he could look it up in this book. I soon discovered that my son had somehow learnt alphabetical order and dictionary skills. (No formal teaching on my part) Now we do a few sentences of copy work each week or he can choose to write something else if he wants to. If he’s not in the mood then we leave it.

He is now happily and confidently taking part in his extra curricular activities and now shows lots of enthusiasm towards trying new and challenging tasks.

So he is back in the water swimming at his own pace and progressing much faster than when I threw him in at the deep end. His stroke is sometimes a little haphazard and lacks style at times, but it’s steady and keeps him moving towards the other end without drowning.

Nina Lawgun has been married to Daniel Lawgun for ten years and has been the home educating mother of three children (sons Stacey, 7, & Zacharri, 5, and daughter Mei-Li, 3) since day one. Prior to having children she was a teacher in a Christian preschool. About home educating, Nina says, “Our decision to homeschool came about for many reasons but predominantly because we want our children to have their individual needs met and to learn in an environment of uncompromising love and acceptance. We want them to develop strong moral values and strong family bonds while remaining free from the pressures to conform that dominate the traditional school experience. We want them to look back on their childhood and think, “Wow, that was an awesome experience.” And finally we want them to view learning as an exciting and fun part of life.”

Worldviews in Focus

Bound for Glory
by R C Sproul, Jr.



A Book Review

by Genevieve Smith

In January 2005 Dr R C Sproul, Jr is coming to New Zealand as keynote for the Code Blue Christian Worldview Conference in Auckland. “Sounds promising,” I thought. His father has a great reputation – I even own a New Geneva Study Bible (R C Sproul was the General Editor)! And I’d heard that R C Sproul, Jr home educates his children and writes on the importance of the family. My blasé analysis that the conference ‘sounded promising’ changed rapidly to intense excitement and eagerness after reading *Bound for Glory: God’s Promise for Your Family*, a book by R C Sproul, Jr (published by Crossway, paperback, 127 pages, ISBN 1-58134-495-3). Now I’ll be very disappointed indeed if I have to miss the conference!

Bound for Glory was written to help folks develop a more covenantal, a more Biblical understanding of the family. It strikes me that R C, Jr, with the heritage of being the son of R C Sproul himself and of being a husband and a father to six, sits well to comment and outline the subject to us. Referring to his father, R C, Jr says:

What makes my father a great man is something that you don’t get to see – he is a great father. My father understands [that] the kingdom of God is built not by writing best-selling books, but by raising up Godly seed.

R C, Jr understands this too and seeks to communicate through *Bound for Glory* a vision for family life and raising up Godly children.

The typical vision of the family in the church, in fact, is so anemic that we think we’re doing well if we can keep a husband and wife together while they raise a child or two. However...a generation ago when people thought of families they thought in terms of patriarchs and matriarchs. They had a multigenerational view. [But] the devil wants to destroy the family because the family matters.

In describing God’s plan for families, R C, Jr shows how our culture views the family not as a family but as a collection of individuals. From the design of our homes (each member has his or her own room, own bathroom, own tv and Xbox) to the layout of the mall (there are half a dozen different sections of women’s clothes, for half a dozen different ages) to the expectation of our culture that Dad will go off to his job, Mum to hers, Princess to high school and Junior to intermediate.

But it gets worse...we have much the same problem in Church...[Mum] goes off to her Women in the Church circle. Dad heads off to his Promise Keepers meeting. Princess is at her youth group meeting, while Junior is watching videos of vegetables in children's church.

We seem to think that if we can keep all this separateness together under one roof we are doing okay. But the truth is, we are failing miserably, even when we think we are succeeding. We're allowing our families to be torn apart because we are allowing our families to be molded by the wisdom of the world.

Then R C, Jr unveils for us a very significant word: covenant. He explains its centrality to the understanding of the family. He explains that God made a covenant with Abraham and his seed and that this is the same way He covenants with us today. The family is made up of horizontal covenants (between the husband and wife and the parents and the children) that are governed by the vertical covenant with God.

R C, Jr then sets the stage for describing how the members of the family need to deal together by first delving into the family's purpose or chief end. With humour and simplicity, R C, Jr helps us to understand the dominion mandate. Found first in the beginning of Genesis, the mandate is one given to Adam and to Eve, as Adam's helper, to take dominion over the world. R C, Jr describes this beautifully in *Bound for Glory* where in referring to the dominion mandate he says:

The command of God for us and our children is not that we would find our way in the world, but that we would wage war with the world. [God] has given us a task, a charge, a mandate. He has designed us specifically for the serving of this purpose. Families are made for this warfare. But like Adam and Eve before us, we have our own plans. We go in search of some other job to do. We seek out some other source for meaning, for significance in our lives. [But] we do not exist for happiness.

No, we exist to glorify God. R C, Jr goes on to explain how glorifying God is the chief end of the family:

I see my life in terms of challenge, quest, warfare and adventure. That's what men do. This reflects the outward call of the dominion task. Men go into the jungle and turn it into a garden. Men are by nature conquerors, which is why it makes such perfect sense that Jesus calls us to this task. In Him we are more than conquerors. The difference is that we do this for Him rather than for ourselves. Dominion is all about conquest; that's what we're made for. Men live for a cause, and this is the cause, the crusade to which we have been called – to make manifest the reign of Jesus Christ.

This making manifest the reign of Jesus Christ is ensuring that as individuals and in families and in the Church and the State that in all things and through all things and at all times God is getting glory. Where this fails to happen, that is where men need to exercise

dominion to make the reign of Jesus Christ manifest.

What a revelation! What a clarification and simplification of life and life's purpose! R C, Jr doesn't stop there, however! After revealing this life changing concept, he then gives us the practical outworkings of this in the family. What is the husband's part? How does he exercise dominion in the family? For as R C, Jr says:

The center of our calling [as married men] is not to exercise dominion out in the jungle where we make our living, but in our homes.

What is the wife's part? How does she help her husband to exercise dominion in the family? What are her covenant responsibilities? And the children, what part do they play in the family?

One might think that after answering those questions the book would be complete. But R C, Jr demonstrates his comprehension and understanding of this subject by going on to talk about the Church family and how it fits in the scheme of things.

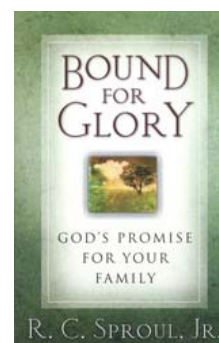
An excellent book. A challenging and inspiring read. It changed and honed my thinking and understanding and is one of the three most important books I've read in my life.

I would encourage you all to read the book. And I would encourage you all to attend the Worldview Conference to meet and hear R C Sproul, Jr for yourself! May we all take advantage of the wonderful opportunity of having him on Kiwi soil!

God bless.

Genevieve Smith is the 24 yr old daughter of Craig and Barbara Smith. She spends her time helping her father with the Home Education Foundation and assisting her mother in the home.

Dr R C Sproul, Jr, husband, father and author is also the director of the Highlands Study Center, founded in 1996. It exists to help Christians live more simple, separate and deliberate lives to the glory of God and for the building of His Kingdom. Simple, Separate and Deliberate are also the names of his keynote talks at the Worldview Conference where R C, Jr will talk about recognizing false worldviews, presuppositions and more! Find out all about the conference by visiting <http://www.cbworldview.cesbooks.co.nz/index.html>.



Parenting Tips

Toys

by Regina Doman



Regina with her two oldest children in 1997, Front Royal, Virginia. Photographer: Richard Cooley. Used with permission of the *Northern Virginia Daily*.

Every once in a while, I suspect that every parent feels like a hopeless idealist. Some parents feel this way when announcing to secular friends or relatives their intent to follow the Church's teaching on birth control.

Others sense their own naiveté when they state that they intend to never own a television set. I feel this way when it comes to toys.

"My children," I say, with all ingenuousness when the topic comes up in discussion, "will never have a lot of toys. I'm a toy reductionist."

"Ah," the older parents say, smiling paternally at me, "we used to feel that way. But the toys just come out of nowhere. We don't buy them — they just appear. Face it: as a parent, you are doomed to shoveling your way through a living room full of Fisher Price, Loc-Blocs, and Matchbox cars. Believe us. We know."

I don't think they take me seriously.

And they could be right. After all, my husband and I only have two children — and one is in the womb and doesn't yet play with toys. Years from now, I could find this article buried beneath a heap of plastic play-food mixed with Tinkertoy heads and laugh cynically at my former aspirations.

But I feel quite strongly about toys. There are several reasons. The strongest reason is that when it comes to toys, my childhood experiences are at my fingertips. I remember vividly what it was like to be a child, in relationship to toys, at least.

To tell the truth, I don't think I ever got over my love for toys. If put in the right environment and given a couple of average-sized kids to entertain, I could fall back into playing with them quite easily. I remember building sand castles and block cities. I remember making my own dollhouses, being perennially dissatisfied with the ready-made ones I found in the stores. The stuffed animals and dolls I loved I can readily picture — even remember their names and personalities.

I also remember my dislikes. Certain toys I always found ugly and even repulsive. Not just the horrid plastic monsters and *Masters of the Universe* grotesques, but certain plastic baby dolls, cheap stuffed creatures, clown dolls. As a child, I was pretty discriminating with what I played with.

I also remember the Clutter. The house I grew up in had a large basement — a wonderful place that was big enough to ride tricycles in and roller skate in, a perfect stage for plays and puppet shows, a natural site for forts built out of tables, boxes and blankets. My six-plus siblings and I played there for hours on end.

But I also remember Cleaning the Basement, our standard Saturday chore. I remember wading through the slough of

Fisher Price playsets, action figures, puzzle pieces, farm animals, plastic soldiers, dried playdough, torn books, wooden blocks and various little odds and ends that no one could identify. We had to sort out the toys into various cardboard boxes my mother had covered with contact paper for this express purpose of organization. I remember the endless trips to the toybox and block bin, feeling sour and aggravated by the knowledge that I hadn't even played with half of these things — my little brother had knocked them off the shelves when he was pretending to be trapped by an earthquake, or my friends had dumped them on the floor just to be mean. Even from a child's perspective, it was easy to see that our family owned too many toys.

"My children... will never have a lot of toys. I'm a toy reductionist."

What could our family do about it? As the oldest child, and therefore supposedly the most responsible, I quickly arrived at the idea of throwing

most of them out. I was always overruled: first by my siblings, which was natural (I only suggested throwing out their toys, of course), but more unreasonably, by my parents, who thought that "your brothers and sisters might want to play with them again some day." So most of the toys remained, until gradually they subsided into dusty disuse on their basement shelves, simultaneously loved and hated by the children of our family.

This frustration with Toy Clutter has never quite left me. The sight of a living room or bedroom cluttered with a hodgepodge of playthings still arouses in me quite the same emotions. I suspect my brothers and sisters still feel the same way. I know that other parents, who are constantly having to pick up after their offspring, share these feelings. But what's to be done about all this? Is there no end to the modern onslaught of toys?



My husband is also the oldest child in his family (my parents now have 10 children, his have 11), so his emotions on the toy issue are almost identical to mine — except stronger. "Our children will *not* have a lot of toys!" he was the first to declare emphatically when we discussed the issue during our engagement, and I eagerly agreed. We know what it's like to clean up after other people for oh, 18 to 20 years straight, and we weren't going to let our kids have to go through

that — let alone put us through it.

In fact, my husband was even more adamant about reducing Toy Clutter than I was, being a man and a former boy. Little girls do tend to produce more Toy Clutter — boxes of tiny doll clothes, piles of stuffed animals, shelves of doll collections, horse collections, shell collections, jewelry collections — and I still have my girlish sympathies. For example, I still have a significant amount of cherished girlhood toys in my cedar chest. Andrew doesn't have anything that he owned as a child, except for a clothes rack and a poncho.

So we had definite ideas on the toy issue before we even conceived our first child. We thought rightly that we had better plan our strategy against the menace of Toy Clutter early, so as not to be caught unprepared.

We came up with an informal list detailing how Toy Clutter begins in the first place, and after each item listed a possible strategy for dealing with it.

How Do Toys Come into a Home?

1. Parents buy them.

Therefore, we resolved to be judicious in our toy-buying as the first line of defense. We would not buy "fad" toys -- Baby-Make-A-Face and other one-use only toys. Generic, traditional toys would be the best buys -- balls, teddy bears, blocks, dump trucks. And we'd have to watch to make sure that we didn't buy toys merely for the sake of buying the child something -- when a snack or a trip to the park would do equally well.

2. Relatives buy them.

This was a potential danger, we thought, particularly from grandparents and godparents. We decided to embark on an "education campaign" to let our parents and siblings know how we felt about toys. Also, we felt it was only fair to give them alternative gift ideas to toys. The alternate gift turned out to be perfect: books. As book addicts and lovers of children's literature, we firmly believe children can't have too many books, provided they aren't cheap ones about syndicated characters. "You can *always* get our children good kid's books," we told everyone, and no one really objected. In fact, I found out that several of my aunts had always felt the same way about toys. (You think you're being so original at times, when you're only living out your family genes)

3. Friends buy them.

Either friends of the family or friends of the children — e.g., at birthday parties. This was a bit more difficult to explain, but we thought we'd deal with it on a case-by-case situation. Fortunately, with birthday parties, parents often have the opportunity to suggest gifts to the guests, and we thought we might be able to give some judicious guidance there.

4. Children buy them.

This, we reasoned, might be easier to deal with, at least for a while, since parents can monitor what the children bring into the house or even what they buy. And if we formed our children's tastes correctly, they might not feel the need to spend their money on useless toys. As a child my favorite store was not the toy store but the craft store, where I could spend my pennies on materials to make my own toys — pompom animals, felt dolls, wooden doll furniture. I look forward



eagerly to introducing our children to my childhood pastime, although my husband foresees difficulties with Craft Clutter in the future. But that's another issue.

5. They get left in your home by accident

(by neighbor children, visitors, etc.). In that case, we would have to be firm and direct about returning them or passing them on.

6. People give them to you,

in the same way that they pass on used clothing, etc. We would have to be committed to passing such toys on, if we thought they would be Clutter-inducing. One mother told me that it is possible, "so long as you don't let your children play with them first. Once a child plays with a toy, it becomes part of his soul, and you can't remove it without some degree of agony." We would have to be vigilant.

How Can We Get Toys Out of the Home?

The second line of defense against Toy Clutter would be how to deal with the toys once they were actually in our home and possessed by the children.

There are several ways in which toys leave the home, aside from getting lost (either by the child losing them or by the parent conveniently forgetting to find them). Parents have several options for enabling Toys to leave:

1. Throwing them out.

If the toy is broken beyond repair (easy with plastic toys) or if there is a general family revolt against Clutter. These revolts, usually led by older siblings or parents, can be traumatic for younger

children and are generally not to be encouraged, as oppression of the strong by the weak. However, in my family and my husband's, throwing toys away (covertly, late at night) was often the only way that Toy Clutter could be combated. We decided we would have to develop and utilize other kinder, gentler strategies against Toy Clutter once it had actually occurred.

2. Giving toys away

(to friends, to St. Nicholas projects, to the Salvation Army) *or selling them* (e.g.: at garage sales). As hard as it is, we would have to encourage our children to be generous in sharing their toys with others, even to the extent of giving them away. I know how terribly hard it is to give away something you are attached to. Well, one way to help the children understand this would be

We decided to embark on an "education campaign" to let our parents and siblings know how we felt about toys.

for me as a parent to demonstrate such self-sacrificial giving myself. Also, we would have to build up in our children the virtue of hospitality, particularly towards the poor — to help them see the needy, the stranger, the poor as Christ Himself. Giving away your possessions, even toys, isn't just an exercise in disinterested charity (giving away what you don't need) but is merely restoring to Christ what is His by right. He deserves everything we have. Even if we gave Him our most treasured possession, He wouldn't owe us anything. That virtue of generous, foolish love is perhaps the hardest thing parents have to teach children — because it is so hard for us. If giving away toys could help teach them that, it might be a useful thing indeed.

This also points out, incidentally, that any strategy against Toy Clutter won't be effective unless it's accompanied by an attack against Clutter in general — particularly Parental Clutter. As single people, we'd tried earnestly to simplify our lives, and we would have to continue this often harrowing process of sorting through and giving away throughout our lives. We would have to be neither hypocritical (giving away our kid's toys while hoarding CDs, bric-a-brac, clothing and grown-up toys for ourselves) nor exempt our children from the discipline we practiced.

3. Packing toys away.

to be given to younger children or, in rare cases, saved for the children's own children. Packing toys away is a useful strategy for helping to de-clutter a house. Once the toys are out of sight and out of the way (hidden in a closet or attic, not simply in a box in the playroom to be used as emergency ammunition in pillow-fights), in some cases the children become less attached to them. They may be willing to give them away, if the toys are truly useless. Maybe not. In any event, the box of toys can be unpacked on special occasions (birthdays, rainy days) to be played with again, and other toys can be packed away in its place.

While packing away may not help children give toys away, it does reduce the amount of toys which are immediately accessible and need to constantly be picked up and put away. And it's a good idea, I think, to encourage the children regularly go through their toys to decide what they no longer play with, what needs to be fixed and what could be saved for play later on. It's a useful exercise in stewardship, and preparation for adult simplification.

How Do We Decide Which Toys Are Acceptable Toys?

Even with the First and Second lines of defense, my husband and I felt a need to be a bit more selective. After all, how could we determine whether or not a toy was acceptable for our family?

There were obvious moral considerations. For example, playing with toys that were occultic

(monsters, witches, etc.) was unacceptable — although perhaps a token evil person to serve as the Bad Guy in made-up adventures would be allowed. (Growing up, our Fisher-Price people were constantly menaced by an ugly plastic dragon who was forever kidnapping the children or the parents and needed to be resoundingly defeated by the townspeople).

Toys that encouraged violence — toy machine guns and bombs — were also obviously out.

Also, we felt (I have always felt) that Barbie dolls and their ilk don't really represent the kind of femininity we want our daughters to imitate. The skimpy outfits of many Disney heroines (and heroes) are also unacceptable to us. I remember reading (as a precocious ten-year-old) the Christian psychologist Dr. Dobson on the subject of Barbie dolls. He asked what type of image girls were getting about what their bodies should look like when they become teenagers from the voluptuous curves and flawless complexions of fashion dolls. It's a set-up for low self-esteem as well as grooming the girl to readily conform to the pressures of the media and the fashion industry to fit into a certain model of "beauty." I just don't think that little girls, in their innocence, need to be exposed to those kinds of pressures at this age — or at any age, actually. Girlhood was meant for better things.



Any strategy against Toy Clutter won't be effective unless it's accompanied by an attack against Clutter in general - particularly Parental Clutter.

Still, we knew of many parents who censored violent and sex-oriented toys out of their children's possession who were still drowning in Toy Clutter. And somehow, I felt that Fisher Price and PlaySkool toys didn't help to create the kind of environment that I wanted our children to have. Were there further guidelines to use?

The answer for me came in the form of an article in *Plain* magazine, a magazine put out by a variety of Christians with a tradition of simplicity — Anabaptist, Amish and the like. In an issue devoted to children, I came across a short but terribly good article called, "Toys Really Are Us." It was written by Sarah Martin, founder of the Natural Baby Company. "Children don't really need toys," she concludes, since things from the outdoors and from the home — like pots — make wonderful playthings for most children.

However, she admits, "parents like to buy their children toys." This is true. So she makes an effort to find toys for her catalog that are made of natural materials — wood, wool, cotton, toys that "resonate with the child's spirit." After all, children are alive, so it's only appropriate to give them toys made out of materials that are also alive. Plastic, that staple of children's toys, just isn't on the same level.

Here was a new standard for judging toys — why not simply limit toys whenever possible to wooden ones over plastic ones? Wooden toys cost more and are hard to find. Therefore, we can't buy as many of them as we can plastic toys. But the toys we do buy will be of

greater quality, and since there will be fewer of them, there will be less threat of Toy Clutter. So we decided to pursue this strategy.

So far it's worked. Although Caleb hasn't reached his second birthday, I think I can say he has a reasonable amount of toys. But he does spend more time playing with pots and pans and cardboard boxes my husband brings home from work than with his wooden trucks. And he has a lot of good books which he enjoys looking at. He's even stopped tearing pages (for the most part).

I do have a tendency to pick up what I call "intelligent looking stuffed animals" at thrift store and garage sales. But I've deliberately limited myself to tiny ones. Large stuffed animals tend to be overwhelming in numbers and collect dust. Small ones can be slipped in a pocket to come to [Church] or on a trip to the store, and while easily lost, can be easily replaced. Caleb's favorite first birthday present was a tiny bear with jointed legs, intended as a Christmas ornament, given to him by an elderly lady in a nursing home. Small Bear came with us everywhere for quite a while before losing himself in a mysterious manner.

Conclusion

But I wonder how our family will be able to stave off the Toy Menace. After all, we're just beginning, and Toy Clutter doesn't generally get underway until Kid Four or Five comes along (although I know some families our size are already snowed under the barrage of Toddler Toys).

Last summer I met a family who gave me hope. We had the wonderful opportunity to stay with a remarkable Catholic family with six children for a few days. I had the chance to view most of their house and gradually noticed that they had a sensible amount of toys. The young boys had built a block castle in the living room, and the girls' bedroom was dotted with doll homes built in convenient nooks. The older girl had her craft projects spread out on the porch, and the boys' bedroom had a magnificent showcase of Playmobil models — but that was it. There were no Legos underfoot, no stuffed animals lying in the stairwells or boxes of trucks overflowing in the den. There were toys — toys that were in constant use, from the look of things, but not in excess. I will also mention that the family had the largest collection of wonderful children's books I have ever seen.

I remarked on this to the mother of the house, and she said, "It's been a lot of work on my part to keep it this way." Explaining her strategy, I found she and her husband had used the same strategies we planned to use, especially giving away toys that were unacceptable. "It's been hard, but I think it's worth it," she said. "Our children really play with the toys they have."

So it can be done. It has been done. So my husband and I sail on in our idealism of Toy Reduction, with our dream of happy, uncluttered children enjoying their playtime, learning to be creative and innovative in their

surroundings and to be generous with their possessions.

Update in 2004:

The author continues to follow all of the above, and it works. Five children to date, and still our carpet isn't covered with layers of Barbie toys and Legos.

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Regina Doman was born in 1970 in Havertown, Pennsylvania. After attending several different Catholic, public, and private schools, she graduated from Koinonia Academy of Warren, New Jersey in 1988. Having a strong interest in scriptwriting, she attended the Franciscan University of Steubenville, Ohio from 1988-1992, and graduated with a BA in Communications, concentrating on Television Production, with a minor in Theatre Arts. She lived in New York City and worked as assistant editor of Lay Witness magazine from 1992-1994, and wrote columns and articles for various publications, including a comic strip for YOU! magazine. In 1994 she married her husband, Andrew. Today she and her husband make their home in Front Royal, Virginia, with their five children. She published her first novel for teenagers in 1997: Snow White and Rose Red: A Modern Fairy Tale, republished in paperback in 2002 under the title The Shadow of the Bear. The sequel, Black as Night, was published in 2004. She continues to work as manager of creative projects for other publishers, while working on new novels. You can contact her at regina@reginadoman.com



I disagree...

In respect to your comments in the last edition of *Keystone* about not allowing your children to sleep over, nor having other children to sleep over at your house: I totally disagree.

We value immensely the input of our friends into our children's lives, both our peers and theirs. This includes on occasion having children stay here and allowing ours to stay away, which has never given us any grief.

We have found it particularly helpful when our household included teens and babies. The tramping that we had looked forward to with our teenagers was not possible, but kind friends included our children on their expeditions. The local tramping club, having met our children accompanied by a parent, were thereafter happy to transport and take responsibility for our teens. (I felt that the risk was higher on their part than on ours.) It opened up a whole world, which has since led to a job with DOC for one of our boys.

I highly recommend Scripture Union camps, which benefited our children spiritually, physically and mentally. Likewise Teen Missions, which has seen one son assist on projects in Malaysia and Thailand and two more about to leave for India and Cambodia.

One of our boys played in a local Brass Band from the age of 13. I credit this with him still playing now 10 years later. I have no doubt that he heard the odd smutty joke in that time, but most of the men put themselves out to be helpful and curtailed their language where necessary.

We increasingly launch our children into the world while they still live at home and can come back with issues they meet. Then when they leave they are confident and used to depending on God directly, via Jesus not via their very fallible parents. Without being foolish/careless and placing them/ourselves in the way of temptation, the world should have more fear of us than we have of the world. "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world." – I John 4:4.

Jenny Barkley
Amberley

(Continued from page 11: *Burnout*)

vember. Our grief was intense, but the funeral was a family celebration of his life and faith in God. Our son James sang one of Papa's favourite hymns, Chris and I both spoke and shared memories of his life, and his grand-daughter read a poem she had written.

During the preparations for my father's funeral, I began thinking about my grandmother, Caroline Black-shear Bridges. When she died nearly 25 years ago, I drove to Blakely, Georgia, for her funeral. As I looked around me at her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren, as well as all the friends who had assembled in the First Baptist Church to pay their re-

spects to the woman we had all called "Miss Carrie," I thought about Exodus 20:5 that says God visits "the sins of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation." I was suddenly struck with the reality that the reverse of that scripture is also true. God blesses the children of the righteous to the third and fourth generation. I knew that Miss Carrie had been a Christian. Her father died when she was a child, but her maternal grandfather was a Christian who said he received a call from God to become a missionary to the then wild and sparsely settled portions of backwoods Georgia. His name was James C. Bass, and he would travel to remote lumber camps and stand on a stump to preach the gospel to the rough lumberjacks. This grandfather had a powerful impact on Miss Carrie's life.

So there I was at my grandmother's funeral, over half a century after James C. Bass died, realizing that nearly every one of Miss Carrie's children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren were Christians. As I sat through that funeral, I was overcome with gratitude for my Godly heritage.

Then, this November I was at my father's funeral (Miss Carrie's son). I again saw children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren: three generations who had all been affected by my father's belief in God. My father was not only a Christian, he was a Southern gentleman who imparted a legacy of loyalty, integrity, principle, productivity and confidence to his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, as well as to all those around him. He gave us all a firm belief that each person's life could count for something.

I spoke at my father's funeral, and what I shared was that God is faithful to bless righteousness. One righteous person can impact four generations, and those four generations can each impact four generations after them, so that the ongoing impact of righteousness can be never-ending as it passes down into the future. In fact, the Bible tells us God shows His mercy and steadfast love to a thousand generations of those who love Him and keep His commandments (Exodus 20:6).

How about that? We can bring mercy and steadfast love to a thousand generations simply by loving God and keeping His commandments.

So, I guess what I want to tell each of you who reads this article is: ***your life can affect forever***. Maybe you don't have generations of godliness standing behind you, but you can start where you are and affect your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren — at least three generations beyond you. And each of them can affect at least three generations beyond them. And who knows? If God were once willing to spare Sodom for only ten righteous men, maybe your presence in your own city has more of an impact than you could ever imagine.

(Ellyn wrote this for the Elijah Co. Catalogue then forwarded it freely via email 10 April 2001 as she had so many requests for copies of it. She may be contacted at elijahco@elijahco.com).