

Keystone

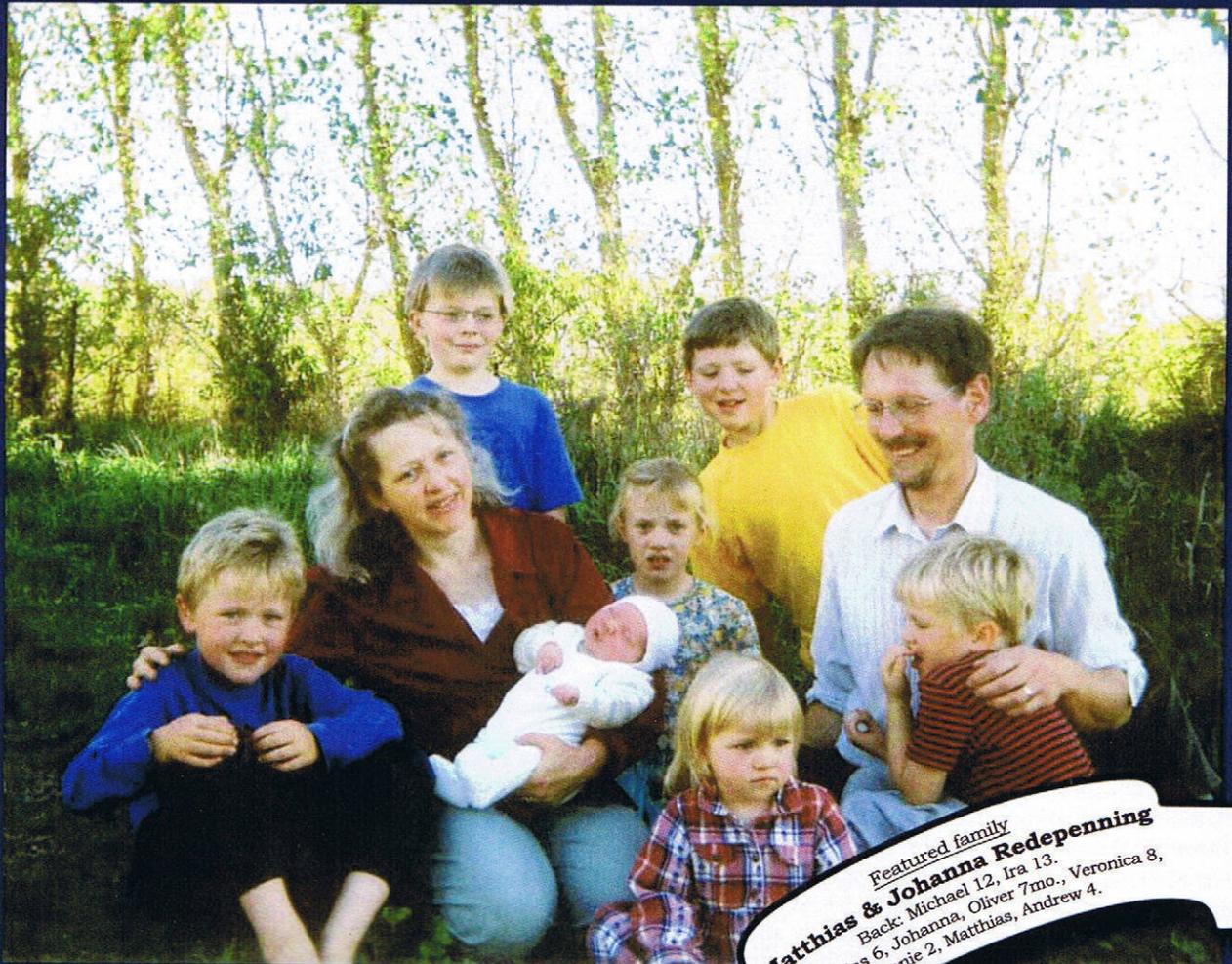
A Bi-Monthly Journal for Christian

Home Educators

Vol. XI No. 5

September 2005

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
Matthias & Johanna Redepenning
Back: Michael 12, Ira 13.
Front: Tobias 6, Johanna, Oliver 7mo., Veronica 8,
Stephanie 2, Matthias, Andrew 4.

Editorial



We don't have the election results to rave about or mourn over in this column, but we will confirm that the Lord Jesus Christ is in control and on His throne, using even the wickedness of the wicked to accomplish His will.

Looking back over the years I've been in NZ since landing here as a 22 year old 32 years ago, it seems to me there has been a systematic effort to rid the law books of all the last shreds of Christian/Biblical influence. Divorce was made a no-fault affair, the vows being looked upon as having no legal standing at all. Homosexuality was decriminalised on the argument that the state should not be in people's bedrooms... although, of course it still is in regard to pedophiles and bigamy and bestiality. De facto set-ups have been recognised as having the same legal standing as marriage when it comes to property. Girls of any age can secure contraceptives and abortions without ever their parents knowing. Family Planning Association (and anyone else incidentally) can give or sell condoms to any child of any age. Prostitution and pimping are now as legal as the corner dairy and probably less regulated. CUs have been introduced to soften us all up for homosexual "marriage".

The push to repeal Section 59 of the Crimes Act will not just ban smacking: it will effectively outlaw parenting itself, since any act that could be construed as assault toward an adult: brushing hair uninvited, changing clothes, bathing, feeding, confining to room, taking to church without express permission, forbidding certain actions and words, requiring other actions and words...these and every other act of parenting wherein the parent projects his or her will upon the child will all become potential acts of assault, carrying a maximum two-year jail sentence, awaiting only someone to bring charges. That someone could be the child or a nosey neighbour or anti-home education relation. Repeal of Section 59 would be far more damaging to Christian families than all the other changes listed above taken together.

Enclosed are two brochures: "Ban Smacking?" could more accurately read "Ban Parenting?" and is suitable to giving to all you know to alert them to this crazy idea of MP Sue Bradford's to repeal Section 59. The one on Christian Foundations of Corporal Correction is good for Christian parents to become familiar with the principles surrounding Biblical smacking. Please consider giving the first one to as many people as you know: just tell us how many brochures you need and we'll post them to you free of charge. Put them into people's hands at church, the workplace, waiting rooms, in front of schools and shopping malls. The vast majority of people receive them well, for a good 80% of kiwis are opposed to banning smacking by parents.

And there is more information at:

www.FamilyIntegrity.org.nz

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**"History has never been dominated by majorities, but only by *dedicated minorities* who stand unconditionally on their faith."
~ R J Rushdoony**

The Woman Who Laughs

For a good, everyday, household angel, give us the woman who laughs. Her biscuits may not be always just right, and she may occasionally burn her bread and forget to replace dislocated buttons, but for solid comfort all day and every day she is a very paragon. Home is not a battlefield nor life one long unending row. The trick of always seeing the bright side or, if the matter has no bright side, of shining up the dark one, is a very important faculty; one of the things no woman should be without. We are not all born with the sunshine in our hearts, as the Irish prettily phrase it, but we can cultivate a cheerful sense of humour if we only try. - *The Rural Yorker* (Taken from *The Family Friend*, Vol. XIX New Series, 1888).



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

The Home Education Foundation is a charitable trust established to serve, promote and strengthen the home education community in New Zealand and beyond. The Home Education Foundation, Christian Home Schoolers of New Zealand and the projects they take on are supported entirely by home educators subscribing to *Keystone* and/or *TEACH Bulletin*, investing in books the Foundation sells or making tax-deductible donations either by cheque, credit card or by automatic bank payment (ask us for a form). The Foundation can also be supported through Telecom who gives a percentage (5%) of your toll bill to the Foundation, *painlessly and without costing you an extra cent!* Telecom subscribers can ring 0800 724 665 and ask to support "Christian Home Schoolers of New Zealand", reference 10898651, ph. (06) 357-4399, through Telecom's "School Connection" Programme. Please ring today!

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Matthias and Johanna Redepinning

of Amberley, New Zealand

From Matthias

What a privilege to share something from our life that God has blessed so wonderfully! Yes, we too read the family profiles in the *Keystone* magazine to see how our fellow families get on. I noticed that most reports are done by the mothers. We were already gearing up to have my busy hardworking Johanna doing this wonderful chore too. The story of Darrell Nepia in the March issue encouraged me so much, I felt the need to take up pen and paper myself.

So where do we start? I was born and raised in North Germany in a nominally Christian home and came to New Zealand after finishing my plumbing apprenticeship in 1980 as a backpacker looking for “a better world.” Travelling in NZ on my own, I became aware of “som invisible” Being with me, guiding and protecting me—I wanted to know God. The people in Camp David (a cult) opened the Word of God to me to bring me to my knees and to a surrender to Jesus Christ the Son of God.

Ten years later Johanna, a trained midwife also from Germany travelled with her backpack through New Zealand. When I was introduced to this young woman, while we were shaking hands, it was as if the Spirit whispered, “Be careful how you listen when this one speaks to you; be careful how you speak—this one listens to you.” Later in the day I had the privilege to make her realise the need to come to the Throne of Grace to receive mercy and find grace to help in the time of need (Hebrews 4). Johanna carried on her travels back to the North Island. We stayed in contact by letter but only on spiritual matters. Later we started to realise that we were meant for one another.

My parents came out from Germany to attend our wedding and made an important decision: to go home and pack a container to come out for good.

When we were on our honeymoon, I attempted to take my old 1957 VW van, the only transport we had, up a 4-wheel-drive track in the bush near Murchison. The tyres lost grip, and suddenly I found myself sitting on top of my new wife with all our camping utensils around our ears: the van lay on its side in a little gully. It was late afternoon and we were all alone, far from human help. We scrambled out and walked to the nearest house; it was empty, locked up, not occupied. Then we went to our knees. I remember my tears at the hopeless situation, far away from help, the car lost beyond rescue, uncertain future...yet peace came into my heart that God would not let us face situations that we could not handle in our own strength and expertise.

We found some old empty truck canopies nearby to spend the night. Next morning I walked the road towards Murchison and found a farmer with a 4-wheel-

drive tractor and a long steel rope. The kind man was willing to go back with me and managed to pull the van first back onto its wheels then up to firm ground. To our total amazement

no windows were broken and neither were the eggs. The battery had dropped out of its mountings and was swinging by the wires. Thus it stayed upright, no acid spilt, and it was still working. We drove out and used the van for several more years. So God led us through our first challenge in our life together.

We had faith for two children. Ira and Michael were born in the next couple of years. In the Camp David community about half the families home schooled, all of them ACE, so we were familiar with the general idea of home schooling.

During that time we attended a Bill Gothard Seminar. It was life changing: the concepts of Godly Generations, the commitment to God’s word, the delight of God in children and the confirmation of home education.

When sin in the leadership at Camp David came to the surface, and the sect broke up, a time of evaluating our faith, our values, our dreams and our plans for the future followed. Thank God that our faith in Him did not depend on the church; we had known His personal care in our lives already.

Courage grew for another child, so four years after Michael, Veronica was born. Our baby Veronica was so delightful, we were encouraged to receive another child. During that pregnancy our hearts were turned towards homebirth and taking up our responsibility in that area of life as well. While Johanna was pregnant with Tobias, we wrestled with the question of medical examination like ultrasound scanning on the unborn. God gave us the faith that since He wanted us to have this child, He would protect this child and the mother during the pregnancy. Preparing for the home birth was a time of soul searching and praying, a time of cleaning our lives of things that could be a hindrance to God’s free hand in our lives. Since then we have been blest with three more home birth babies, each time a fresh challenge to walk yet closer to the LORD.

Our home education

For all our children we used Rod and Staff Preschool material so far and have the Pathway readers in the home, which are beautiful wholesome stories of



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

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

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

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

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

children on a farm.

The breakthrough for reading came for the big boys by listening to tape recorded reading of the Bible Story Books *My Bible Friends*—whenever the page was turned, a bell sounded and the boys followed the words in the book and gained reading confidence and speed.

We purchased a box of Cuisenaire rods and the Miquon maths series. That has worked really well for all the children so far. In their free time all of them enjoy constructing some amazing buildings with the rods. Veronica and Tobias started to write before they read; they also started Mathematics before we “taught them.” I gave Tobias a tape measure for his fourth birthday. Initially he just pulled it out and let it run in. Then he started to measure things. By the time he was five, he had a good understanding of addition and subtraction.

The timestables are also a firm part of the program. Johanna made little booklets with the timestables so the children could test themselves and each other. Last year we started using the *Italic Handwriting* books because it looked promising that they would teach fluent and legible handwriting. The younger children have greater joy and faster progress than the older ones because they have used it from the beginning.

Michael has become a real bookworm, but Ira is also devouring books on nature, raiding any second hand bookshops on this subject. It is a continual challenge to get enough good books into the house. We managed to get a few German schoolbooks from a local Swiss family to practise German reading and writing. We also get the occasional book from Germany. The majority of books, though, we get through American sources like Timber Doodle or Sunlight Curriculum.

As mentioned before, my parents came out to New Zealand. They live fifteen minutes away by car, and grandfather, a retired maths and Latin teacher, has been visiting us weekly to challenge the big boys with mathematical problems and some lessons in Latin.

For the other subjects we mainly work with unit studies. A lot of “history” happens as bedtime stories: biographies and historical fiction. Geography happened for Ira with his stamp collection and the rest of the family learns from him.

We consider a grounding in life skills an important part of home educating. For us these are housekeeping, cooking, sewing, gardening, healthcare, also hospitality, house repairs, car maintenance (wheel changes, oil change, oil & coolant levels), finances (bank account, cost of grocery items, cost of living), parenting (the older ones observing the training of the younger ones and gradually being given responsibilities for them) and practicing to pray for day-to-day needs and experiencing God’s answers (the help to find lost items is probably the most common answered prayer).

We hope and trust they will grow up knowing how to think for themselves. The Fallacy Detective by the

Bluedorns has been greatly welcomed. Have you ever been told that you have just asked a “loaded question”?

On the whole we appreciate the freedom of individual developing speed and focus. A year ago we used the PAT tests (through Alan Curnow) with our three older children. When we had our first ERO visit in February 2005, the PAT tests were of great value to prove that we do assess the academic progress. They also gave us a measuring stick for where we are at in comparison with average New Zealand children.

Another very important part of our lives is music. Ira loves the accordion, Michael is learning piano, Veronica has had professional recorder lessons for two and a half years and all of us are singing! We live on a 10 acre block near Amberley which is 40 minutes by car from Christchurch. I take the boys to Christchurch to the same music teacher in the evening after work. On the way home we visit a library with a late Friday night opening, or we go for a swim in a pool just before closing time.

I started to bless my children individually daily before I go to work. We work at having more devotional time as a family as we discipline ourselves to go to bed earlier. We get up in time to sing and pray together before I go to work. As we enjoy family unity at devotions with the little ones, I long in my heart that my children will connect up to the Lord in a living relationship, that they not only follow the God of their parents and grandparents but get their own conviction and their own hunger for God. I am very aware of the words in Psalm 127, “Except the Lord builds the house, they labour in vain that build it; except the Lord watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain.”

We as parents do have to build in the lives of our children, we do have to watch over their development, but without the Lord our efforts are fruitless.

From Johanna

My Story or How My Husband Found His Wife:

Like him I travelled New Zealand with a backpack, as a 28-year-old nature-loving hitchhiker. In my bag was the address of a German family a friend had given to me. As I passed through Christchurch, I rang them up and, of course, ended up staying the night. The next day I was introduced to my host’s brother: Matthias.

Matthias challenged me on the subject of Christianity. I politely but firmly kept assuring him that I already was a Christian until he, by the Spirit, cut through to my heart with one particular, unlikely verse from Hebrews, and I saw my need for Jesus to become my LORD. The next day I packed my backpack again and went on my way to the Bay of Islands to my work on an oyster farm. From this point on I devoured the Bible—it had become alive! It was no longer this mysterious, sacred book that one wouldn’t possibly read. Now it was a book that I simply read and asked questions about and searched for answers. I also prayed and searched for an answer concerning baptism.

After four months I went back to visit with Matthias and get baptised. Three days later it hit me: "I found the Master! He is real! I can talk to Him, He does listen to me; I can listen to Him, He talks to me!" A couple of months later I got my caravan moving and came down south for good. Our engagement was just in time to keep my visa from running out. Half a year later we got married. We established our first home with our two caravans, and our first baby acquired the nickname "the most prammed-about baby in the world."

Matthias was part of a cult (Camp David) that I had joined too before we got engaged. Joining the cult resulted in my new found faith being diverted from being focussed on the Lord Jesus to focussing on a man (the founder). It also resulted in learning twisted teachings from the Bible, living a performance driven, pharisaic life and becoming subject to the mind control mechanisms in place. But in spite of our abusing His Name and His Word and bringing shame to His Name, the Lord was very, very merciful and delivered us from bondage. The revelations about the immorality of the leadership shocked us to the core. God used that to wake us up, and we started questioning everything. Step by step we were led out of deception.

Both of us feel that it is since coming out of Camp David that our walk with the Lord has really begun. We think we have covered quite a lot of ground by now but also feel like very beginners at the same time.

Home Education tips

If I had known that one day I would be a mother of seven, I would have panicked. But this is God's grace that He only shows us what is beneficial for us to know about the future. I still have my moments of panic, but He is constantly training me, teaching and leading me on. Praise God!

Over the last few years the Lord whispered to my heart three things so far to make our Home Education workable:

1. *Prepare.* I sit down in the evening with the white board and adjust each child's schedule for the next day. When adjusting I consider how each child will fit together with my schedule and other requirements. Hardly ever does a day unfold the way I planned, but it gives us the necessary framework.
2. *Work atmosphere.* During times of structured learning, usually mid-morning to lunchtime, I simply require the children to whisper which creates an atmosphere of concentration.
3. *Goals.* That's one I'm still working on at present: to determine which activities should have goals attached to them and which ones should not (!) and whether and what incentives to use.

As adults we are so used to goal setting as necessary or at least helpful to achieve things, that we can overlook that wonderful ability of a child to live here and now, totally engrossed in what they are doing, excited, productive, satisfied, fulfilled; with your eyes set on a goal, you can lose the joy of doing something for the sake of doing it. And considering that He calls Himself "I AM the I AM" gives me a deep respect for the here-

and-now.

Thus it was precious for me to hear from His own lips that goals are also in His toolbox for learning. None of the three points were new to me, but what a different authority they receive through personal confirmation from Him!

The chiming clock

In my continuing wrestling match with discouragement, worrying, fear of man, self righteousness (being annoyed and/or feeling selfpity) I found a wonderful helper: my chiming clock (my husband's birthday present for that very purpose). Its calm notes are prodding me (while I am within earshot) every quarter of an hour to turn my eyes on Him, thanking Him for His presence and telling Him that I love Him and whatever else is on my heart right then.

I miss a lot of chimes, but I hear enough, probably a quarter of them. My concern that I would soon get used to the sound and tune out has not come to pass (after seven months now), which again is by His grace. I can see how my thoughts, words, emotions and actions, are slowly, slowly becoming softer clay in the Masters hands, my heart is beginning to taste more of His peace and rest—this clock is indeed an answer to years of repeated crying for help.

Family devotions

We found a valuable set of books in Nancy Ganz's *Herein is LOVE* series. These are Bible commentaries for children which I read while the children have breakfast. So far the author has expounded on Genesis, Exodus and Leviticus; at present we are halfway through Exodus. I think there is not one chapter where she doesn't link the events to Jesus Christ and the overall plan of salvation, giving the big picture, describing the shadow character of the Old Testament.

Our long term goal is to have family devotions and breakfast together each day before Dad leaves for work. Some times it seems to dissolve into a distant dream, but just recently we've picked up hope; we've managed to pull our average bedtime forward by almost an hour, which is the first step to getting up earlier. So Dad and Mum are rising earlier more and more often, but the need for a decent chunk of individual time with the Lord seems as great as for family worship and breakfast. So we have to decide each day afresh what the priorities are.

Children

Ira is 13 years. He loves the outdoors – birds, fishes, all the tiny water creatures, insects, spiders (his focus!), fungi. He got himself a name among family and friends as being an expert in these areas. Our 10 acre block has been a gift from heaven with its duck pond (where can you catch arm-thick eels for Mother's bath tub?), old fruit trees and a long established pine tree belt on a steep bank!

Ira's latest hobby is photography – which enhances greatly his discovery tours in nature and identification skills (and brings welcome and not so welcome

(Continued on page 26: Redepinning)

The Faith of Us Fathers

Family Worship: A Father's Highest Duty

by Phil Lancaster



You have probably heard the observation that when you point a finger at someone else, you are, at the same time, pointing three fingers back at yourself. Now there is no doubt that this proverb is often quoted to stifle a well-deserved criticism. After all, ours is a day in which it is not considered nice ever to pass judgment on someone else's behavior. But it occurs to me that the observation is quite apropos when considering a commonly heard condemnation made by Christian men today, namely, that our nation's spiritual heritage is under attack by those we call secular humanists.

Certainly it is true that there is a godless element intent upon rewriting history so as to deny our Christian heritage and eradicating the last vestiges of Christian values from our culture. This element of our population deserves finger-pointing and the blame it communicates. Unfortunately, as we apply such fitting judgments to these obvious malefactors, we are implicating ourselves as well. Three fingers are pointing back at Christian men—because while we correctly denounce the humanism of others, we fail to recognize that which lodges in our own hearts and in our families.

Yes, Christian men, even dedicated, family-centered men, are too often what I will call practical humanists. This means we are humanists in effect, though not in profession. We affirm the reality of God with our mouths, but our lifestyle denies our confession. While we denounce the overt godlessness of others, we ourselves have been guilty of a quiet godlessness. If humanism is a denial of God, many Christian men are humanists in the fabric of their daily lives.

In the Bible we find a more reliably true proverb than that with which we began: The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Prov. 9:10). What it means is this: taking God seriously is the foundation for right thinking and right living.

Applying this to our discussion, we must acknowledge that too many Christian men do not take God seriously in how they think and how they live. While professing faith in God, there is no evidence that God shapes their approach to major portions of their personal and family lives. In matters as diverse as business, recreation, dress, education, finances and music, for example, there is no discernible difference between many Christian men and others who make no such claims to faith. I suggest that if so much of a man's life is unaffected by the God he claims to revere, he is not actually taking God very seriously. He does not truly

fear God. He is, while a professing believer, a practicing humanist.

It is no surprise that wicked men act wickedly. What is disastrous is when good men fail to act righteously. The reason our nation is on the skids is not that godless humanists are out to eliminate public expressions of faith, which they surely are. The problem is rather that Christian men are too often guilty of voluntarily eliminating private expressions of faith. Our nation is being destroyed by the failure of Christian men to take God seriously in the way they live in the home and in the small circle of their daily experience.

Does God Make Any Difference?

In particular, one of the prime symptoms of our malady is the absence of family worship in Christian homes. Yes, this is one of the chief barometers of how much the fear of the Lord infects a generation of believers; and by that measure our generation does not take God very seriously at all. When a family goes through a day without corporately acknowledging God, they are, for that day, living like humanists. They are saying that God is not present in their family, that He can be ignored without it making any difference.

The children of that household are being taught a subtle lesson: while we talk about God, He does not affect our daily lives. The children are being raised to be practical humanists. If God is really the God we claim He is—the majestic, all-powerful Creator; the gracious, all-merciful Redeemer—how can we ever live a day without acknowledging Him together in our homes?! It just does not make sense.

Writing in the last century, James W. Alexander in *Thoughts on Family Worship* had this to say about children and the practice of (in his time, twice-daily!) family worship:

The simple fact, that parents and offspring meet together every morning and evening, for the word of God and prayer, is a great fact in household annals. It is the inscribing of God's name over the lintel of the door. It is the setting up of God's altar. The dwelling is marked as a house of prayer. Religion is thus made a substantive and prominent part of the domestic plan. The day is opened and closed in the name of the Lord.

From the very dawn of reason, each little one grows up with a feeling that God must be honored in every thing; that no business of life can proceed without Him; and that the day's work, or study, would be unsheltered, disorderly, and in a manner profane, but for this consecration. When such a child comes, in later years, to mingle with families where there is no worship, there is an unavoidable shudder, as if among heathen or infidel companions.

In too many Christian homes today, someone who truly fears God would shudder. God is acknowledged in profession, but He is not a substantive and prominent part of the domestic plan.

A Universal Christian Practice

As our author wrote, regular, daily, family worship is simply an historical fact among godly families in all ages and places. This gathering of the whole family for the purpose of worship, Bible reading and prayer is a conscious, corporate ritual. It is a specific, intentional gathering to acknowledge God together in addition to thanks offered at meals or bedside prayers. While the church gathers weekly to worship the Lord, the family assembles daily for that highest of all human endeavors.

Both Old and New Testaments contain abundant evidence that family devotion is assumed as the lifestyle of the godly. We see the pattern of domestic worship in the example of the patriarchs who so often gathered their families around their crude altars to offer thanks to God for his guidance and blessing (Gen. 8:20; 12:8; 13:4, etc.). The pattern is evident as well in the life of Cornelius, about whom we read that he and all his family were devout and God-fearing (Acts 10:2); and he gathered his family to hear the gospel proclaimed (v.24). The fact that the early church met in homes testifies eloquently to the fact that faith and worship find their first manifestations in the household (Acts 2:46; Rom. 16:5,23; 1 Cor. 16:19, etc.). The practice of domestic worship would have to be assumed among the godly, even if Scripture never hinted about its existence. How could genuine faith fail to find such expression in the family?!

From the early church to the Reformation times in Switzerland, France, Holland, Scotland, etc., to the colonial days in America, indeed, up to our own century, the institution of family worship is an ever-present evidence of a vital faith within the home. In Reformation Scotland you would come under church discipline if you persisted in the neglect of the duty of Family-worship (Directory of Family Worship, 1647). Not much chance of that today! But why not? Only because our standards are so much lower today. We tolerate practical humanism, and it shows.

A Father's Chief Duty

Men of God, it is up to us to remedy the situation. No matter what our churches say (or neglect to say) about it, we can and must assure that at least in our homes God is taken seriously. It does not matter how far short of godliness the church and Christians in general have fallen today; we must say, as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!

If my highest overall priority in life is God Himself, and if my highest temporal priority is my family, then it follows that that duty which rests at the intersection of these two greatest obligations is my paramount concern in life—and that duty is none other than family worship! It is here that my devotion to my God and my commitment to my family find their inevitable expression. I honor God best by leading and loving my family; I lead and love my family best by bringing them before God. Family worship is the most important obligation of a Christian father.

If you have been regular in this practice, keep up the

good work! You show that you understand what it means to fear God, and he will bless you as you remain steadfast in your family leadership.

If you have not been regular in family worship, how do you go about developing this habit? We will spend the remainder of this article addressing how to get started.

Laying the Groundwork for Success

The first thing you must do is to deal with your own personal relationship with the Lord. Family spiritual leadership is simply an overflow of a man's own walk with God. In this regard, do two things. (1) If you are not already doing so, establish the practice of daily personal worship (devotions or quiet time). Again, you must be walking with God yourself before you can lead your family in that walk together. Spend some part of every day (preferably first thing in the morning) reading God's word, offering worship and thanksgiving and engaging in intercessory prayer. (2) Go before God and confess the sin of neglecting family worship. Confess that you have been a humanist in practice and have encouraged your children to become practical humanists as well. It is only as you acknowledge sin that you will find the grace to develop new patterns in your home. Mere efforts at reform, apart from repentance and grace, will not succeed in the long run.

Secondly, deal with your relationship with your wife and children. Don't just try to sneak up on them and get them to join you in family worship if you have not been in the habit. Sit them down and confess the sin of failing to be the spiritual leader of the home. This is humbling and painful, but it is necessary. Great failings require great humility in acknowledging the fault. The most manly thing you ever do will be to admit that you have failed in your manly calling. Your family need to see that you recognize the gravity of the matter of your spiritual leadership. They need to see that you are serious about making the changes that are needed. Taking this humble posture before your flock will elevate you far higher in their esteem than if you kept silent on the point.

While you have the ears of your wife and children, ask their help as you begin to do your job. Let them know you realize it will be hard to develop a new family habit but that you are committed to God to do so and must have their support. Invite their ongoing counsel on the matter of how family worship is conducted in the home. Ask their commitment to cooperate with your efforts to lead, and ask them to pray for you as you seek to obey the Lord in this way. Family solidarity will go a long way toward assuring the success of your program.

The third thing you should do is to establish an accountability relationship with another Christian man or group of men. Our generation needs to rediscover the benefits of men encouraging one another in their duties by holding one another accountable. Naturally it makes sense for you to develop such a relationship with someone in your church. In duties that pertain to your family, you need someone besides your wife to

whom you can answer about your progress. She is not your authority. Another man can represent to you the authority of Christ through His church. If your church is healthy, your elders should be making it a point to encourage you in your family responsibilities; but you should take the initiative to be accountable to someone regardless. It would be wonderful if I would always do what I knew I should out of sheer love for the Lord; but lacking that, it helps to know my brothers will be checking up on me! This is a vital ingredient for success for most of us until we have our spiritual disciplines mastered. Don't neglect it.

The fourth and final step in laying the groundwork for your successful practice of family worship is to establish it as a part of the family schedule. This means selecting a time when you can daily gather the whole family together. Don't plan just once a week or whenever it works out. God deserves more honor than that! Plan a daily time to meet. The ideal time is early in the day since this is the best preparation for taking God seriously the rest of the day. For some this will mean having the family rise earlier than they otherwise would. If it is simply not possible to worship in the morning, then plan a time in the evening, perhaps right after a family supper (dinner) before everyone scatters. Whenever you decide to meet, stick with it and make the rest of your schedule bow to this priority.

Many families will need to de-clutter their hectic family schedule before they can establish a realistic, sustainable meeting time. But be clear about this: if your family is too busy to find a daily time to worship God together, you are busier than the Lord wants you to be! Don't allow so many good things in your family schedule that they crowd out the most essential family activity. Simplify your family life and learn to walk with God together.

A Pattern for Family Worship

If you have not led your family in worship before, it may seem like a monumental undertaking as you anticipate getting started. Recognize that fear and acknowledge it, but don't allow it to prevent your diving right in. The fact is that once you have overcome the inertia of past neglect, have laid the groundwork outlined above and are willing and ready to conduct family devotions, you have come 90% of the way toward success! The actual how-to of leading worship is no big deal. That's the easy part!

Get over the feeling that there is some right way to lead that you have not yet learned. What your family needs is you, right now, just as you are. God has appointed you the spiritual leader of your little flock, and He will use you to lead them. See yourself as an adequate leader, because your Father does!

There are three basic elements to family worship: praise, Bible-reading and prayer. There is no formula for how these should be incorporated; rather, there is an infinite variety of approaches. Here is the key thought behind the inclusion of each of these three elements:

(1) Praise is simply the response of creatures to their Creator, of saints to their Savior, of children to their heavenly Father. It is acknowledging the greatness of God and the greatness of His works. Praise can be expressed in prayer, in the reading of a Psalm, in a hymn or chorus. Children especially enjoy singing, so having the family sing praise to God—even if it is literally a joyful noise—is a desirable part of any family worship plan.

(2) Bible reading is God speaking to us. As the family gathers in His presence, this is the most natural of activities. The Bible reveals God, communicates wisdom, points us to the Savior, tells us how to live. It is our spiritual food. Feasting on a portion of it each day is the best prescription for family health.

(3) Prayer is our speaking to God. Through it we can express praise for who God is, thanksgiving for His blessings, confession for our sins and supplication for God's help in our needs.

The simpler the plan for family worship the better. Just gather your household, read a chapter of the Bible, sing a hymn and lead in prayer. As you get in the habit of doing this and feel comfortable, you can begin to experiment with other ideas. For now the important thing is to get with the program!

Here are some of those other possibilities. You can have a discussion of the passage you read; practice Bible memory; read a devotional or doctrine book; hear insights each family member has gotten from his own personal devotions; develop a brief service with a call to worship, a hymn, confession of sin, a Bible lesson, intercessory prayer, another hymn, etc.; incorporate your wife and children in the reading and prayer; have some of the children provide special music; focus prayer on different topics on different days, like church families on Monday, missionaries on Tuesday, government leaders on Wednesday, etc.; meet in different locations to add variety; and on and on we could go. Let your imagination go! Just don't neglect the three basic elements of any family worship time.

(Continued from page 11: Muslims)

My initial response to reading this is: "With all due respect, you have to be joking!"

I have travelled through Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Malaysia and Indonesia. I've seen Islam up close. I have Christian friends who were part of the underground Church in Jeddah in Saudi Arabia. I have spent hours in conversation with a moderate but orthodox Sunni Muslim Afghan refugee who became a good friend.

While there may be some scope for co-operation on broad political issues, and I will applaud many such efforts, especially to secure more peace, justice and freedom of self-determination under God, the statement here is presuming far too much:

This is not a hard task, as there are no fundamental

(Continued on page 28: Muslims)

Worldviews in Focus

with Craig Smith

Philosophy

Many well-meaning folks have been impressed with the philosophy behind this statement made by Jack Shallcrass (a New Zealand educationalist and philanthropist):

If we treasure the right to be heard, then we must accord that right to every other person. If it is correct for us to deny any person or any section of the community any right, then by change of circumstances he would be correct in denying us... Freedom for the expression of someone's wrong idea secures freedom for the expression of my right idea. Error is essential to the finding of truth. What we know depends equally on knowing what is and is not the case. Hence the futility of enforced orthodoxy—for we can only know if its view is right if we also know other views.

Although it sounds good, like a universally applied truism anyone and everyone would surely agree with, it is coming from a definite non-theistic position. This has many implications, some of which Jack mentions in the statement. There is no way anybody and everybody could possibly agree with this statement. It has a lot of fishhooks in it.

Now first, Jack Shallcrass is patron of the Humanist Society of NZ. This means he is a lot more definite and focused than most of us in relation to what he believes: that is, he can articulate his religious position well. This statement quoted above certainly does this.

Jack's statements get progressively disconcerting. His first statement, "If we treasure the right to be heard, then we must accord that right to every other person", sounds great. None of us believe it, of course...I hope not even Jack. Skinheads in Christchurch have tried saying all kinds of things about Asians and for some reason their freedom to speak is (rightly) curtailed. We don't even let our little children ramble on, but constantly correct their



content for accuracy, every nuance of meaning, and I doubt many of us tolerate lies. In other words, Jack left out any reference to the fact that the speaker must first have some claim to integrity or credibility and that his message cannot abrogate indisputable facts because otherwise no one will listen to him, and he may be forbidden to speak at all. Neither of these prohibitions should be in place in order for Jack's final statement to be utilised.

The "Freedom for the expression of someone's wrong idea..." bothers us a wee bit, for we really don't think it is a good idea to go around expressing wrong ideas...like Auschwitz never happened, it is ok to commit any crime you like as long as you don't get caught, or we should start using the mentally retarded and physically impaired for vivisections. But if it is true that by letting others say these obscene things we thereby secure our own freedom to say our right things, then we buy into Jack's argument that it must be ok to listen to this kind of drivel. No. If it is right, you say it anyway, because it is right. But Jack doesn't talk about that kind of right, the kind that is always right. He's saying that that drivel he wants you to let others say will probably one day be right...it'll gain a following and take its turn at being right.

Then he exposes his hand for the relativistic quicksand it is: "Error is essential to the finding of truth." First he assumes that truth is lost or that he or the reader don't know where it is. He appears to be saying a hit or miss, trial and error approach to everything will eventually lead us to "truth". Now, this seems to work in the physical world: experience and trial and error brought us the light bulb, the mousetrap and the internet. These can hardly be said to be examples of "truth", for they are simply tools. But what about moral issues? Abortion used to be a no-brainer...it was murder, plain and simple. Somehow people are really keen to justify it now. It has had periods in history where it was

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forbidden and also when it was standard procedure. Perhaps we can say it has gone in and out of fashion. But apparently we cannot say we've "found" the truth about abortion yet. But according to Jack, if I say, "Abortion is wrong" I can only know that as long as I know the other views, such as, "Abortion is right," "Abortion may be right in some circumstances," "Abortion is essential," "Abortion is a woman's choice," "Abortion is the doctor's choice," "Abortion should be left up to the baby to decide," and all the other views. I might like this expanded array of choices in regards to the truth of abortion, but in the end I choose one or maybe a couple of them, as what I reckon is closest to the "truth". My friend chooses something else. We both have the same facts about abortion presented to us. But we have different choices about the "truth" in the end. So in fact, there is no truth....there is only personal preferences as to what we think or would like truth to be.

This is precisely what the following stuff I pulled off the humanist website says. (Remember that Jack is a patron of the Humanist Society):

On the Humanist website (www.humanist.org.nz), it has at the top of the page titled "Principles and Aims" the following:

IHEU Definition of Humanism (IHEU = International Humanist and Ethical Union): Humanism is a democratic and ethical life stance, which affirms that human beings have the right and responsibility to give shape and meaning to their own lives. It stands for the building of a more humane society through an ethics based on human and other natural values in a spirit of reason and free inquiry through human capabilities. It is not theistic, and does not accept supernatural views of society.

There you have it: since you give shape and meaning to your own life, you have customised truth! What is true for you is not at all necessarily true for me!

Now here is where poor Jack gets caught in what appears to be hypocrisy or at least inconsistency. God is specifically ruled out of his consideration. So if I say, "Abortion is always wrong because the God who made us all says so and after all, with His exhaustive knowledge of all things, He cannot be wrong", Jack will automatically disallow my statement from his consideration, though he may be happy enough for me to say it in the public arena. At the point where he is quoted earlier saying that he needs to know other views in order to know his own version of truth, he automatically rejects my contribution because it is theistically based. This is nothing but plain ol' religious intolerance on Jack's part; hardly an example of "a spirit of reason and free inquiry."

His plea for freedom of speech shows itself to be hopelessly chaotic since it is based only on personal preferences and no transcendent, never-changing standard of truth (what Jack called orthodoxy). His version of truth can change from person to person, time to time, conversation to conversation. You will never

know the truth because you really aren't sure what it's going to look like; and anyway, when will you ever know all the views there are to know, which Jack says you've got to know before you can know which one is right? Truth then just becomes something that is presently useful....until the next useful truth comes by.

So, to sum up, if you are truly concerned for truth that you can rely on, truth that is always true, right that is always right and wrong that is wrong no matter what, don't listen to Jack....he doesn't offer that kind of thing. The Bible does, for it is God's unchanging word on the matter...and being omniscient, as He is, sure allows Him to have a corner on the truth!

Do Muslims, Jews and Christians All Worship the Same God?

There are a slew of books on the market at the moment similar to this one by Harun Yahya entitled, *A Call for Unity*. The patten for this book goes like this:

We are living in an era in which the world is desperately in need of peace, friendship and solidarity. Despite the urgent need for unity and cooperation, certain circles are inciting conflict, particularly conflict between the world's two greatest and deep-rooted civilizations. This issue needs to be explored as the war of civilizations that they predict would have disastrous consequences for humanity. One of the best ways of preventing such a disaster is to strengthen the dialogue and cooperation between these civilizations. This is not a hard task as there are no fundamental differences between Islam and the Judeo-Christian western world. To the contrary, there is much common ground between them.

Today, ideological struggles, indeed, continue to divide the world. However, Muslims are not at one pole and Jews and Christians are not at the opposing pole. In fact, one pole represents people who believe in God's existence and unity, and the other pole represents the unbelievers. There is only one way to defeat the alliance of the various groups of unbelievers on an ideological level: eradicate the negative and destructive influences of anti-religious materialism and further the cause of a society dominated by morality, happiness, tranquility, security and prosperity. This will be done by forming an alliance of all conscientious people, namely, sincere Christians, along with religious Jews and Muslims, who will come together and unite in this common cause.

This book reveals that Muslims, Christians and Jews have common principles of faith, worship and moral values; face common dangers; and calls on the People of the Book (Christians and Jews) to unite with Muslims as fellow believers opposed to atheism, anti-religiosity and social as well as moral degeneration.

(Continued on page 9: Muslims)

Teaching Tips



Bible Memorization— Do It Now

by Holly Sheen

I think we would all agree that Bible memorization is important and it is something we should aspire to include as an integral part of our curriculum. You don't need a fancy approach to make this work.

When our daughters were ages 4 and 2, I heard them reciting a story tape verbatim. I had been planning to teach them to memorize Bible verses when they were older, but when I heard them mimicking the tape, I suddenly realized that if they could recite silly stories, they could recite the Bible. Our "curriculum" consisted of Bible verses printed on small cards. I selected a verse card for the week and at every meal each member of the family repeated the verse 3 times as they were prompted by myself or my husband. By the end of the week we all knew the verse. I was surprised at how painless this was for everyone, even our 2-year-old.

As they grew a little older, we began working on multiple-verse passages. We didn't dumb down the verses in any way. I figured if they could speak, then they could recite. This didn't seem to fazed our daughters at all, so we pressed on with the approach.

When the girls were about 7 and 5, we expanded this approach to begin memorizing short books of the Bible. By now this process was too lengthy for mealtime so it was added to the daily bedtime-story routine. However, our strategy was the same---simply say the passages over 3 times each. The girls were good at this because they had been memorizing Scripture for several years by now. In fact, they were so good at it that they began to leave my husband and I behind. Rather than hinder their pace, we kept them memorizing as fast as they were able, while my husband and I toiled along with our older, more feeble brains.

Something very important to think about—if you don't tell your children that Bible memory is hard, they won't know. They will assume the same attitude that you do. If you enter into the memorization process with enthusiasm and gusto, they will too. They don't know any better. Take advantage of this while they are young!

By the time our girls were about 10 and 8,

they had memorized the books of James, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, Phillipians, I & II Thessalonians, and Titus. I can't say that my husband and I were as successful, but we kept trying. We at least wanted to demonstrate faithfulness. However, we saw no reason why our slower pace needed to impede their progress, so we urged them onward.

Now that Heather and Raquelle are in their 20s, they can't spit these passages out as easily as when they were young. However, the girls are still very familiar with these Scriptures so that they can quickly find whatever they are looking for when they want it. And they have certainly taken to heart the principles and teachings in these books, which is the ultimate aim.

Remember, young minds are built for absorbing. So don't feel that your kids need to wait until they're older. Do it now while they're good at it. And encourage them cheerfully so they will see memorization as something to look forward to.

Holly Sheen homeschooled her two daughters from birth through high school and is still a full-time homemaker—otherwise known as Mizzuz Glue. She tries to keep everyone's very busy schedules coordinated, mentors her daughters in their on-line college studies and various home businesses, assists her husband, Ray, in his management consulting business, keeps the household running, and happily vents her creativity in the house and out in yard.

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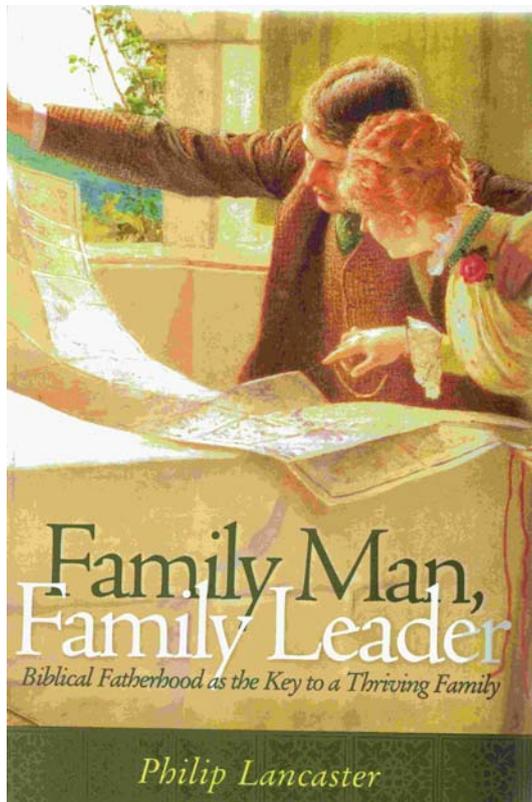
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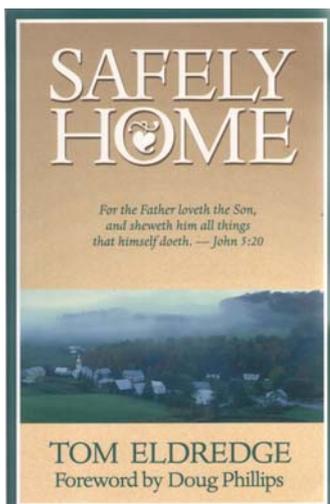


What this country needs is a few good men — husbands and fathers who are willing to love and lead their households with manly resolve and godly vision. Frankly, the Church needs these men every bit as much as the rest of the country. We are experiencing a national crisis of manhood of epidemic proportions. 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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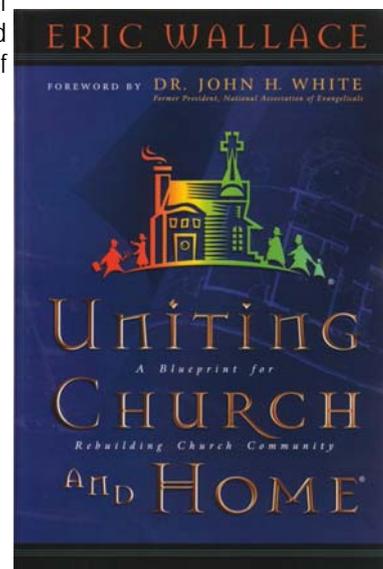
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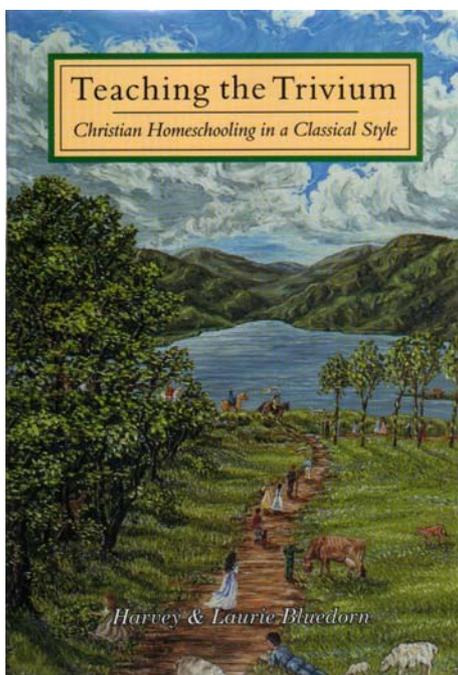
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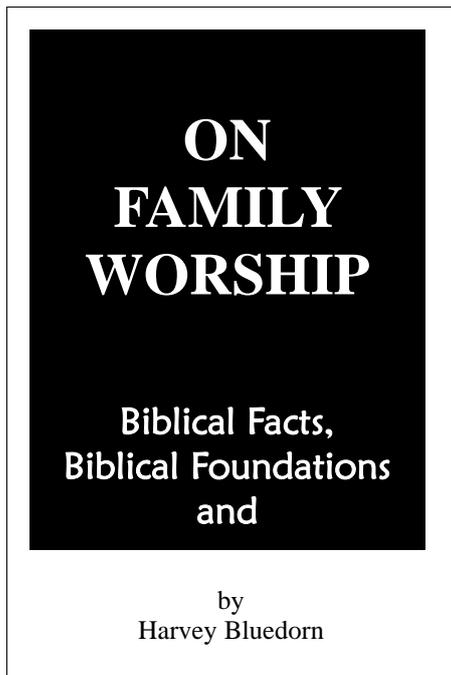
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35 pages, A5.

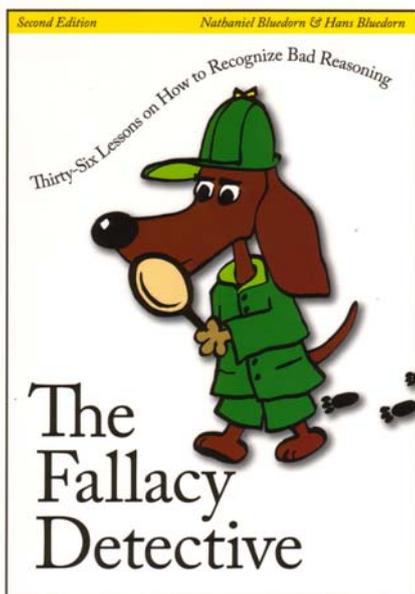
The Fallacy Detective

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.

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TRAINING OUR CHILDREN

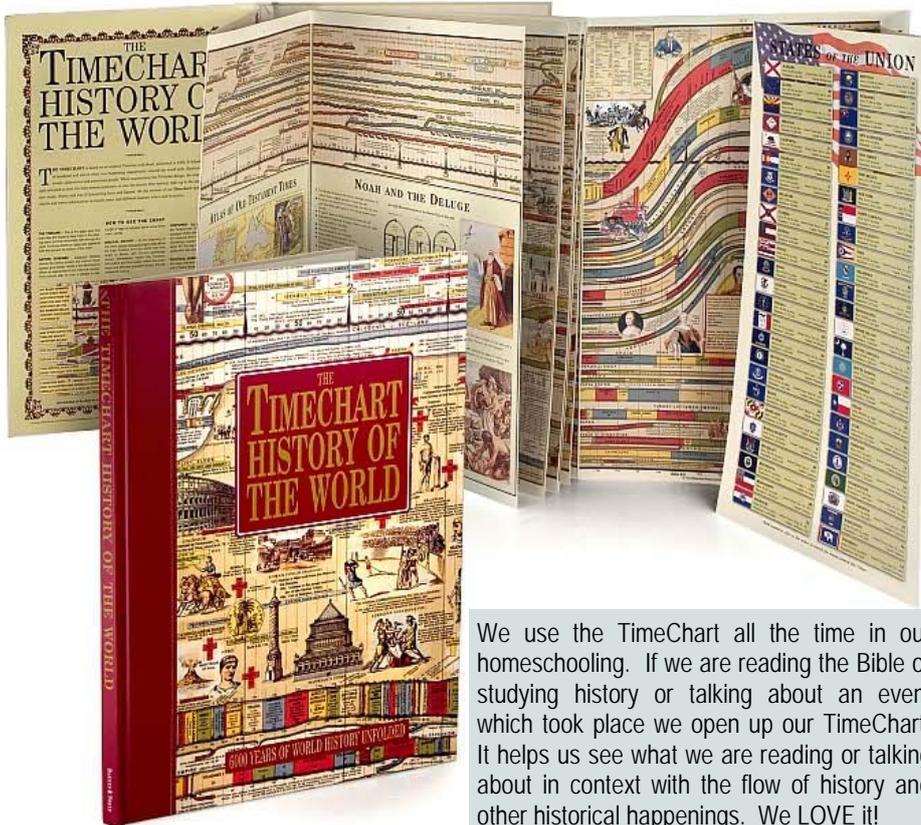
by
Craig & Barbara Smith

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Graduates Speak

Chief Among Desires

by Lanier Ivester

*For wisdom is more precious than rubies,
And nothing you desire can compare with her.
Proverbs 8:11*

When I was fourteen, God turned my world upside down — or, more accurately, set it right side up. My parents had become Christians a couple of years before, and the devotion and zeal with which they approached their new-found faith had had a marked influence on me. I had started to take my own walk a little more seriously, spending time *almost* daily reading my Bible and praying at times for things I wanted very badly, paltry trifles though they were. But, for the most part, I went about my merry way, which really wasn't all that merry, truth be told, making little, if any, application of the things I had read in the Bible and making my own personal happiness the very business of my life.

Chief among the desires that I cherished was a passionate yearning for popularity, and the high road to that glittering god of adolescence was, I believed, a spot on the cheerleading squad. From the first day of middle school it was painfully obvious that I didn't fit in. I still wore the trim little plaid woolen jumpers, crisp oxford shirts and penny loafers that my mother had dressed me in since elementary school (three long months ago!) and wore my hair long and pulled away from my face with satin ribbons. All of the other girls wore make-up and big earrings and tight-fitting clothes; but it wasn't until I turned around in class one day and caught my best friend, Andrea, making fun of my ribbon-bound braid that a reckless determination arose within me to be just like the rest of them, whatever the cost. That was the beginning of a dark period of opalescent lip-stick and teased hair and cheap, ill-fitting garments that stuck gracelessly to my thin little-girl frame.

My appearance was not the only sacrifice that I made to this shining idol. There were others, more subtle perhaps, but more dangerous, laced as they were with the sly cunning of self-deceit. With every 'little' choice I made, every coarse joke I laughed at, every true desire that I shamed into conformity, I grew more and more distant from myself — and from my God. I was eleven years old then and daily in contact with girls from respectable families who whispered of smoking and 'making-out' with boys; but as that year passed, I learned to listen to their chatter without the slightest sensation of the wide-eyed shock that had characterized my early days in junior high. No amount of conformity, however, could change the fact that this shy, slightly awkward little girl — who had felt the ache of beauty in her soul and had heard the call of God — would never fit in, unless she put her own



nature to death.

Nevertheless, I was resolved to be a cheerleader or perish in the attempt. If hard work could win a spot on the squad, then it should be mine. I could hardly wait until the end of seventh grade when I could try out. In the end, I was chosen for the team — with much different results than I had anticipated. In being selected I had inadvertently bumped one of the 'in' girls off the squad and thus invoked the wrath of her whole set. It was a dreadful, painful, self-conscious year of petty slights, ill-concealed ridicule and open scorn. Of all the cruelties of nature, few can surpass those of teenage girls. I had some pluck, though, if I do say so myself, even if it was misplaced. With all that I endured that tedious year, I was ready, even eager, to try out for the high school squad. It would be different in high school; I would get another chance to find my niche in the popular crowd. After all, there was no other choice. What joy could life possibly hold if I continued to be relegated to that wistful host outside of the charmed circle?

During this period, unbeknownst to me, my parents were weighing a very serious question. At nothing less than God's initiative, they had begun to investigate a new and rather radical method of education called home-schooling. By January of that year I was aware that it was a very real possibility for Elizabeth and Zach, my younger sister and brother, but it never entered my mind that they could be considering it for me. Apparently it hadn't entered Daddy's mind either, for when Mama pointed out to him an algebra book in a catalogue that she thought might do for me, he was taken aback.

"Now, wait a minute — I think that this will be great for Elizabeth and Zach, but not for Lanier. She's going into high school. How can we expect to teach her all of the subjects that she'll need?"

Mama stared at him for a moment, too dismayed to speak.

"Honey, you don't understand!" she said desperately. "It won't work. It's got to be all of us, or it won't work! Otherwise it will pull our family apart rather than build it up. Lanier has got to be a part of this, too." I'm sure that Mama's own conviction that they were losing me lent weight to her words. "I honestly don't know how we're going to tackle all of those high school subjects, but I am convinced that if God is calling our family to this, then He will show us the way."

She wisely said no more on the matter, at least to Daddy. To be sure, she said a great deal to God about it over the ensuing months, and God, in turn, began to speak to Daddy. By the end of the school year, he was as good as convinced, and the decision had all but been made, when a trivial incident became the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back. One afternoon he turned up at my school, intending to surprise me by attending the pep rally scheduled for that day. No

father that ever lived could be more proud of his children or more supportive of their efforts and interests than mine. He rewarded every hard-earned achievement with such a liberality of praise and affirmation that the actual attainment of the goal paled in the light of his smiling approbation. All three of us knew the joy of that smile; under its influence our best efforts ever flourished.

His displeasure can be imagined, then, when he entered the gym to find the other cheerleaders mid-way through their little display and me watching them alone from a bench on the sidelines. I felt so awkward and stupid there by myself, in front of the whole school, as it were — but at the sight of my Daddy's figure in the doorway, I smiled in spite of myself. Mortification fled before the indomitable comfort of his presence. I was not alone.

In a moment he was beside me with his arm around me whispering, "What's going on?" I whispered back that the girls had decided among themselves that I wasn't 'ready' to perform the routine, and had put the alternate in my place moments before the pep rally began. My own stinging sense of injustice melted into his as he sat there for a moment with his mouth set in a firm line.

"Let's go," he finally said, rising abruptly and taking my hand.

I remember driving away with him, a happy sense of freedom rising within me. I felt wildly, as I had many times before, that I never wanted to come back to that hated place. I did hate it, with all of my scramblings and schemings for its elusive bounty of popularity — or, perhaps because of them. I never knew any real happiness there; and when I was honest with myself, I knew that the one place on earth that gave me the kind of security and joy that I was searching for was my own home among the people who loved me for exactly who I was.

But I was going there now — with Daddy. It was Friday afternoon, and a whole weekend stretched between now and the grey Monday when my parole would be up, and I would have to return to prison. Daddy probably bought me a milkshake on the way home. I don't remember exactly, but it was just the kind of thing that he would do. And we came in the door laughing, leaving the cruel world and its insults and hostility outside.

Not long after this incident, a family counsel was called, and the three of us made our way to the den with vague forebodings. I had known something was in the air. Like the distant rumble of an approaching thunderstorm, snatches of overheard conversations and catalogues left open on the dining room table had heralded the coming disaster. But even I was stunned when the storm finally broke — for it broke with such force and finality that all of my hastily erected arguments and alternatives were swept away before I knew what was happening.

We all sat open-mouthed as my parents related the plan

for the coming year. There was such a curious mixture of excitement and firmness in their voices as they told us how God had led them to embark on this strange adventure called home-schooling, and I knew that an unwilling protest or an insolent remark would be worse than fruitless. So I tried another tack.

"What if we don't want to?" I wheedled. "I mean, what if we would rather go to Christian school or something?" I could still be a cheerleader there, if I had to.

Daddy's smile vanished. He lowered his eyebrows and looked at me with that steady, searching gaze that always made me squirm and which, I imagined, could have wrung a confession from the most hardened of criminals before his bench.

"Ah, sweetie," he said, without taking his eyes from my face. It should be expressed that in our house, 'sweetie' was *not* a term of endearment, and when prefaced with a calculated 'ah', one knew, unmistakably, that one had erred. "I'm afraid that you don't understand. We're not giving you a choice. This is what God has led us to do with our family, and your Mama and I are committed to seeing it through."

I stared at the floor and bit my lip in frustration and anger. *Home-schooling?* Were they *crazy?* I had never even heard of it before they had started whispering about it last fall. Maybe it wasn't even legal! Hope glimmered faintly for a moment and then faded. Daddy would surely have looked into that. Oh, this was terrible! Did they even care that I was going to have absolutely *no* friends now?

I stole a look at my younger sister, Elizabeth. She was sitting in stony silence with her little mouth set very much like Daddy's could be. She was three years younger than me and my opposite in many ways — a passionate student and the sun around which her fellow fourth-graders revolved. I knew that she was stricken to the core, but she would save her tears for the solitude of her own bedroom.

Zach on the other hand was the very essence of enthusiasm. Despite the difference in our ages, I suspect that we shared the same distaste for traditional schooling, and it was an unspoken, even unobserved bond between us. While I had been reprimanded by teachers for daydreaming in math class and drawing crude sketches of princesses in my social studies notebook, Zach's trouble had manifested itself in a general rambunctiousness — perfectly normal in a boy his age — which had occasioned several notes home and conferences with annoyed teachers. What Zach really needed was exactly what he was about to get: a sound education with enough freedom and sunshine interspersed with spelling tests and multiplication tables to satisfy the inherent longings of a healthy, robust boyhood.

"Won't it be wonderful?" Mama was saying. "On cold mornings we can do our lessons in here by the fire—"

"With hot chocolate?" demanded Zach, as if it were

one of the terms of a contract.

“Yes, of course!” Mama laughed. If Elizabeth and my sullen countenances troubled her, she didn’t let on. She seized upon Zach’s interest and talked as if we were all wildly excited. “Think of the books we can read together — and the field trips!”

Zach accepted it all with the enviable abandon of an eight year old and went his way with a light heart that summer. Elizabeth and I were not convinced, however, and I have every reason to suspect that she cried herself to sleep at night for weeks. I tried to be hopeful: they would get tired of it, or it would be too hard, and then they would come to their senses. I even pictured myself trying out clandestinely for the junior varsity cheerleading squad the following spring — I could see the surprised but proud looks on their faces as I told them that I had made the team and could hear their vanquished concession to my all-important happiness. How could they resist? For you see, I was still quagmired in the state of believing that my happiness was the main objective in everything — I, who didn’t even yet know what true happiness was!

It is with some shame that I confess that I left my friends in school with a very dubious idea of what I was doing in the next school year. If they happened to cherish the notion that I was going to a private school (*very private!*), I didn’t see any necessity in disillusioning them. The only friend that I discussed it with was Andrea.

“It’s only for a year at the most,” I told her. “I’ll be back in tenth grade.”

“I think that your parents are crazy,” she replied.

“I do too,” I muttered.

The courage of my mother and father cannot be underestimated. Relatively new Christians, they had embraced obedience with an uncommon devotion; and if this new life led them into uncharted territory, it was with a steady eye of faith that they scanned the horizon. To be sure, there wasn’t much to be seen, even from that hilltop of satisfied obedience, for the homeschooling movement was still in its early stages, and there were few provisions and little company in the land that stretched before them. I couldn’t help but notice that virtually the whole of our town thought them insane. Their conversion had been dramatic enough, for my parents were well known in the community, both by Daddy’s profession as a judge and by Mama’s civic involvement; and the manner in which they had lightly dropped their former pursuits and pleasures had sent shock waves through their set. But *this* had caused a genuine uproar, and no doubt there was much shaking of heads and wagging of tongues over it. Heaven only knows how many snide comments Mama smiled graciously at over her grocery cart or how many well-meaning cautions from baffled colleagues Daddy laughingly brushed aside.

Even their closest friends were skeptical. Their pastor tried to talk them out of it. My loving and godly

grandmother had dire forebodings: “You won’t make it a year,” she told them grimly. But to me, in retrospect, the most admirable facet of their courage lay in not being afraid of their own children. Our resistance did not deter them in the least. In not giving us a choice in the matter, they did the very best thing possible. My parents did not allow us to presume that we knew what was best for ourselves, and in so doing, taught us all a great lesson about the wise and loving dealings of God with *His* children.

So that was how it all began; and thus, with my arms folded and a sullen look in my eye, I embarked on a golden pilgrimage.

If the first step was taken grudgingly, even against my will, then all the more credit goes to God for nudging me and tugging me into the path where my joy was to be found. My first impulse had been to ‘lay low’ and by feigned compliance store up my parents’ favor for the time that I should really need it the following spring, when I would launch a full-blown campaign to be put back in school. And so I was docile enough on that bright September morning as we all sat around in the den, hands folded over crisp new workbooks, faces turned expectantly towards Mama. How overwhelmed she must have been at that moment! And how bravely she lifted her head and smiled back at us, the cheerfulness in her voice masking any fear she may have felt.

“Let’s just begin with a prayer and thank God for this wonderful opportunity that He has given us,” she said with shining eyes.

I am sure that, even as committed as they were, Mama and Daddy scarcely imagined the vastness of what they had undertaken. What valor and faith would be required of them! And yet, if they ever were weary and burdened — and I know that they had to have been at times — we were never, never made to feel that it was directed towards us. I never heard the slightest word of complaint from my mother over the sacrifices she had made to educate us at home. But neither do the noblest soldiers show off their battle scars or seek sympathy for the privations of camp life. There were skirmishes and struggles, to be sure, but my parents cried out to God in the midst of them and found that they were not worthy to be compared with the blessings and benefits of the life that they had been called to. Mama and Daddy had disentangled themselves from anything that would hinder obedience, and Elizabeth, Zach and I were the ones who were blessed for it.

Hardly a week had passed before I had to admit to myself that it really wasn’t as bad as I had feared. There was, in fact, a new little happiness welling up within me that was both mystifying and delightful. Mystifying because it had finally begun to come to me when I had stopped grappling for it; delightful because it was sweeter than I had ever suspected. The change that came about in my attitude — truly within a matter of days — was such that it can barely be traced; so natural and easy was it, that I didn’t even realize that it was happening. Suffice it to say that at the beginning

(Continued on page 27: *Graduates Speak*)

When the Going Gets Tough



A Husband's Perspective on His Wife's Depression Part 2 (Final)

by Steve Maxwell

There are many things I don't understand about women, and one in particular is the effect clutter has on them. I can be content with a closet so full it takes a week to find something in it. As long as the door is closed, I'm fine. Not so with most women. There is something about clutter that nags at a woman's heart and will bring her down. I know that when I help Teri by building storage areas and weeding things out, she is unbelievably grateful. It is as if a big weight is lifted from her shoulders.

When she was struggling, I needed to understand that her choice of words might be less gracious than normal. I had to be prepared to be loving and accepting anyway. The situation would not have been improved if I was insensitive and offended because she was more direct than other times. Truly we need to be men of understanding.

Next, I believe that the husband needs to take full responsibility for his wife's depression. "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body." (Eph. 5:23) It was not my wife's problem, but it was my problem. We are one, and if part of the union is hurting, we are both hurting.

Unless I took full responsibility for my wife's depression, I was not going to have the compassion that God desired for me to have, and I wouldn't have been crying out to Him for direction. I believe that most of what Teri is sharing in her Mom's Corner is a result of God answering our prayers. It was not a pamphlet we picked up somewhere, but our Lord hearing our cries to Him and slowly showing us new things.

Just after moving to Florida in 1980, I was extremely troubled and concerned for her. I was led to fast and pray about the situation. God is so good. In my heart I felt strongly that He told me to not worry, but to be loving, patient and supportive. I would have preferred a quick solution, but God had as much for me to learn as He did for Teri.

One of the most critical things I did was closely

maintain my walk with the Lord and do everything I could to encourage Teri in her walk. "The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in Him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise Him." (Psalms 28:7) Oh how great our pride to ever think that we can get along without a close walk with the Lord. During times of depression, the mind can play all sorts of games, and to focus on God and His truth is imperative.

If we have neglected the Lord, we must repent and turn to Him. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

Taking responsibility also will ensure that I am not being judgmental. It was easy to become impatient and critical. However, Teri would have given anything to be herself, and it was not a wrong choice she was making. If anyone could have just willed it different, she would have, but she couldn't. "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." (1 Cor. 13:4-7) Again, God commanded me to love my wife as Christ loved the church.

Don't be distracted by "non" issues. Often when Teri felt bad, she would think some circumstance must be the cause. Most things were not really the cause of her feelings, but they would seem very monumental at the time. We would discuss it and I, in typical male fashion, would come in and tell her how to fix it. Finally it dawned on me that what she needed was someone to listen to her. I didn't have to fix it, just listen. There were times when I would ask her, as she would begin to share a problem, "Honey do you want me to listen or fix it?" That helped so much as I finally understood at that moment, all I needed to do was be sympathetic and listen to her. I think this was one of the most challenging lessons God had for me. To my shame, there are times now when I really just need to listen and not jump ahead to a solution. Oh well, so much still to learn and so little time.

In our experience and those I've spoken to, there just doesn't seem to be a "silver bullet." Unfortunately, that is what we usually want. We need to be very cautious if one is proposed – a quick fix so we can get back on track, and things can be normal again. Dads, we must get our heart fixed on Christ and be prepared that it could take a while. How long before our sovereign God says it is enough? Obviously no one knows, but we need to set our expectations such that if it takes years, then we will minister in whatever way God calls us to during that time.

That is about all I could think of that God might have me share. Truly it can be such an awful time for husbands and wives. I think the easiest to deal with was when the depression was mostly caused by my failures. Then if I'm willing to humble myself, God is

*(Continued on page 28: **Wife's Depression**)*

When the Going Gets Tough



A Journey Through Depression Part 2 (Final)

by Teri Maxwell

How do you handle it when you are depressed? Do you become more and more unhappy with yourself for being depressed and make a worse cycle downward? I would do that, or I would end up becoming angry with the children and “beat” myself up about that. In my Mom’s Corner from February 2000 called, “No Condemnation,” (www.titus2.com), I share how the Lord gave me victory over that cycle, although I write of it in terms of the struggles I have now. However, the truths I apply with my current problems are the ones the Lord taught me in the depths of my need. Learning “no condemnation” came from the “Sin List” project Janice gave me.

I believe a most powerful change came when I made a decision before the Lord one morning. I remember showering and thinking, “Lord, I just feel like crying all the time. I am miserable. My family is miserable. I can’t seem to do anything about how I feel, but I can do something about how my family feels. I can act like I am happy whether I feel like it or not. My emotions don’t have to drive my behavior, and I can make that choice because of my love for my family.” Those reading this, who are living with depression, may think this would be impossible for them to do. I encourage you to test yourself. When you are down and go to church, can others tell by looking at you and talking to you that you are depressed? If you can make this choice to act differently than you feel there, you can do it at home!

I think if depression-prone moms could figure out a way to work on even a skeleton of a schedule, it would help. I have had many moms write me and say that when they are distracted, brain dead or just overwhelmed, that their schedule directed them through their day when they couldn’t make decisions themselves. If you have somewhat of a schedule in place, despite tiredness, despite feelings, many things would get done because it would be the easiest path to take – just do what the schedule says. Without my schedule on those bad days, I would have just sat and cried. That would have made everything even worse because then I would have been a day behind! Plus you can let your schedule direct your children when you don’t have the energy to keep up with what you would

like to be doing. At least they are accomplishing things rather than just undoing everything you have done.

If it is any encouragement, I asked my older children if they remembered the struggles I had during those early, difficult days of their lives. My older boys (21 and 23) remember nothing negative. Can you believe the Lord can blind our children to what is going on inside of us, especially when so much of it is easily visible? My 18 year old daughter only remembers one time that I was really struggling. I don’t share that as a license to allow the hormones or depression to control your life and emotions. Rather I tell it to help you to not feel that it is ever hopeless because there is too much emotional damage already done to you and to the children.

Twenty-three years ago I would never have believed where the Lord has brought me in relation to depression. I thought it was impossible to be free of it, but I am. The process was gradual. I wanted it to happen right away. Looking back, fifteen years isn’t all that long to lose what was such a devastating, negative part of my life.

As women, God has created us such that there are emotions and hormones to be coped with. That is still true in my life. However, a disappointment, a “down” day, a discouraging situation is nothing more than that. These no longer send me spiraling through depression. They are simply normal burdens to be left with my Lord Jesus while I rest in Him.

I pray the Lord will give each mom who needs help in the area of depression insight into what will make a difference. Steve always encouraged me that as long as my heart’s desire was to please the Lord, He would answer that heart’s cry.

Somehow these words just don’t come close to describing what all those difficult years were like, but my prayer is that you will sense in my heart a deep desire to be able to encourage moms that it can be better even if you are homeschooling, if there are more pregnancies and more babies, or if there are more challenges of any kind. My growing out of the depression was a result, I believe, of a process the Lord brought me through in the midst of homeschooling, pregnancies and babies. Seek the Lord!

Written by Teri Maxwell, co-author of Managers of Their Homes, A Practical Guide to Daily Scheduling for Christian Homeschool Families, Keeping Our Children’s Hearts: Our Vital Priority, Just Around the Corner: Encouragement and Challenge for Homeschooling Dads and Moms and author of Homeschooling with a Meek and Quiet Spirit. Homeschooling since 1985, Teri Maxwell is the mother of eight children, from age eight to twenty-eight. She has been writing monthly encouragement articles for homeschoolers since 1990.

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Exploring God's Creation



Why is it Important to Believe in a Literal Interpretation of the Genesis Creation Account? Part 2 (Final)

by Anna Bentley

A second basic problem with these alternate interpretations of Genesis is the very fact that they seek to reconcile evolution and Scripture. Many Christians see themselves as protecting the legitimacy of Scripture when they interpret it to harmonize with evolution. They believe evolution to have been so undebatably proven that it cannot be ignored.⁴ They see no alternative but to re-interpret Scripture to agree with modern science. But the two views cannot be brought together without compromise. Christianity and Evolution are diametrically opposed to each other. W. B. Provine, professor of biological sciences at Cornell University, wrote:

Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear . . . There are no gods, no purposes, no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end for me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning to life and no free will for humans, either.⁵

Why would we want to unite evolution, with all its attendant philosophies, to the Bible? What fellowship can light have with darkness? (2 Cor.6:14).

Some Christians feel that failing to embrace evolution makes the church look backward and stupid. But re-interpreting Genesis to better fit the hypothesis of evolution does not enhance the church's status in the scientific world. It does not make believers look less peculiar or more intelligent. Rather, it shows us to be inconsistent and easily swayed because we cannot even accurately interpret our Scriptures, which we claim to believe and follow. And besides, if Genesis does not mean what it says (as addressed above), why do we believe in it in the first place?

The Authoritativeness of Scripture

The modern Church has questioned the ultimate authority of Scripture, grievously straying from the Biblical doctrine of Sola Scriptura. No longer is our foundation Scripture alone. It is now Scripture and Science. Not only this, but we've decided that when Scripture and science disagree, science trumps Scripture. If this statement seems exaggerated, consider this: If the scientific community was not saying that only idiots believe in Biblical Creationism,

and that all of the scientific evidence supports evolution, there would be no debate over the issue in the Church. It is only because the "scientific" dogmas disagree with Scripture that the Church even thinks to question the legitimacy of God's Holy Word in regard to Genesis. We are starting with science and interpreting Scripture through it, rather than beginning with Scripture and interpreting science and all of life through God's revealed Word. This is serious error.

Science is merely the exploration of creation using the physical senses and reason. Man's senses and reason are fallen, corrupted by his sin. They are fallible at best and subject to self-serving deceit and wickedness at worst. In short, the product of man's reason and senses will always be subject to error and must therefore be carefully scrutinized and viewed through the lens of Scripture. This is not to say that science is bad or should not be pursued. Indeed, God has given man reason and senses and is pleased to have him search out the mysteries of creation (Prov. 25:2). But science should always be viewed as subordinate to the Word of God. Elevating science above Scripture is really to put man above God. It is Humanism.

The Evolutionary View of Origins Calls God a Liar

"For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them..." (Exodus 20:11) God has told us how He created the world. He could hardly have been more explicit. Indeed, had He purposed to relate His actions in a manner that would dispel all doubt, how could He have said it more clearly?

However, some Christians argue that if God really created the earth in six days, a mere six-thousand years ago, the Creator has deceived us. The earth looks older than that, they say, and the scientific evidence obviously suggests that the world is millions of years old. Is God tricking us?

Consider this: A carpenter crafts a table, copying a piece from the 1700's. He ages the wood and finishes it so masterfully that the two pieces are almost identical. He places the table in his show room and ties on a tag that says, "Reproduced from a 1700's Original." The table has the appearance of age, and yet no one would accuse the carpenter of deception. He has told his customers up front that, although the piece looks old, it really is not. On the other hand, it clearly would be deception for the craftsman to advertise his table as if it were the authentic, three-hundred-year-old article, no matter how genuine its appearance.

These things are likewise true of God and His work of Creation. No matter how old the earth may appear to us, God, the Master Craftsman, has erased all doubt by plainly telling us how it came to be.

Original Sin and the Savior

The doctrines of sin and redemption are based in Genesis. In chapter three of Genesis we read of Adam's sin of disobedience, followed by what is commonly called the first gospel message (Gen. 3:15).

It was the sin of Adam, representative of the entire human race, which made the sacrificial atonement of God's Son necessary.

Discounting Genesis requires a discounting of Christ. If there was no original sin by a federal head (Adam), there can be no redemption by the second Adam (Christ) as the federal head of the church (Rom. 5:12-20).

II Corinthians 4:6 says: "For it is the God *who commanded light to shine out of darkness*, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (emphasis mine.)

This passage clearly links God's first act of Creation ("Let there be light" Gen. 1:3) to His gospel workings. Although many Christians fail to realize the importance of this relationship, one unbeliever seems to see it quite clearly. G. Richard Bozarth wrote in *American Atheist* in 1979:

Christianity has fought, still fights and will continue to fight science to the desperate end over evolution, because evolution destroys utterly and finally the very reason Jesus' earthly life was supposedly made necessary. Destroy Adam and Eve and the original sin, and in the rubble you will find the sorry remains

of the Son of God. If Jesus was not the redeemer who died for our sins, and this is what evolution means, then Christianity is nothing.⁶

Christians must recognize the gravity of the creation/evolution controversy. The Church should grant no quarter to the evolutionary ideologies which attack the accuracy of Scripture, the doctrines of redemption and the supremacy of God and His word over science. Such ideologies will destroy the Church from within, gradually eating away at the foundation of everything we believe.

In the Garden of Eden the serpent began his attack on Eve by persuading her to question the words of the Lord. He ultimately induced her to ignore God's commands and instead use her senses to determine what was right and true.

"So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate." (Gen. 3:6, NKJV)

What is science but the use of our senses and reason to explore creation? To discount what God has said in favor of human wisdom is simply to follow in the

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

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(Continued from page 6: **Redepinning**)

interruptions to his and everybody else's assignments, when he dashes in, grabs the camera, "I have just found a . . .!"

He is an avid stamp collector although he has eased off a bit now. In three years he covered almost all the countries of the world and times in (stamp) history. Stamps must be the best geography teachers I know. I can only marvel!

He has taken accordion lessons since he was 11 yrs: a direct hit! He and his instrument are inseparable; loves to play for others; playing at the local rest home on a semi-regular basis (getting on so well with the elderly). He loves folk dancing (like Mum). Recently he started drawing lessons to add needed technique to his talent. Ira also loves teasing and playing practical jokes on those he loves. Sometimes I have to pull the reins in... He has a keen sense of justice/injustice and often take the role of arbitrator between his siblings. He is also quick to take charge of a situation. He will take responsibility; organising, for example, a group of younger children to get a ball game going. We had a special ceremony for his 13th birthday, leaning on the Hebrew tradition of Bar Mitzvah, to prepare him for manhood. And, yes, we've got a young man now in our home, which is absolutely great!

Michael is 12 years. He is our quiet technician, fascinated always with "how things work" and "what happens if I do . . . ?" His curiosity needs to learn where the limits are, though. Michael is a real bookworm devouring books including instruction manuals; loving riddles and word fun. He is right into construction—always making something from Lego or Morphun or Fischertechnik or cutting out cardboard models, or building in the sandpit.

Michael services our photocopier, programmes the fax machine and shows the rest of the family how to use the different household devices and modern gadgets.

He is enjoying his piano lessons, but it wouldn't be him to volunteer for a performance.

Generous, observing (unless when, through the power of a book, only his outward body is with us), Michael is also quick to jump up to get what somebody else needs or to do what needs to be done.

Veronica is 8 years. Artistic, musical, with a clear singing voice (still too timid to let us hear much of it), her legs are always in motion, whirling, twirling, swinging. One of her favourite positions is head down with her feet up in the air. She is always making things, often to give away and is a good storyteller.

Barefoot in the rain, running, dancing, Veronica loves tree climbing and creepy crawlies: "Ira, Iraaa, look what I found! Is it a . . . ?" She is timid, determined, tough and is used to rough and tumble fights with her big brothers. Veronica is also keen to take care of younger siblings (practising to be a teacher...), whether they want to or not.

Tobias is 6 years. He is our woodworker and gardener. Strong, with a great need for rough—n—tumble play, Tobias and Ira can hardly walk past each other without ending up on the floor. He has a loud, clear voice ("Turn your volume down, Tobias!") and can blow a trumpet well. Our Tobias loves to laugh and jump up and down with excitement and will ask family members 100 times a day "Are you glaaaad, that...?"

Tob is also very systematic. He can and does spend hours in quiet concentration, building something. He is Michael's apprentice. I can ask Tobias how to set the oven timer on automatic. I keep forgetting, but he knows!

He loves to play quietly with little Stephanie, being her big brother, looking after her. Anything new (places, clothes, foods, people) is eyed suspiciously. He needs time to get used to changes.

Andrew is 4 years. To him the world is funny! He is a great mate for Stephanie. Life is doable to Andrew ("Me, tooo!" he calls, even if he has no idea what is talked about). When he was 18-months-old he walked off to our neighbour, causing panic at home. He is keen to try almost everything (doing it or eating it...)



Stephanie is 2 years. She is our determined, intense little lady (just like her quick birth), in spite of her dainty body. She fought her way through seven asthma attacks last winter. The LORD assures us of her healing, in His time. We need to walk very close to Him.

Very affectionate and passionate, she has a love for baby Oliver. Stephanie seems to be a born leader. She will start everyone off on "Simon says" at the meal table or marching, with five older siblings following her, through house and garden.

Oliver was born in March 2005. He is a peaceful and strong baby; much loved by everyone in the family (and others).

An elderly gentleman remarked recently, after being part of a baptismal service for a young homeschooled man where the majority of the families present were homeschoolers, "Seeing these young people here, I have hope for the future again." May we by God's grace, be His light and His salt in the earth.

(Continued from page 19: *Graduates Speak*)

of that first week, I was inwardly defiant, and that by its end I was more satisfied than I had ever been in my life. Gone were the strivings for approval, the endless agitation of insecurity, the wearisome business of conformity.

It was in those early days of sweet content that one of the greatest blessings of this bright, new journey came to me, namely, my friendship with my sister. Looking back over all the joy that those years held for me, it is striking to see how inherent a part of it all she was. I have been extraordinarily blessed in friendship and agree most heartily with Helen Keller that “my friends have made the story of my life”; but within that sacred little circle of influence there is no friend who has loved me more truly or understood me more perfectly than Elizabeth. One of the first times that I ever experienced that sympathetic illumination that ever characterizes great poetry, was upon reading Christina Rossetti’s fantastically beautiful ‘Goblin Market’ — when I came to the final stanza, my heart leapt up in recognition:

*For there is no friend like a sister
In calm or stormy weather;
To cheer one on the tedious way,
To fetch one if one goes astray,
To lift one if one totters down,
To strengthen whilst one stands*

Indeed, there is no friend like a sister, for the dividing of sorrows and the sharing of the burden of joy; for the unblinking cognization of all one’s weaknesses and the unstinting appreciation of one’s leanings towards strength; for reproof, praise, consolation each in their proper hour. Each soul needs another soul to understand it completely, to comprehend perhaps better than they do themselves the meaning and matter of their personality. Someone that you don’t have to *explain* things to — this is a blessing indeed. And who better than she of one’s own blood, who carries within herself the traits of a shared lineage?

My friendship with my sister was, and is, in its purest sense, the simple complexity of counterpoint: *a combination of two related, independent melodies into a single harmonic texture in which each retains its linear character*. ‘Two independent melodies’; yet incomplete without the other. Complimentary strains flowing side by side in the perfection of opposites united, brief dissensions resolved into but sweeter harmony. That ‘harmonic texture’ has been for me one of the loveliest songs I have ever known.

We reveled in freedom and friendship that autumn. On the crisp, sparkling days of September and October, we often packed up our lunches and our books and headed down the street to Mrs. Smith’s at the bottom of the hill, whose wooded sanctuary of a yard we were most welcome to picnic and play in. We would spread our blanket by the happy little brown creek, among ferns and jewelweed and mistflowers, and give ourselves over to the pleasures that the day so graciously offered us. Already the idea of school cafeterias and long grey hallways was so remote it would have seemed utterly

foreign had we even remembered it. But that was more than another life for me, it was another person altogether. This girl here, sitting in the gold September sunshine, laughing as merrily as the stream that chuckled by, reading poetry out loud merely because it was beautiful and she was beginning to understand it, *this* was who I was meant to be.

We gradually learned to laugh at the ubiquitous ‘socialization’ question. How abundantly the Lord replaced my previous strivings with *true* friendships that flowered effortlessly within a moments’ recognition of a kindred soul! His goodness in this area has been almost heart-breakingly sweet. He gave me a lively band of like-minded friends with whom I made some of the happiest memories of my youth. And He sent alongside me a smaller, but infinitely dear company of heart-friends whose very lives spurred me on to a deeper union with Christ. These are the young women with whom I shared many of the burdens and perplexities and yearnings of my young heart — and they are the ones who gathered around me on my wedding day, a gossamer host in pale pink organza, and prayed for me with the loving insight that only such a closeness can give. I feel certain that much of the fulfillment of my present life is due to the example of godliness and contentment that they so faithfully set before me.

We never looked back, and the years only grew sweeter as they slipped by. How could I recount it all: the fireside readings of Shakespeare; the plays staged in the dining room for an audience in the adjoining living room; the indispensable daily tea times wherein matters of consequence to our young hearts were treated with all due solemnity? Friends came to life from the pages of the worthiest literature; godly aspirations were tended with the utmost care; every opportunity was granted me to pursue the desires of my heart — desires undeniably placed there by God Himself. It would take a book to tell of my happiness in all of these things. From this vantage point, twelve years after my actual high school graduation, my heart is more overwhelmed than ever at the goodness and faithfulness of God. I thank Him, and I thank my parents for risking all on His sufficiency to give me a chance to live so abundantly. Because of Jesus, my girlhood was a splendor of birdsong and star shine; of tears turned rainbow-hued by the light of His countenance; of dreams materialized beyond description. I can only pray the same for the children that God will give me someday.

*My someday coming child, I name and I rename you,
I make up memories for you,
Of melodies and friends from books I want to give you
And horse and buggy sounds outside.
But of the someday coming world, I don’t know, I don’t know,
There is so much I would keep you from, if I, if I could
But maybe you won’t see, my too self-conscious stumblings,
My running from the phone, my fear-
Because I can be very strong, (say I can, say I can)
There is so much to believe in,
There are angel words to teach you,
There is hope my daydream child.
-Karen Peris*

(Continued from page 9: *Muslims*)

differences between Islam and the Judeo-Christian western world. To the contrary, there is much common ground between them.

To say there are no fundamental differences is to fully and completely misunderstand Christianity. Jesus Christ is not just a prophet, He is God Himself come to earth in human flesh. While I appreciate the Muslim's effort to respect the Lord Jesus Christ by saying, "Peace be upon Him," when they make reference to Him, they are saying by this little phrase that He is dead...which He is not. He rose from the dead, appeared to some 500 people and then ascended into Heaven. Both His resurrection and ascension are written about in our Christian Bible. Some Muslims say they respect and honour and accept the Bible as authoritative. But then they say Christians have tampered with the text. Which means they emphatically do not trust anything the Bible says. And of course the Saudis, who regard themselves as the keepers of the true orthodoxy of Islam, will not tolerate Bibles in the country and routinely imprison anyone caught with one.

The Gospel of salvation is that Jesus Christ has fully paid for all my sins by His precious blood and has set me free from the tyranny of the devil. I became a partaker of this salvation when God, in His great mercy and grace, opened my eyes to see my lost condition, gave me the faith to believe in the finished work of His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, for my salvation, regenerated my heart and caused me to be born-again spiritually through the power of His Holy Spirit. God is not obligated to save me or you or anyone else because we say prayers, abstain from certain foods, give alms, fast or go on a pilgrimage. To think that we hopeless and abominable sinners can do anything to put God into a position where He has to save us is gross and extreme arrogance. To then propose that there is one greater than the Lord Jesus Christ, someone whose sayings are more up to date or authoritative, is to blaspheme the Name of Christ and what is worse, it is to fail to recognise God Himself as He revealed Himself in the Bible and in the Person of His Son Jesus Christ.

What I say here is not some extreme or fanatic position: it is simple, orthodox, historical Christianity. Read the most powerful and universally accepted summaries of Christian doctrine in the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Canons of Dort or the Belgic Confession to confirm what I am saying.

As much as I would like to think that Christians and Muslims and Jews are all brothers worshipping the same God — and indeed I would love to believe that — it is an impossibility. Why? Because since Muslims and Jews do not recognise the Lord Jesus Christ as the Messiah, the Incarnation of God Himself, the One who paid for the sins of sinners by His personal once-for-all perfect sacrifice of Himself on the Cross in the shedding of His blood, the One Who not only died and was buried but Who also rose from the dead and ascended into Heaven....because they do

not recognise Jesus Christ as Who He said He was, the divine Son of God, then they clearly worship a different god than the Most Holy, Almighty, Most Gracious, Most Merciful, Omniscient God of the Bible, Who is God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, One only God in three Persons.

(Continued from page 21: *Warning*)

Sodom? Or that he needed a school transfer to move to the city of Zoar to re-enroll them in the Sodom Unified School System? Yet this is exactly what Christian parents do when moving from place to place. The only difference is that they do not recognize the hand of God's judgment on the government schools of America today.

Evangelist/Historian Richard "Little Bear" Wheeler, through the vehicle of Mantle Ministries (www.mantlemin.com), has integrated his theological and theatrical training to "re-educate" adults and children via dramatizations demonstrating the spiritual foundations of the USA using authentic costumes and props. Richard and his wife Marilyn have three children: Noelle, Aimee, and Joshua, and live in Texas.

(Continued from page 22: *Wife's Depression*)

able to resolve the situation fairly quickly. However, God designed women the way they are for a purpose. Hormones are not a design flaw; our wives are perfect according to His plan. When the depression is physiological in nature, it might last awhile, and we need to be the strong, faithful shepherd that God desires us to be. This won't happen in our own strength, but it can when we are in full, complete dependence on the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our strength and our shield. All praise to Him.

Written by Steven Maxwell, co-author of Managers of Their Homes: A Practical Guide to Daily Scheduling for Christian Homeschool Families, Keeping Our Children's Hearts: Our Vital Priority, Just Around the Corner: Encouragement and Challenge for Homeschooling Dads and Moms, and author of Preparing Sons to Provide for a Single-Income Family. Homeschooling since 1985, Steve Maxwell is the father of eight children, from age eight to twenty-eight. In 1997, the Lord brought Steve home to run his own business, and he now enjoys the privilege of working with his two adult sons and one adult daughter. Steve has been writing monthly articles of encouragement for homeschooling dads since 1990.

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(Continued from page 25: *Creation*)

tragic footsteps of our first mother. The devastating consequences of her actions are incalculable.

Notes

4. Actually, the scientific evidence can be well interpreted to support Biblical creationism. However, it is not the object of this paper to delve into the scientific arguments for Creation.
5. W. B. Provine, *Origins Research* 16(1), pg. 9, 1944
6. G. Richard Bozarth, 'The Meaning of Evolution', *American Atheist*, pg. 30, 20 September 1979

Anna Bentley was born into a homeschooling family and graduated this past spring having convinced her parents of her commitment to lifelong learning. She resides in Alabama with her parents and six other siblings, enjoys watercolor painting, paleontology, and a bit of desktop publishing. She helps maintain a busy household while preparing to manage her own one day.

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