

# Kalstone

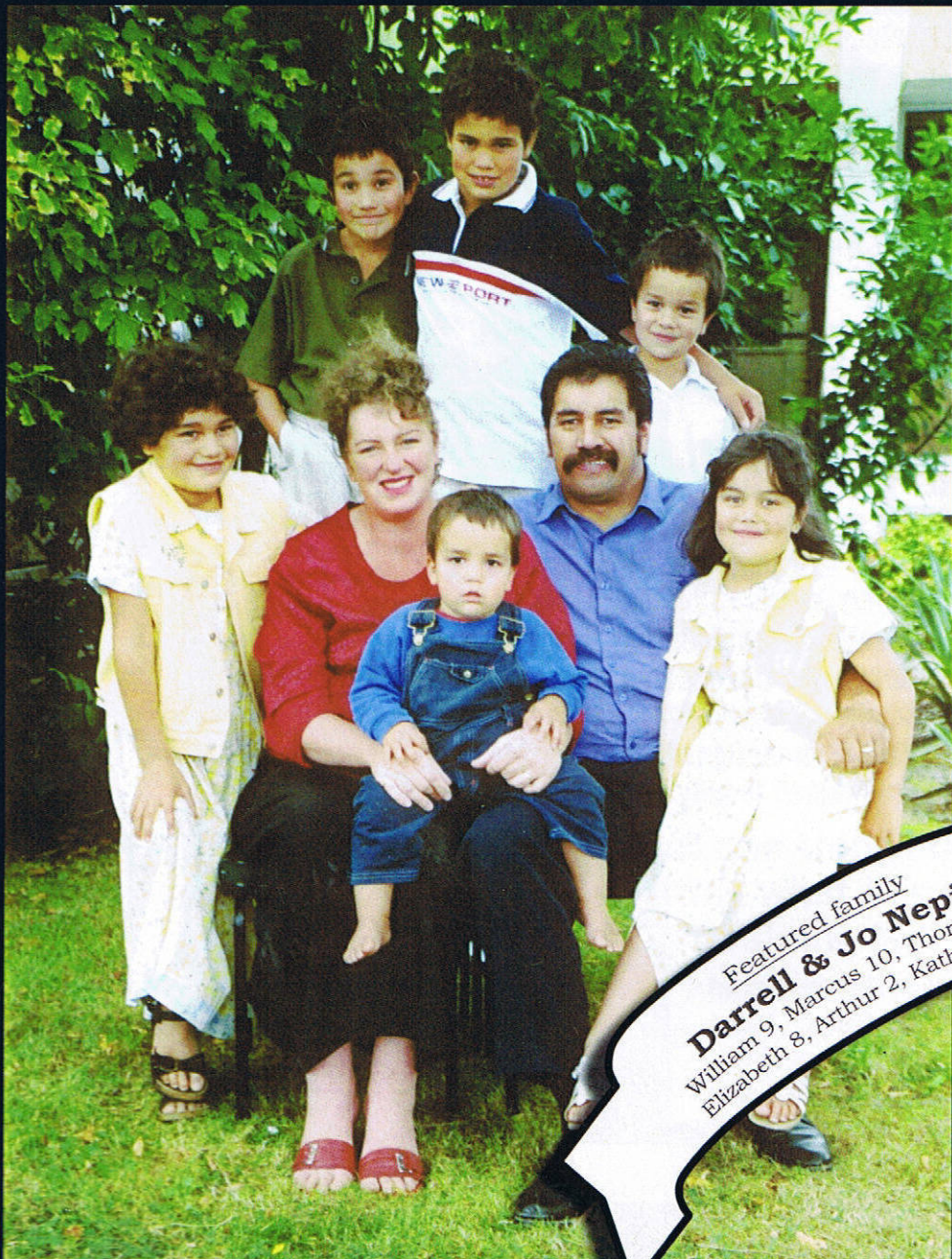
A Bi-Monthly Journal for Christian

Home Educators

Vol. XI No. 2

March 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  
**Darrell & Jo Nepia**  
William 9, Marcus 10, Thomas 5,  
Elizabeth 8, Arthur 2, Kathryn 6.



# Editorial



Allow me to update us all on the Nepia Family's woes (this is-sue's Feature Family) with their negative ERO reviews. After the second negative review they were sent a copy of the interim (negative) reports and given the usual 10 days to respond. They did, writing a lengthy objection to just about every line in the reports. The ERO, who do make every effort to be fair, sent another two ERO officers, one from Wanganui and one from Auckland, to further investigate the situation. At this point the Nepias asked the Home Education Foundation to get involved, which it is happy to do when folks need a hand. The Nepias spent about a week getting thoroughly prepared for this next interview and met the two ERO officers at the newly-finished offices of the Home Education Foundation in Palmerston North. Craig and Barbara Smith were also in attendance as support people.

This interview lasted about 4 1/2 hours. It did not go well. The main sticking point seemed to be the Nepia's non-negotiable stance on emphasising Christian character development over academics at this stage, assuring the ERO that the academics, which were not being neglected, would be accelerated later. This interview culminated in the ERO confirming the interim negative reports and sending them to the MoE who duly revoked the exemptions. This is a very traumatic experience, to be avoided if at all possible!

The Nepias immediately made new exemption applications. The MoE had also received some letters and phone calls of objection to both the previous ERO reports and the MoE's revocation from both the Nepias and the Home Education Foundation and decided further investigation was warranted before approving these new applications. So on Wednesday 16 March two senior officers from the MoE's Lower Hutt office came to visit the Nepia home. They were surrounded by relations Lois and Grace, by Terry and Julie Calvert from ATI in Marton and by Craig and Barbara Smith....yep, pretty good support network. While the MoE quizzed the children and interviewed the parents again for four hours, it was the witness of the six children during that whole time being quiet, well-behaved, friendly, smiley, respectful, helpful and obviously eager to learn and just fun to be around that won the day. Suddenly, the emphasis on Biblical Character qualities made a whole lot of sense. Well, the MoE folks were also lovely, and they no sooner got back to their office than they rang the Nepias to say the exemptions are approved, they're back in the home education business! The real icing on the cake was when a parcel arrived from these two MoE ladies full of colourfully wrapped gifts for the children and a lovely note to say how pleasant was their visit with the Nepias and how taken they were with the children! As someone who grew up in the USA, I want to say, "That only happens in New Zealand! That's why I love this country!" Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

~Craig Smith—Editor

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

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

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# Darrell and Jo Nepia

of Shannon, New Zealand

Hi. My name is Darrell. My wife, Jo, and I would like to say what a real pleasure it is to share something of our lives and home education experiences with all of you like-minded readers out there. I would also like to thank Craig and Barbara Smith and their wonderful family for giving us this opportunity.

Our journey teaching our children has been eventful to say the least! It's been a tremendous blessing for us and has also placed the greatest of burdens upon us. Yes, even greater than money worries!

Before I get my teeth into those particular blessings and burdens, let me give a brief rundown on my family. Jo and I have been Christians for a number of years; she, since she was a child and myself for about twelve years. We live in the little town of Shannon, about twenty-five minutes south of Palmerston North. Shannon is my home town, where I was brought up and schooled and where much of my extended family also live. My local marae, Poutu Marae, is also there, so I'm a real local. My wife's family used to farm just north of Palmerston North. We've been married eleven years and have six children, with one on the way. Our children's names and ages are: Marcus (10), William (9), Elizabeth (nearly 8), Kathryn (6), Thomas (nearly 5) and Arthur (nearly 2). I'll give a description of each child later on in this article. I currently work as a nurseryman in a local nursery and have been employed in this line of work for the last seven years. Jo is even busier than myself, looking after the home and raising and educating the children.

Our home education journey started about seven years ago. Marcus was three and we were at the stage where we were looking at options for "schooling" him. Jo's sister and her husband were home-educating their two children, who were in their late teenage years at the time, so I wasn't a stranger to home education. Before I continue on, I must state that I was not sold on the idea of 'home-schooling' at all! We were living back in Shannon by then, and to my mind, if Shannon School was good enough for me, it would be good enough for my kids. All of the prejudices concerning "home-schooling" were firmly set in my mind! Socialization, no teaching experience, blah, blah, blah. Luckily for me and my family, I had two outstanding examples of the home education product displayed before me in the form of my sister-in-laws children. Spending lots of time with

these two teenagers really convinced me that I should send my kids along the same route. Of course while I was trying to make up my mind, my dear wife had already "seen the light"; she was just waiting patiently for me to see it likewise! Also God's Word was at work, especially verses that stress the father's direction for the spiritual education of the child. My take on that being, all things should come under the spiritual/scriptural guidance. Jo's brother and sister-in-law also home educate their children. They were more confirmation in my mind that this was the right path for my family.

Having been convinced, by the grace of God, we had to make a decision on which curriculum to use. This was easy for us. Jo's brother and sister were using the ATINZ curriculum. We decided to use the same, not because of any pressure from her siblings to use it or because of any academic superiority that ATINZ may or may not have, but because of the very strong character focus that is built into it. The way we see it, if a child has the academics down pat but no character (Godly character...there really is no other; all good things come from God), what use are they in the kingdom of God? Anybody can put his mind to succeeding in a worldly manner, even displaying many of the character traits that are a part of righteous living, but is worldly success/academic achievement going to bring eternal rewards and further the kingdom of God in their lives? Not likely! Don't get me wrong, I think academic achievement is great. Success (even in this world) can be good too. I just believe that knowing

Jesus Christ and who He is, what He is like (His character) is more needful than any other goal in life. With that in mind (character doesn't save of course), I just believe imparting His character into a child's life, takes a lot of the hard work out of things down the track and also gives them a glimpse of the character of Jesus Christ.

We don't want to blow the trumpet for ATI too much. Of course we think it's a great curriculum and I have to say I

haven't seen anything approaching the ATI Wisdom Books for spiritual content and understanding Biblical concepts, but we have found other curriculum really helpful also. We also use Christ Centered Curriculum for our reading and mathematics foundational lessons. This has been really useful too. We have used these two main curriculum right through our years of home education and will definitely continue with them as we carry on with home-educating the rest of our kids. As the kids progress we have decided to use Abeka maths for that particular subject, but the ATI Wisdom Books will continue to be the backbone of their education. We

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## KEYSTONE

is the Journal of  
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It is read by subscribers in New Zealand,  
Australia, Japan, the USA, Ireland  
and the UK.

### Keystone correspondence to:

Craig S. Smith, Editor  
PO Box 9064  
Palmerston North  
New Zealand  
Ph.: +64 6 357-4399  
Fax: +64 6 357-4389  
E-mail: mail@hef.org.nz  
www.hef.org.nz

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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!

use the Holy Bible extensively for reading. There is no better text book! We use the Authorized Version exclusively in our home. I won't go into why, although many of you will probably guess. We find that there are an unending supply of passages in it for all levels of reader. It's also God's unerring word, good enough for me! Other resources, from all medium, also play their part in helping us educate our kids.

As for our daily routine, it has changed a lot over the years. We were pretty much sticking with the curriculum work for the first few years and finding what was useful and what the kids strengths and weaknesses were and focusing on those. We were just going along nicely, I thought, until we got an ERO visit. At the time of this visit all of the teaching work had ground to a halt, the reason being that Jo had just had our sixth child. We were rather ignorant of our rights concerning these visits, and like good little lambs we went through with it. Well, mother managed to get herself together enough to do this review. In hindsight the reviewer should have backed out of it. We didn't really know that WE could back out. Anyway, to cut a long story short, we got a negative report. In a way we were expecting that we probably would, considering the state we were in at that time. That was okay; at least he said in his report that our circumstances weren't ideal at the time of the review. During this review, the officer informed us that we should include more varied lessons into our teaching regime. That was okay by us, no problem. As a result of this we cranked up the work by about a hundred percent, all the while just going through the formal academic stuff as we usually did. Jo really did work like a Trojan, the kids too, as she had the motivation continually in her mind to please this review officer and do everything he wanted her to do. Both of us were really pleased with the amount of work that had been done over the next ten or so months. Please keep this in mind as I now describe what happens next.

I now take us forward a few months to our follow-up review!! You got it, and we were so confident that we would actually pass this thing that we invited this guy to come back and review us again!! Duhhh. All joking aside, we were so confident that we hardly even prepared for the review and only got a handful of stuff out to show this guy. He came along all business-like, unlike the first review, and we were caught on the hop! To cut a long story short once more, he gave us another negative report. We sat there like stunned mullets. By the time we knew what was happening, he was out of there and we were slapping ourselves silly, wondering what on earth had happened! This has been a real blow to us, especially to Jo, who really took the outcome of the review personally. He had so intimidated her she really started to think she hadn't done anywhere near as much work as she had done.

To tell the truth, this really was a slack review. The reviewer appeared to make up his mind really early in the piece. He wasn't at all impressed by anything we had done, much of which was what he wanted us to do after the first review. He nonchalantly dismissed all of this work and then told us we should be concentrating on the formal academics, which we hadn't stopped

doing anyway! Well you can't please anybody if they keep changing the rules.

To really cut this story short we have been in a paper moving war with the ERO and the MoE. This is continuing right up to the time of writing this article. We are currently in no-man's land as far as the future of our home education programme is concerned, but we are steadfast in our belief that we have a God-given responsibility to direct our childrens' education.



I shall now give a brief rundown on our children, starting with **Marcus**. He is our eldest and our most capable child, who has really become a good, useful and inquisitive boy, showing himself to have quite a lot of good character qualities. Marcus is quiet, but not shy, he is interested in how things

work and is also really good with his hands, loves to fix things and use tools. Marcus is also keen on rugby and is a very physical boy. We believe a trade would be really good for him in his teenage years, which are just around the corner for him. He is a little ahead of the others academically but seems to understand the spiritual lessons and concepts more. As the eldest child and son, Marcus is the natural leader amongst his siblings. We are starting to see the fruit of our hard work coming to fruition with Marcus. Marcus is a big help around the house: he does the lawns, cooks and even does some minor repairs around the house. He and William are becoming quite handy with their tools now, a collection of which is growing for both of the boys.



**William** is our next child. He has been a challenge for us. He has had mild epileptic seizures from an early age. Thankfully these have now finished, although he does suffer from really bad headaches at times. William has become a fairly capable kid. His work habits (school and chores) are really starting to improve. His ability to do chores suffered a bit due to Marcus

being so capable. We have now started to distribute the work amongst all of the other kids. This has helped William to come on a lot with his own work habits. William, or Willem to us, has quite a gift for art. Some of his drawings are really fantastic and a little bit "out there" as well! He is good at designing practical solutions to problems. We are trying to encourage this artistic streak by giving him pretty much free reign to create whatever he can. He is coming along nicely in the academics side of things, being only marginally behind Marcus in his reading. William could be considered to be quite shy and quiet. He can also be really strong willed too, even stubborn, something we are working on. He is starting to respond to all of the work we are putting into him. William is the child who wants to pray when we ask someone to, and he can be relied upon to pray if delegated too.

**Elizabeth** is our eldest girl. She is a bright and bubbly sort, very popular at Church. Lizzie is a lot of fun and





always in the middle of things. She is quite an independent girl, willing to work and do activities by herself. Her independent streak has gotten her into a bit of strife at times. She is prone to doing things the other kids wouldn't dare try! Whilst saying that, she is not a willful girl, not too willful, I mean.

She is best friend to her younger sister Kathryn. Like Marcus, she is very physical, a bit of a tomboy but certainly not boyish! Lizzie has made a lot of friends. She is a great help around the house and with the younger children. She is a very robust girl. Slim, but big and strong. The other seven and eight year old girls at church look like half-backs next to a lock! She says she would like to be a nurse or missionary and serve in poor countries.

**Kathryn** has just started her home education. Kathryn is a kind, sweet little girl who is ever so eager to please. She also has a fiery disposition and is not afraid to tell the bigger kids what she thinks of them. We liken her to a flea in a fit during those moments. She has a real heart for the Lord and is always the first to pray for help or to find something, and God seems to delight in answering her prayers! There's something about child-like faith isn't there? I think she will do well in her studies. She certainly has a good attitude and a good work ethic. Kathryn is another lovely sister to the baby. She would love to be able to carry the baby around on her hip like Lizzie does, unfortunately the baby (Arthur) is really solid and Kathryn isn't as robust as Lizzie. A bit of an indoors girl who likes little girl stuff: hair ties and long finger nails.



**Thomas** the tank engine is our lovely sweet natured, dear little boy. He is full of smiles and has smiling eyes too. He is a good play mate for the baby. He is learning to be a good little worker. Thomas is a typical, nearly five year old, kid with boundless energy who seems to hop everywhere. He is learning some basic reading and math skills. Jo thinks he will zoom ahead when we really home in on him. Thomas has heard all of the flash cards and charts and stuff. He probably knows a lot of it already.



**Arthur** is the king of the house, a great big solid baby. I always tell people he was born with a block of lead in his stomach! Arthur is the apple of everyone's eye. He has brought so much joy to us. He has a funny sense of humour too. He will come along and lick me on the knee when he thinks I'm not looking and think it's a great joke! He loves to watch the sparrows eating on the lawn and has been known to share the stale bread that's been thrown to them! He is a bit like a giant baby sparrow himself. He is just learning to talk

and is trying to say Jesus.

So, there are our kids. We hope they will walk in God's ways and put His word ahead of everything else on this earth. We are certainly working towards that goal in our time here on God's good earth. Although we think academics are good and useful in the big, bad world out there, we feel Godliness and God's word are far more important. After all, academics are just a way to put bread on the table. Granted, the more academic you are, the better the bread, one would think. We all know that's not always the case in real life though, but in Jesus, all of our paths are sure. That is the biggest lesson we would like to give our children, that we can trust in God through His word to lead us through our lives, whatever the circumstances.

A key area of learning that we have been hammering into the kids is the value of work. We have had some real battles with all of the children at some point or other in this vital area. It must be said that one or two of the children are a little lax when it comes to working, especially when it comes to the household chores or if it involves doing something for someone else. It can be really easy to just let the capable kids do the work and let the others fluff around, but you'll find that the ones doing all of the work will resent having to do it all, and the others just learn how to dodge. There are two key things that we have found really do work in overcoming laziness: First, sharing the workload evenly, and to what you think are their capabilities. Second, the real key to overcoming laziness is to just keep them at the task that they are meant to be doing. It seems that it will be absolutely hopeless and that the task you've assigned them to do will take forever, but if they are kept at it right to the end (and you supervise, otherwise the task won't get done) you'll find they will complete it. We've found that emphasising meekness/yeilding, telling the kids that Jesus said "learn of Me (be like Jesus), for I am meek and lowly of heart" (being a servant) and that "My yoke is easy and My burden is light, and ye shall find rest unto your souls," really helps a lot. If the child is meek, they find that the burden of work will be light. On the other hand if they dig their toes in and are stubborn, they find that the burden is really heavy. We are finding that the kids who need to change are changing in their work habits, and they are starting to enjoy work much more. And they've also learnt something of the mind of God and what He requires of us.

We can't emphasize enough what tireless servants to home-educating families Craig and Barbara Smith are, especially for us right now as we are striving with the ERO and MoE, willingly putting themselves into our problem. Sometimes at the cost of their own personal plans. We thank God that they have been there for us, we are very grateful! All I know is that without them, we would definitely have been up the creek without a paddle.

I hope this story of our home education journey is both encouraging and enlightening to all of you readers out there. It has certainly been eventful for us! I pray that the grace of God would abound in all of your lives. Best wishes, the Nepias.

# The Faith of Us Fathers



## It's Your Home School

*by Phil Lancaster*

One of the notable features of the home education movement is that it is pretty much a women's movement—at least down in the trenches.

In the day-to-day battle of planning and teaching, scheduling and organizing, disciplining and encouraging, it is the mother who bears the brunt of the work, at least in the vast majority of homeschooling homes.

It is true, we fathers often adopt the title of Principal of our home school, recognizing that we are in the position of leadership in the family. Yet too often this remains simply a title we wear as our wives actually do all the work.

Most of us would not even question that this is, as a very practical matter, how it must be. After all, we fathers are busy earning a living to support the family, and this usually takes us away from the home for most of the day. So if homeschooling is going to be an option at all, it is going to have to be the responsibility of our wives, right?

Wrong!

### You Are Responsible

You see, the painful truth is that you are totally responsible for your home school. Yes, totally. No matter what your involvement today with the process of education in your home, the fact is that everything that happens there is your responsibility. If your wife has chosen the curriculum for the children—that is your decision. If she is failing adequately to teach one of the kids his math—that is your failure. If your son has an attitude problem with his mid-day chores—you are responsible.

Let's imagine the Lord visits your home tonight to check up on any of these or a hundred other matters pertaining to your home education program. He walks right past your wife and children in the kitchen in order to find you in the family room, and He looks you right in the eye and asks for an accounting of these things.

When you begin to explain that you are rather busy with the necessary tasks of earning a living—and maybe even leading in the church—and that you have delegated the home school to your wife, you find the Master's gaze does not follow your finger which points hopefully toward your wife. He keeps looking at you as if you are really responsible for everything. And that's exactly the way it is.

Now, this is not my idea. Believe me, I am as inclined

by nature as the next man to avoid responsibility. No, this principle is clearly taught in the Word of God and it rises up to shake us out of our complacency. So let's look there to see what the Lord has to say to fathers.

The place to start is at the starting point, the book of Genesis, and in particular its account of man's creation and fall into sin. Here we see the foundational principles which define the role of the man in his home. We can learn a lot from our first father, for better and for worse.

### God Created the Man as the Leader

Chapters 2 and 3 of Genesis reveal that God very intentionally established the man as the leader in his relationship with his wife (and, of course, by implication, his children). This is demonstrated in several ways.

First, the man was created first. God the Creator fashioned him from the dust of the ground, breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and thus made him a living being (2:7). The woman was not formed until later (v. 22). So what? So God was in this way signifying who was to have the lead position in the relationship. This order of creation is the foundation of Paul's instruction that women should not teach or exercise authority over men (1 Timothy 2:11–13).

Second, the woman's very being was derived from the man. Rather than creating her from the ground, God shaped Eve from the rib or side of Adam (Genesis 2:22). That this derivative existence demonstrates the authority of the man is made explicit in the New Testament. In establishing the basis for the assertion that the head of the woman is man (1 Corinthians 11:3), the Holy Spirit through Paul offers this: For man did not come from woman, but woman from man (v. 8).

Third, the woman was created for the man. The Lord seems to have gone to some lengths to be sure Adam understood this. Only after parading the animals before him and letting him discover his need for her did God create Eve (Genesis 2:19,20). She was then created to be a companion-helper (v. 20) to assist him in fulfilling the mandate God had given him to multiply descendants and take dominion over the earth (1:28; 2:15). Again, Paul appeals to Genesis in support of the headship of the man and the woman's submission: neither was man created for woman, but woman for man (1 Corinthians 11:9).

Fourth, the man named the woman. Just as Adam had exercised his authority over the animal kingdom in naming them (Genesis 2:19; cf. 1:28), so he demonstrated his authority over his wife in naming her Eve (3:20). In the Bible, having the prerogative of naming someone always indicates a position of authority over the one named.

Fifth, the man was the guardian and teacher of God's Word. Before Eve was even created, Adam was given God's commandment concerning what they could and could not eat (Genesis 2:16,17). There is no evidence



that God repeated the commandment to Eve, and yet she knew all about it (3:2). Apparently Adam had taught her.

Sixth, the man was held responsible by God for their fall into sin even though his wife had taken the initiative in that sin. She was approached by the serpent, enticed by his lies and deceived into sinning. Only then did Adam take and eat the forbidden fruit (3:1-6). Her's was clearly the initiative. Yet when the Lord came to demand an accounting for the offense He went straight to the one He held responsible: But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?" (3:9) Not only does Genesis show unmistakably that God designed man for a role of leadership, it also shows how quickly that role was neglected.

### **The Man Abandoned His Leadership**

The first sign that Adam was not doing his job of guarding and directing his wife is his absence during her temptation. Actually, the language of the text seems to suggest that Adam was indeed there; he was just passive and uninvolved. After Eve had eaten the fruit we read, 'She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it' (3:6). It appears that though he was right with her (where else would you be if God had just given you this fabulous creature to be your companion?) he did not interfere with the Tempter. Further, he simply submitted to his wife's leadership even though it meant disobeying the Lord.

Then as if to confirm the fact that Adam had discarded the role of leader and protector, he quickly tried to pass the buck to Eve when the Lord confronted him for the disobedience of them both. The man said, 'The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it' (3:12). Adam even seems to blame the Lord himself for putting the woman there—anything to avoid responsibility!

### **The Legacy of Distorted Roles**

Unfortunately for all of us, the distorted patterns of Genesis 3 have become the norm for our sinful world, and even for our Christian homes if we are not careful. The woman has a tendency to step out from under her husband's authority, to act independently of him and even to try to lead him. And the man tends to abdicate his position of authority as he retreats into passivity, all the while denying his responsibility. In addition, he sometimes substitutes harshness for true leadership, thus compounding the distortion of his role.

This scenario seems to be foreseen in the curse pronounced on the woman in Genesis 3:16: Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you. She will desire to control him, but he is stronger and so will simply dominate her by his strength. Not exactly the relationship God had in mind!

### **Becoming a Leader Again**

Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil, and that certainly includes the distortion of the man-woman relationship in the home. His grace is sufficient to free us from our sinful patterns and lead us into the freedom and joy that comes with obedience to His revealed will.

Specifically, the Lord wants to help you and me to become the leaders of our wives and children. The headship of the husband is still God's plan, and Jesus is our perfect model for how to implement that calling (Ephesians 5:23,25ff.). We can and must follow his example.

Above all else, we must simply accept the stark fact of our responsibility. Authority always carries with it responsibility. It is inescapable. Authority can be delegated but responsibility cannot. We can and must enlist our wives to help us raise our children, but we remain totally responsible for the process.

Consider a ship's Captain and his crew. The Captain delegates authority to those under him in the complex process of running his ship and delivering it safely to its destination. But the Captain remains totally responsible at all times. If he is in his quarters sleeping when a petty officer or seaman makes a mistake that damages the ship, the negligent underling may be disciplined for his error, but the Captain is still accountable to his superiors and may lose his command. He delegates authority, but he remains responsible.

So it is with a father. He is totally accountable for everything that happens in his home. He is answerable to God for everything his wife and children do, or don't do. They bear their own personal responsibility for their actions, but the overall burden is always his. When on the day of judgment the Lord inquires about the conduct of the family and the training of the children, it will be the father who renders an account.

However, then, a father may view the process of homeschooling in his family, the fact is that it is his home school. He may sit on the sidelines and leave it all up to his wife, but that does not mean that he is not the leader; it only means that he is a poor leader. Because a leader he is, for better or for worse.

So we might as well exercise our leadership since we are going to be held accountable anyway! Since the decision about curriculum, for example, is our decision whether we make it actively or passively, we might as well be active in the process.

Most of us have inherited a good bit of our original father's penchant for wanting to avoid responsibility. However, we will be no more successful that he was.

Realizing that we cannot escape responsibility may not be the highest motive for learning to practice leadership, but it will do for starters! Once we have begun, we must then keep our eyes on our new Leader, the Lord Jesus, and learn from Him what it means to embrace headship.

**Phil Lancaster** is married to Pam and has six children ranging in age from 26 to 12 years of age (all of whom were completely home educated. He is the author of *Family Man*, *Family Leader* which is sold by the *Home Education Foundation* and featured on page 13 of this Journal. He is the Publisher and Editor of *Patriarch*

(Continued on page 12: *Fathers*)

# Home Education Research



## Nine Reasons for Not Using Public Schools

By Dan Smithwick  
Of Nehemiah Institute

Public schools (or as some like to say, government schools) have come upon hard times in the past several years. One would be hard-pressed to find a community where the public school system is not having serious problems. While gun-shootings get the most coverage, understandably, there are many, many other problems plaguing the 150-year-old experiment of government-run education. Budget crises, teacher shortages, facility problems, undisciplined youth and now more frequently, problem parents plague most school districts. In addition to these is the fundamental problem: poor education. Standardized test scores have fallen dramatically over the past few decades. Both college and business leaders lament at how poorly high school students are educated.

I want to give nine reasons why the church today should cease using state-run schools. But first, some background on the theological basis for arguing why the church should abandon public schooling.

Here is the fundamental issue: Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:4) For the past several decades it appears that leaders of our nation, particularly in the field of education, have systematically set out to demonstrate that Jesus didn't know what He was talking about. From the removal of the Ten Commandments in the classroom to denying prayer in school to forbidding any display of religious objects in public places (including a closed Bible on a teacher's desk), our nation has determined to become a secular people officially. No Word, just bread; no supernatural, just natural.

The fruit of this removal of Christianity from the public square is apparent to anyone who wants to see a decrease in good things (honesty, morality, literacy, family coherence, etc.) and an increase in bad things (crime, sexual immorality, bankruptcies, business and government corruption, family breakdown, etc.). Within a few short generations, our nation has been changing from liberty to bondage (government dependency), from free enterprise to socialism, from creditor status to debtor status, from community spirit to isolationism, from honoring God to ignoring Him.

The seedbed for this change I believe, more than any other place, has been the public school classroom. When the public/government school system began in the early 19th century, it was absorbed in an

environment of Christian ethics held to publicly and privately since the days of the Pilgrims. Prayer, Bible reading and fear of the Lord were the foundations of learning. Not anymore. The spiritual capital inherited by the public school system has been spent and will not be replenished.

But America didn't enter this experiment of non-religious secular education without warning. Theologian and educator Dr. A.A. Hodge, Princeton Theological Seminary, said, "I am as sure as I am of Christ's reign that a comprehensive and centralized system of national education, separated from religion, as is now commonly proposed, will prove the most appalling engine for the propagation of anti-Christian and atheistic unbelief, and of anti-social nihilistic ethics, individual, social and political, which this sinrent world has ever seen."

Scholar J. Gresham Machen said "An education that trains the mind without training the moral sense is a menace to civilization rather than a help." On January 12, 1926, Machen testified before a Congressional committee on the dangers of creating a federal Department of Education. He stated, "Do we want a federal Department of Education, or do we not? I think we do not. And I am asking your permission to tell you very briefly why. We do not, I think, want a federal Department of Education because such a Department is in the interests of a principle of uniformity or standardization in education which would be the very worst calamity into which this country could fall."

Martin Luther said, "I'm afraid that the schools will prove the very gates of hell, unless they diligently labor in explaining the Holy Scriptures and engraving them in the heart of youth." America's government-run education system has proven Luther right.

These men, and many others, gave us clear warnings about government-run, secular, no-Bible education. But the church pressed on. It bought the concept of "free" education and surrendered her posterity to be raised by the state. Would to God that all parents would have seen the error of this as clearly as one parent from Iowa who said, "I don't want my children fed by the state. I don't want my children clothed by the state. But I would prefer either to their being educated by the state."

Education expert Samuel L. Blumenfeld stated, "The plain, unvarnished truth is that public education is a shoddy, fraudulent piece of goods sold to the public at an astronomical price. It's time the American consumer knew the extent of the fraud which is victimizing millions of children each year." Pastor and author Douglas Wilson captured the situation well by saying in *Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning*, (1991) "For over one hundred years, Americans have been running a gigantic experiment in government schools, trying to find out what a society looks like without God. Now we know."

Here are my nine reasons why Christians should no longer use public schools (and really never should have); listed in reverse order.

## **9. Unsafe environment**

Surely, every parent in America has heard about the gun-shootings in more than a dozen public schools over the past several years. What Mom hasn't worried as she watched her child go off to school wondering if today it might happen to them? But there are tens of thousands of students who go to their public school daily without ever being confronted with such violence. There are lesser-degree acts of violence (fights, sexual abuse, name calling, teasing, etc.), but these problems show up in private schools as well. Even drug and alcohol problems occur in Christian schools, but to a much smaller degree. Public schools are unsafe in many ways, but I believe it belongs last on the list of "top nine" reasons for Christians not enrolling their children in them.

## **8. Negative role models**

The Bible says, "Do not be deceived: Bad company corrupts good morals." (I Corinthians 15:33) An environment where the majority of people are not Christian is unquestionably going to produce a different ethic than will occur when nearly all are Christian (faculty and students). The value system, or worldview, of non-Christian teachers and students will produce a 'normal' environment that is hostile to Christianity. If we believe the Bible to be true, it simply cannot be any different.

Most students like to model their teachers, especially when they are viewed as 'cool.' However, the morals of Christian-family youth are being corrupted when the lifestyle of their teachers reflects such anti-Christian views as gay rights, abortion rights and sex before marriage. Believing otherwise is already proof that the warning of this scripture was ignored – you have been deceived.

## **7. Reverse "evangelism"**

Many Christian families state that a key reason for staying with the public school system is to be "salt and light" to a pagan culture. I think this may be an excellent reason for an adult who is called to teach and who has a burden for evangelism of the lost. There are many Christian teachers in public schools who choose their work for this reason, and my hat goes off to them. They are undoubtedly facing in-your-face hostility to Christian principles and yet remain there to pray for the lost, be a witness for Christ and give the best education they can to students. But the "salt and light" concept ends there. I think it is unwise (dangerous?) to send little-trained or untrained youth to perhaps the key battleground of Humanists (the public school classroom) and expect them to be effective in winning over unbelievers, adult or student. The evangelism is working in reverse far too often as is evidenced by Christian-family youth adopting morals of their unbelieving friends.

## **6. Godless curriculum**

School is about learning and learning is about knowing truth. Fundamental to the Christian faith is the axiom that God *is* truth. God chose to reveal Himself in Word-form (the outworking of truth) in four primary ways: 1) By His spoken Word, "Let there be—"

creation came into existence, with order and purpose; 2) By inspiration, His written Word was given to us in the scriptures for right living; 3) By incarnation, His Word was given to us in flesh (Jesus Christ) for our redemption; and 4) By His final Word all will be judged, "For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law;" (Romans 5:12)

When schools use a curriculum that is completely void of God's Word, how can we possibly expect students to be educated? How can we expect our children to be blessed? To be successful? Peter Marshall said, "Let us not fool ourselves: without Christianity, without Christian education, without the principles of Christ inculcated into young life, we are simply rearing pagans." A Godless curriculum will produce a Godless people.

## **5. Public schooling is not thorough**

Pick any subject taught in K-12 education: if it has been taught apart from the knowledge revealed in scripture, it is incomplete (and likely inaccurate). History, biology, mathematics, sociology, science, language, arts, economics, government—each are openly addressed in Scripture. In other words, the God who made all creation has also told us how to understand creation. Why would we want to go to the effort and expense of having our children educated for 12-16 years ignoring what the original Author has to say about the subjects we are teaching? It makes no sense, except for the fallen mind who wants no part of God. As Christians we understand this dilemma for the unbeliever, but why should we give our children to them for the primary instruction of their lives?

Take history for example. Schools teach world history. But do students in public schools learn the factual history of mankind: formations of people groups, nations, or why certain civilizations came and went? Or the origins of different languages? Do they learn of the individuals who were greatly used of God in shaping civilization: Noah? Abraham? Moses? David? Paul? Are they taught about some of the world's greatest events such as Creation, the Flood, the birth, death and resurrection of the Son of God, by whom the school's calendar is dated? Not likely.

## **4. Poor academic results**

It is secret to none: Public school students, to a large degree, are simply not well-educated. Much has been written about the "dumbing down" of our public schools. There are exceptions of course. Some youth, because of their gifting and good homes, are excelling in public schools in spite of the overall deterioration of the system. But for the great majority, even average to above average in intelligence, they are being badly educated. What a travesty this is.

My friend, Rev. E. Ray Moore, Jr., recently wrote, "Abundant evidence, assembled from test scores and elsewhere, assures us that today's public school graduates do not have the mastery of basic subjects that earlier generations had. Students are leaving public



high schools in record numbers without having acquired basic writing skills, reading comprehension or mathematical ability. They know little or nothing of this country's founding or its history. They cannot place major historical figures or events in the right century. They cannot walk up to wall maps and point out significant foreign countries. This intellectual deterioration has spread into public colleges and universities that have admitted more and more unprepared students into college level work."

### 3. Public schooling breeds the view that success can come apart from God

If we throw out all the bad stuff found in public schools (shootings, rapes, stealing, fighting, cheating, etc.) and have a "nice" school where no student is afraid, we are still left with an education system that is robbing youth of the most important aspect of being educated—to trust God. **The supreme value being touted today for education is so that you can be successful and have a good life. Students are told, "You need a good education so you can get a good job so you can give your kids a good education so they can get a good job," ad infinitum. Not only is this a horrible philosophy of life, it is grossly unbiblical. The Bible says, "But you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth," (Deuteronomy 8:18). But this wealth is not simply for the sake of our being rich, for this verse continues, "that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day."**

**Here is the purpose of being properly educated and successful: to establish God's covenant on earth.**

#### **Baldo** by Cantu and Castellanos

The comic strip below perfectly embodies the philosophy described under point three (the specific part has been bolded).



Public schools do not go this direction but rather promote materialism as a way of being successful. This is a formula for failure, the exact opposite of the stated purpose of public education.

### 2. Public schooling produces no fear of God

Education, in any subject, should create fear (reverence) of God for how His majesty is revealed in that area of life. Teaching should also instill a proper fear (fright) of going against God's order and purpose in each discipline of life. Sadly, our public schools teach subjects simply as if God does not exist.

### 1. Public schooling (secular education) is disobedience to God

Herein lies the primary reason why Christians should not use public schools any longer. Having been educated myself in public schooling through college, having become a Christian at age 33, and having put our five children through combinations of public and private Christian schools, I can only look back and confess that I was not always obedient in "education." I wish every day I could relive some of those years and do it "by the Book."

But those days are gone. It is only the present in which we can decide to be obedient in this all-important field we call education. The Bible says, "Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it," (Proverbs 22:6). There is simply no easy way around the fact that putting our children in an anti-Christian education system is not training them up in the way they should go. Many parents want to say, "But we are giving our children Bible training at home." Really? Are you going back to all subject matter your children are taking and giving them a scripture-based education to correct wrong teaching? If so, you are in essence homeschooling them, so why

(Continued on page 23: **Nine Reasons**)

# Parenting Tips



## Our Relationships with Our Children

By Rosalind Peterson

Hi. I hope that things are going well in your homeschooling. What do you find helpful in your important job of teaching your precious children?

One of the things that I find helpful is reading books by Christian homeschooling parents, such as Steve and Teri Maxwell ([www.titus2.com](http://www.titus2.com)). A lot of my thinking was turned upside down by reading their book *Preparing Sons to Provide for a Single-Income Family*, and I'm expecting that the same thing will happen after I finish reading their book *Keeping Our Children's Hearts: Our Vital Priority*.

Half of our six children are teenagers or older (13, 16 and 20) and it is easy to see in them how important it is, to "keep our children's hearts". One reason why we need to, is that the call of "the world" is so loud today. A pastor from our old church once pointed out that today's young men have more temptation thrust in front of their faces (eg; partially dressed women in billboard advertising) than their grandfathers could find—if they were actively searching for it! Another reason why we need to work at keeping their hearts is that if they have some difficulties during their teenage years, your love for them and their love for you, will help them to keep their short-term troubles from turning into long-term disasters.

OK, so how do we work at keeping our relationship strong? One way is by keeping *our* hearts towards them. Are our hearts turned towards our own activities (email lists, our own friends, a job or business) instead of towards these precious children that God has blessed us with? We have such a short time before they will be grown up and gone ...

An old friend visited us this week, and we talked about the families that we both knew and how they are now... Sweet young children who are now 'worldly' teenagers ... 'lost' ... and causing their parents lots of heartache ...

What had happened? The answer is just one word: 'friends'. Every one of those teenagers had spent a lot of time with their age peers, their 'friends'. Guess who had the greatest hold on their hearts? Proverbs 13:20 says, "a companion of fools suffers harm". And let's face it: *all* children are foolish (mine included)—so it is much better for our

children to be with us (slowly-growing-wiser adults) than for them to be with other (immature) children.

Now for one bit of good news. My friend's two children are both aged over 20 and they have never had 'teenage troubles', but have instead 'kept the faith' (1 Timothy 3:9). Guess who their best friends have always been? Their father and mother.

I hope that this year will bring for you a closer relationship with your children and with your God.

**Graham & Rosalind Peterson** are in their 15th year of homeschooling. David (aged 20) & Matthew (16) go cycling together, Sarah (13) walks with her mother, Andrew (11) runs with his Dad, James (8) plays tennis with his Dad and Timothy (6) enjoys shopping with his Dad.

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(Continued from page 8: **Fathers**)

magazine which was founded in June 1993 and is presently a member of the Reformed Presbyterian Church on Lookout Mountain, Georgia. One can often find him having family discussions concerning vision for the future and skulking around used book stores.

This article was first published in *Patriarch* magazine (Patriarch, PO Box 50, Willis, VA 24380, [www.patriarch.com](http://www.patriarch.com)). Used with permission.

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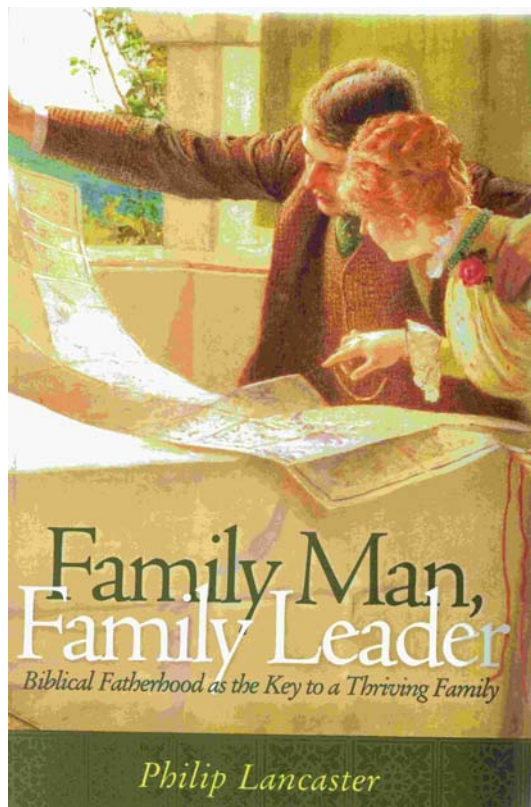
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## Home Education Foundation presents...

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### Family Man, Family Leader

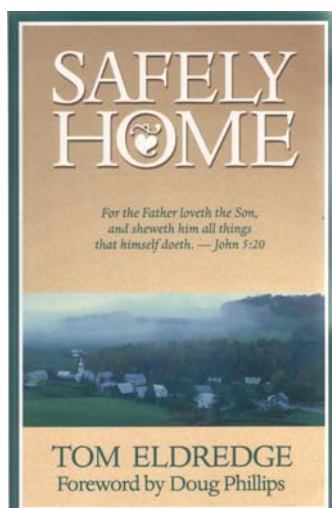


What this country needs is a few good men — husbands and fathers who are willing to love and lead their households with manly resolve and godly vision. Frankly, the Church needs these men every bit as much as the rest of the country. We are experiencing a national crisis of manhood of epidemic proportions.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

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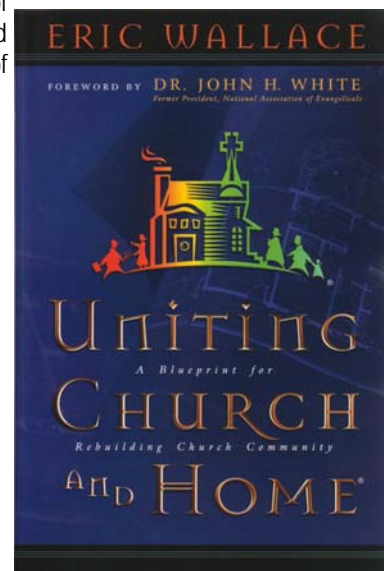
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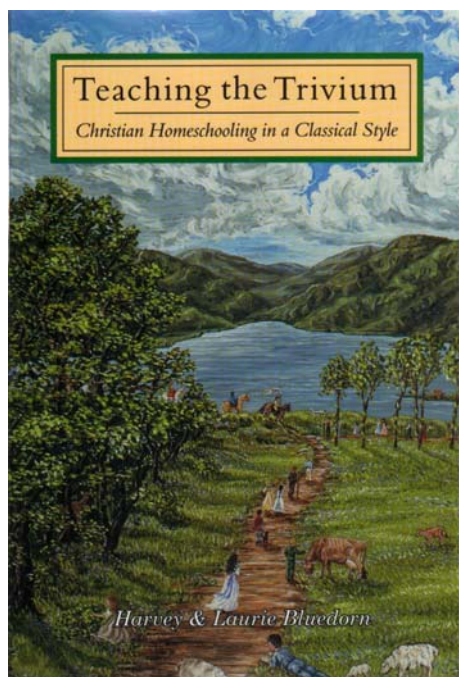
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## Books by the Bluedorns

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35 pages, A5.

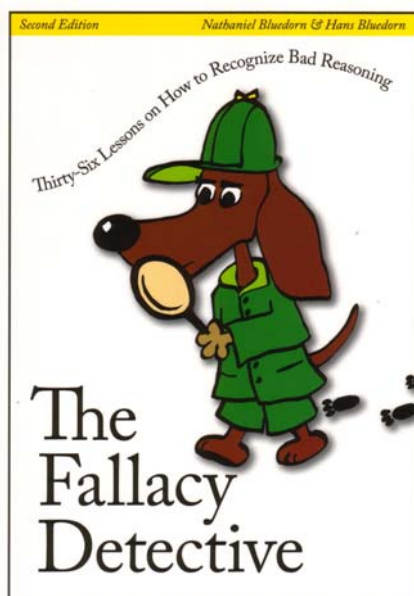
### The Fallacy Detective

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.

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



**A New Zealand Home Educator's Guidebook**

## Preparing for an ERO Review

Craig S. Smith

## Preparing for an ERO Review

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## TRAINING OUR CHILDREN

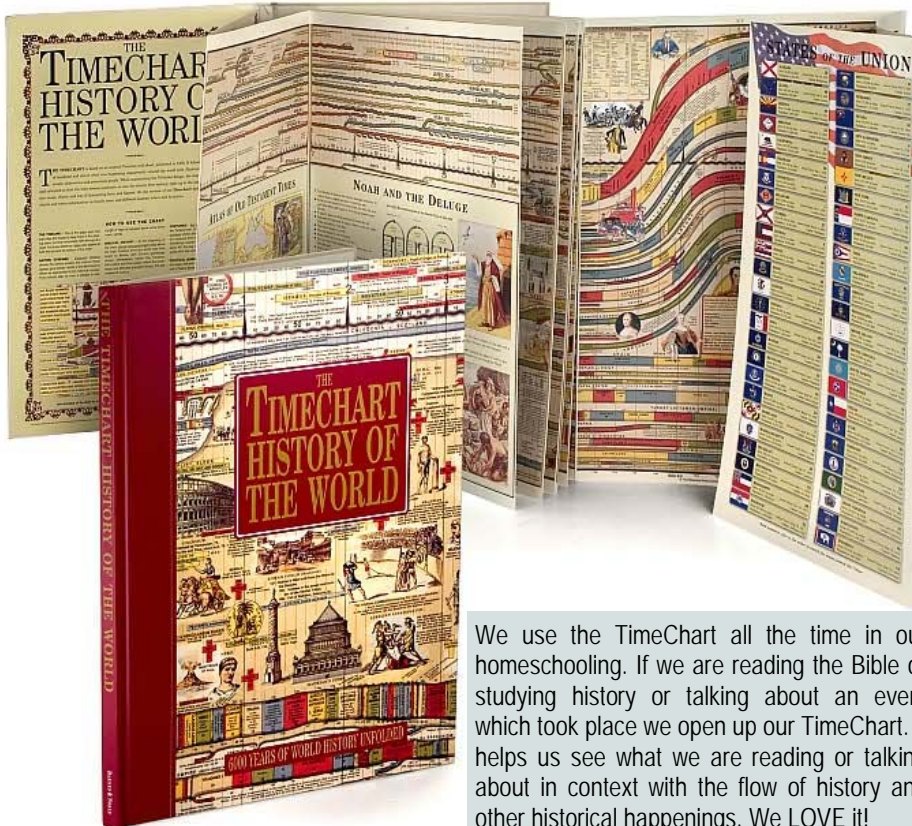
by  
Craig & Barbara Smith

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## Training Our Children and Youth to be Pure

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

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~Happy Home Educated Child

# Home Education Foundation: Order Form

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# Graduates Speak



## Honor the Hoary Head

By Wesley Strackbein

*E'en down to old age all my people shall prove  
My sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love;  
And when hoary heads shall their temples adorn,  
Like lambs they shall still in my bosom be borne,  
Like lambs they shall still in my bosom be borne.  
from the hymn, How Firm a Foundation*

For a number of years, our family went one Sunday a month to a local convalescent center to minister to the elderly folks who lived there. Each visit we sang old hymns and read from the scriptures. Then my dad preached.

Afterwards, we made it a point to talk personally to as many senior citizens as possible who had gathered in the cafeteria for the service. So many of them were lonely. Some had no relatives, no one to carry on their name. Many of them, however, did; but their family had relegated them to the nursing home to waste away. Story after story poured forth from these old folks' lips. Wisdom and wit, sarcasm and sadness colored their words. They related recollections of days gone by with great ardor, almost with a sense of urgency. It was as if they feared that their legacy was about to be lost, that their story was about to die. And they wanted to see it preserved.

Our generation's irreverent disregard for the elderly is shameful. By lightly esteeming our parents when they grow older, we invoke a curse upon ourselves (Deuteronomy 27:16). God commands us to attend unto their words and show them honor (Proverbs 23:22). We are to derive strength and direction from their testimony. Scripture commands, "Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee" (Deuteronomy 32:7).

And why is it so important that we sit at our parents' feet and ask them about the stories of the past? Plain and simple: our time on earth is short; what we can learn from our own experience is limited. Without an understanding of how God has worked in our parents' lives, we have an inadequate foundation, one that will not long support us. "(For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon the earth are a shadow:) Shall not they teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart? Can the rush grow up without mire, can the flag without water? Whilst it is yet in its greenness, and not cut down, it withereth before any herb" (Job 8:9-12).

The Old Testament gives us the story of an aged man who desperately desired to pass the legacy of his generation on to the next. Moses, Israel's seasoned

leader, stood at the threshold of Canaan with a month left to live. Gathering the children of Israel around him, he began to speak. What he said to them in four short weeks we know today as the book of Deuteronomy.

And what was his dying message? He simply summarized their history: he reiterated the laws which God had given their fathers 40 years before on Mt. Horeb and recounted stories of their wilderness journey. And his final charge? Do not let this legacy die. Do not forget it (Deuteronomy 4:9). Embrace it (Deuteronomy 4:32-39), and teach it to your children (Deuteronomy 32:45-47).

Sadly, this generation dishonored their 120-year-old leader. They failed to pass the legacy on. Following their Canaan conquests, we are informed: "And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being a hundred and ten years old....And also that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel" (Judges 2:8,10).

Because the generation under Moses' leadership did not hearken to his dying words, their children had no foundation for their faith; and their offspring subsequently became slaves.

Your aging parents may not possess the wisdom of Moses. Their stories may not be as grand as the parting of the Red Sea. Frankly, their legacy may leave something to be desired. Nevertheless, the fifth commandment is no less binding: Honor your father and mother—especially when they are old. "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the Lord" (Leviticus 19:32).

Listen to the stories of your grey-headed parents—the good ones, the bad ones. Preserve their legacy. Use the lessons of their lives to build a lasting foundation for your children. And make it a point to teach your children to do the same. Your future depends on it.

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

# Graduates Speak



**Pictured:** Sally's children Adonijah and Ahlai

## Teach Your Children to Teach Their Children

*By Sally Gillespie*

[We met the author of this article when she appeared on a panel of home educated young people at a workshop in Wanganui last year. The workshop was shortly after the May 2004 *Keystone* had gone out. In that *Keystone* Anna and Elizabeth Botkin in this column made the point that to whom much has been given, much is required. We referred the members of the panel to this article and reminded them that our parents have invested much in us. Then we asked them what they intended to do with the headstart in life their parents had given them through homeschooling them. Sally Gillespie honoured her parents and effectually rose up to call her mother blessed by answering that she intended to teach her children what she had been taught. Bravo Sally! Wesley Stackbein in his article on page 17 also makes the point that we need to teach our children to teach their children as does R C Sproul Jr in his book *When You Rise Up*.—Editor]

If you're a home educating parent reading this, I have no doubt that you get discouraged at times. I'm writing this to say, "Keep going. Don't give up. It will truly be worth it."

One of the things I'm incredibly grateful for is the fact that my parents allowed me to leave the conventional school system. The passion I have for educating my children is borne from the teaching my parents gave me. They've done the hard yards and it has made my road easier.

Do you remember thinking, "Where do I start? Which curriculum do I use? Do I use *any* curriculum? I was no good at maths!" I've seen where to start. I've trialed different curricula or lack of them. For me personally I lean toward an "unschooling" approach but it doesn't really matter; my point is that I already have an idea of where to go from my experience as a student. I've also realised that we don't need all the answers – most of these issues can be dealt with as we learn alongside our children. I know that I can learn alongside my children as they get older. I know there will be potholes, hidden corners, and forks in the road, but the beginning of the map was already drawn for me. Hopefully my husband and I will be able to draw more for our own children.

This is true in spiritual matters too. God has revealed some major spiritual truths just from having me in the lounge while Mum and Dad were talking with friends. One example that comes to mind is God having sovereignty over our family size. I was just sitting there listening while friends of ours discussed their views with my parents. I read the books that they loaned to Mum and slowly digested everything that I

heard and read. I discussed all these things with Tim, and we felt we needed to trust God in this area, as in all others. (I didn't even realise that my parents had reached the same conclusion until I found out they were having another baby!) We firmly believe this road has been much easier than it is for some others because we didn't have to reverse any life styles that were already established. The map was drawn for us and we *started* our marriage with this conviction, all because I was listening in on adult conversation.

Maybe you feel guilty that your children don't see you at your best but it's a good thing! They're around all day to see you when you goof, but they see you get back up and try again.

At the moment we are experiencing both extremes of home education with pre schoolers. Our three year old is hungry for knowledge. She always wants to know more and has an incredible capacity to take it all in. This year she has started writing her name and is constantly tracing letters or asking for 'study'. I'm loving the fact that she virtually begs to be extended. It's so exciting to see her getting closer and closer to understanding the written word, and the new world that it holds. The biggest challenge of home education with her will be keeping up! She makes me grateful for my home education—I already had an idea of how I wanted to teach her so I was prepared when she started asking.

On the other hand our eighteen month old has the developmental ability of a three or four month old. I honestly don't know what the future holds for him. We have loads of help for him now, but I don't know what will happen when he reaches school age. At times I have already questioned whether we are doing the best thing for him by keeping him at home, rather than going to a learning institution. Whenever I start to doubt what we are doing, I remember that I have an 18 month head start on everyone else. I've been with him every day for his entire life, and no one else has that advantage (though his Daddy comes pretty close!). When I started this paragraph the feelings of doubt returned, but I'm starting to feel better already. He makes me grateful for my home education—I already have my convictions deep set so doubt doesn't get to linger for very long.

That's just two examples of the many, many ways my home education has advantaged me. Take heart, stick to your guns, go the distance. You're doing an awesome job, and God will give you the strength to finish your task. As for me, my two home education experiments need my attention so I'd better go!

*Sally Gillespie (23) started being home educated in 1994. She is married to Tim who went through the state system. They were married in August 1999. Their daughter Ahlai came along in May 2001 and their son Adonijah joined them in August 2003. They are keen to welcome whoever else God wants to send their way.*

# Book Review

By Genevieve Smith



## **When You Rise Up: A Covenantal Approach to Homeschooling**

by R C Sproul Jr

*"Now this is the commandment, and these are the statutes and judgments which the LORD your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe them in the land which you are crossing over to possess, that you may fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe it, that it may be well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as the LORD God of your fathers has promised you—a land flowing with milk and honey.*

*"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.*

*"And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up."*

Deuteronomy 6v1-7

Every now and again one comes across a real gem. My gem was a multi-faceted one in the shape of a book entitled *When You Rise Up: A Covenantal Approach to Homeschooling* by R C Sproul Jr. I call it multi-faceted because of the many ways I was impressed by this book. It was easy to read. It was inspiring. It passed C S Lewis' test of a good book in that it is one a person could read (and should read) again and again. I've read it twice, read parts to other people and had parts read to me. It is simple. It is clear. It clarifies and simplifies what is often made to be a complex matter. It actively helps one to not just read and forget what is written but read and put into practice what is written.

And what does R C Sproul Jr (RC Jr) write about?

Education.

R C Jr is a Christian. He is also a covenanter meaning that he understands the importance (the vital importance) of Christian education for God's covenant children.

In his first chapter, *The Goal of Education*, he

acknowledges that "the education battles are myriad." The major skirmishes he identifies as being those fought over who is called to do the teaching (state, church or family), what should be taught (the content of our curriculum) and how it should be taught (the method). Then he surprises the reader by saying:

*There are three prior questions that we usually skip right over, which helps explain why we have such disagreement. The first question is, "Is education important and valuable?"*

There is really no disagreement here. As one looks around, it is easy to conclude that we all view education as important. The amount of money spent on education is certainly a primary indicator of this fact.

*The second question is, "By what standard?"*

So education is important and should be taught; but by what standard? By the Ministry of Education's standard? This would be a little tricky since they have acknowledged that they do not have a standard. By John Dewey's standard? Dorothy Sayers? The answer, R C Jr concludes, is this:

*However much God might have gifted any education theorists through the ages, He made none of them inerrant or smarter than Himself. At least those combatants in the education wars who claim the name of Christ can all agree that whatever the Bible says, that is what we must believe.*

Our standard then is God's standard. And this we find revealed in Scripture.

*The third question relates to the first two. "Just what exactly is the goal of education?" When Alice was walking through Wonderland, she found herself at a crossroads. She was confused over which way she should go. Startled by the Cheshire Cat up in a nearby tree, Alice asked the Cat which way she should go. "That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat. Alice replied, "I don't much care where." The Cat saucily answered, "Then it doesn't matter which way you go."*

What is the goal of education? To prepare children to get good jobs? To teach children to get along with each other? To ensure children embrace our moral vision? To equip children in the pursuit of personal peace and affluence? Remember that our standard is to be God's standard; so the question becomes, "By God's standard, what is the goal of education?" The puritan poet John Milton once said:

*"The end [that is the goal] of learning is to repair the ruin of our first parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge, to love Him, to imitate Him, to be like Him."*

In this chapter on *The Goal of Education* R C Jr concludes:

*This is the goal – raising God-glorifying children...*



*Perhaps even before we ask, “What is education for?” we should ask a prior question, “What are children for?”*

In answering this question R C Jr quotes the Westminster Catechism:

*[Children’s] chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.*

R C Jr goes on to say:

*Therefore, if we are to train our children rightly, we must expunge from our own hearts that overarching agenda of the culture around us, the pursuit of personal peace and affluence...I’m not arguing that it’s a bad thing for children to be smart. Rather, I am suggesting that the issue of education is always the heart. Changed hearts is the goal, the function, the very purpose of education. Our goal is not multigenerational personal peace and affluence. Neither are we simply trying to raise clean-cut children...But what we want is the changed heart.*

So how are we going to get this? How do we affect this changed heart? How do we achieve success in our goal to raise God-glorifying children? This brings us back to the questions raised at the beginning of this review. The questions over which battles are fought! The questions of who is called to do the teaching, what should be taught and how it should be taught.

For the answers, R C Jr searches the Scripture to find out God’s standard on each of these questions. And over and over throughout the book R C Jr keeps coming back to Deuteronomy chapter six (which was quoted at the beginning of this review). I won’t attempt to answer all these questions in this short review of R C Jr’s book. I need to leave you some reasons for reading this treasure of a book yourself! But I do want to tell you about the three G’s. The three G’s are God’s standard for what should be taught. The chapter on the three G’s is an exciting chapter. This is the sort of chapter in a book full of light bulb moments. The previous chapters have gotten us to the point where x marks the spot. We have dug and dug and in our digging our spades have rung with the eagerly anticipated sound of metal on metal. We have pushed away the dirt from around a very large and very old ornate box. If we continue reading it will be akin to pulling out our muskets and shooting the lock off the treasure chest to uncover the treasure therein. Are you ready to proceed?

The three G’s encapsulate what God wants us to teach to our children. The first G, the first thing God wants us to teach our children is the answer to the question, “Who is God?” After revealing this, R C Jr goes on to say:

*Jesus himself...made much the same point: “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” (John 17v3). Our problem is that when we come to passages like this we think, “If I didn’t*

*have God, all this personal peace and affluence I’ve won wouldn’t be nearly as good.” Indeed we think knowing God is a means to attaining greater peace and affluence, turning God into a means and showing that we don’t know Him. God’s message isn’t that He’s a help to the good life, but that knowing Him is the very being of life. Knowing Him isn’t what makes life better, nor what protects life – knowing Him is life.*

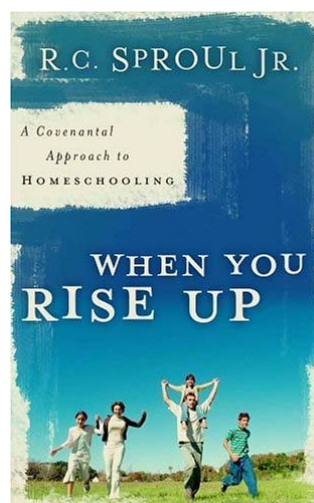
The second G is, “What has God done?” And the third G (are you ready for this?) is, “What does God require?”

In the rest of the book R C Jr outlines from the Bible the simple answers to these questions. He also answers the major education questions of who is to teach and how the teaching is to be done. He opens up and makes obvious the gender questions (ie., do we teach our boys and girls differently?) And he answers the major objections to simply educating the way God wants us to educate.

As I said at the beginning, this book is a gem. Forget the pursuit of personal peace and affluence, this book will help us to store up treasures in heaven. For educating our children to glorify God is putting our treasure where moth and rust will not destroy it. When we get to the Eternal Land and shoot the lock off the chest we dug up we will truly find it full of the most glorious treasures if we have been obedient to God in the matter of educating His children!

*When You Rise Up* is published by P&R Publishing and should be available from any Christian bookstore. Christian Education Services carries it, and you can contact them on email at [cesbooks@intouch.co.nz](mailto:cesbooks@intouch.co.nz) (Attention: Carol Munroe). Do buy it, read it and put it into practice!

*Genevieve Smith is the eldest daughter of Craig and Barbara Smith and resides with them in Palmerston North. She has also read Bound for Glory by R C Sproul Jr which she highly recommends. In January 2005 she attended the Code Blue Christian Worldview Conference in Auckland where R C Sproul Jr spoke in person. “He speaks as well as he writes.”*



**If you only  
read one  
book this  
year, make  
sure it is  
*When You  
Rise Up*  
by  
R C Sproul  
Jr!**

# CHomeS Roundup



## Homeschooler's Postcard Exchange

This project was created for many reasons. All kids love to get mail, but this is mail from other kids, all over the country and even other countries!

The goal is to help our kids learn a little geography, practice their penmanship and grammar skills, learn how to address a postcard, how the postal mail system works and to do *all* this while having FUN!

Parents sign up on the website with their email address. They list the names and ages of their children and the country where they live. Parents can go through the list of people signed up with their children. If their children would like to write to any of the others listed, the parents can email the parents of the other children and exchange full names and addresses. Then the children can send postcards!

So far families have signed up from countries such as USA, Canada, New Zealand, Wales and Qatar. The only requirement once you sign up is that you send at least one postcard a month

The website for this is: <http://groups.msn.com/ChristianHomelearning/postcardexchange.msnw>

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## Free Easy-Tips eBook

Lorraine Curry, a home educating Mum since 1989, has put together a short eight-page booklet with tips for home educators on things such as dictation, memorization and poetry. You can access her ebook on line at: <http://www.easyhomeschooling.net/ebook-easy-tips.pdf>

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## Pen Friends for Turkish Youth

The land of Turkey has a population of 75 million. Of this number, 99 percent are followers of Islam, a religion that accepts the existence of God but rejects Jesus Christ as Saviour. Open missionary activity is not allowed, and most Turks have never heard the gospel. We offer you an opportunity to be a friend and a Christian witness to at least one person in Turkey—and even more if you wish. If you accept the challenge, we will send you helpful guidelines for sharing the Gospel.

Through letters to teachers in Turkish schools, we recruit students who want to *correspond in English*. Most are between the ages of 13 and 21 and are eager to hear from adults and teens in other lands. We occasionally have Turkish teachers and university students as well.

We try to match Turkish students with Christians who have similar interests. However, this is not always possible. We often have more Turkish students to assign than Christian youth, so adults are very welcome in the program.

### Requirements:

You must be 13 years of age or older to join. We assign male to male and female to female. On occasion we have too many Turkish boys and in that case assign Christian grandmothers to correspond with them.

### To request a Turkish pen friend:

Please reply to the following postal address, email address, or telephone:

Postal Friend Coordinator  
Turkish World Outreach  
508 Fruitvale Court  
Grand Junction, CO 81504  
USA

Email: [twosandy@onlinecol.com](mailto:twosandy@onlinecol.com)

Telephone: +1 970-434-1942

### Information we need:

- 1) Your Name and Postal Address
- 2) Your email address in case we are able to assign you a student with an email address. Please realize, however, that most Turkish students will only be able to correspond by regular mail.
- 3) Your age
- 4) Whether you are male or female
- 5) The number of Pen Friends you want
- 6) What some of your hobbies or interests are.
- 7) You should agree with this statement: I will try to be a genuine friend to my pen friend and to share the love of Christ. If my pen friend chooses to follow the Saviour, I will contact you so he or she can be sent helpful information.

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(Continued from page 11: *Nine Reasons*)

continue to have them enrolled in the public school? If you mean that you are giving your children moral training, and letting the public school give them “academic” training, you are simply denying them a Christian worldview. Your children are being given an anti-Christian worldview in all subjects at the local public school.

We used to educate our own children, and did it much better than the state does now. Let's do it again.

*Dan Smithwick is President of Nehemiah Institute. The Institute is a research and educational private foundation providing worldview testing and training materials to Christian educators. He has been guest speaker on several Christian radio shows. He is married and has five children. You can contact him at [nehemiah1@home.com](mailto:nehemiah1@home.com)*

Certain American statistics have been removed for readability in New Zealand.

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# Exploring God's Creation



## Disturbing Testimonies

By Peter van den Brink

Have you ever ventured onto one of those anti-Christian websites or picked up some book and, after reading it, become really concerned about whether what you believe is actually true? How do you survive that, faith intact, without blocking your ears to other peoples' ideas?

I'm a YEC, a Young Earth Creationist. I believe that the world is about 6000 years old, that God created the world in six literal, 24-hour days and that the flood in Noah's day literally covered the entire planet. I believe that this is taught in the Bible. However, this position flies directly in the face of widely accepted "secular" beliefs about the history of the world – usually described in billions of years. So how can I claim that so many learned people are wrong without being either ignorant or arrogant? The answer lies in who or what I credit with having final authority – who determines what I believe to be true?

I recently got stuck into Jonathan Sarfati's book, *Refuting Compromise*<sup>1</sup>, a book that seeks to refute the 'progressive creationist' position of Hugh Ross. This book is quite technical in places but gives an excellent overview of many of the central issues considered important by so-called Young Earth Creationists. Sarfati carefully and methodically demonstrates the integrity of the YEC position and the short-comings of Ross's compromising attempt to marry secular (i.e. non- or anti-Christian) science with the Biblical accounts of history. It's an excellent and useful book, despite reviews that have called it ungracious (which, apart from a few unrestrained comments, it is not).

It occurred to me at one point to check up on the internet for rebuttals to the book. Sure enough, I found one by Greg Neyman<sup>2</sup> (there are undoubtedly more) and carefully read the sections relating to what I had read up to that point. It was quite disheartening to read because it began to cast a shadow of doubt on the arguments that I had read in Sarfati's book. I read on and found a hyperlink to testimonies of several people who had abandoned a YEC position in favour of an old-earth one. I followed the link and read the "enlightened", if somewhat bitter, testimonies of several people now vehemently opposed to YEC.

Three testimonies in particular caught my attention, those of Glenn Morton<sup>3</sup>, Joshua Zorn<sup>4</sup> and Ed Babinski<sup>5</sup>. These are intelligent, scientifically trained people who were all extremely well informed and zealous about YECism. Yet each of them found reason to change his position, reject his belief in a young earth

and accept what secular science has been saying about billions of years. In Babinski's case he rejected Christianity altogether while the other two still identify themselves as conservative, evangelical Christians.

As I read through these testimonies, I tried to see myself in a similar place. I am currently a zealous advocate of YECism, just like these men once were. I have to ask myself the question, "Will I also have a testimony like that in ten or fifteen years' time?" I can't say right now. My divination skills are limited (and my conservative morality would exclude the use of them anyway), and God hasn't shown me my future yet (I expect He'll reveal it as we get there!). Part of me was very sad to read of people abandoning and now opposing what I hold so dear. Part of me was fearful that perhaps I was not yet as enlightened as these men and that one day I will also have to go through a similar humbling experience. I began to feel quite discouraged.

And then my brain kicked in.

I began to analyse what it was that these men claimed motivated them at one time to accept, then at another time to reject, what seems so clearly Biblical to me. Were these actually the testimonies of truly objective searchers who carefully weighed all the evidence for and against something to finally come to a conclusion that is unassailable in both assumption and reason? Glenn Morton, for example, says that he rejected YECism because he found that the evidence he was confronted with in his seismic geology was contrary to what YECs were saying. Ed Babinski began his process of 'deconversion' when he started to read more widely, claiming to have already been deeply rooted in the Christian faith. Surely if these intelligent people saw good reason to abandon their beliefs, then it must just be a matter of stubbornness or ignorance that people like Jonathan Sarfati, or myself, continue to hold YEC as scientifically feasible? Greg Neyman frequently points out that if Sarfati is right, then 99% of scientists are wrong – highly improbable to say the least.

Yet I maintain that it is not stubbornness or ignorance that keeps me to a YEC position. The central issue in the whole debate is one of **authority**. This is the key factor by which we should weigh the arguments and testimonies of anyone – *what is their final authority?*

In Chapters 1 and 2 of *Refuting Compromise*, Sarfati presents a strong case for Biblical authority and for accepting Genesis 1-11 as literal history. He argues that if the Bible does not speak faithfully about things that can be observed, then how can we trust Him when He speaks about spiritual (unseen) things (cf. John 3:12)? He describes two ancient hermeneutical (interpretive) principles: the *perspicuity* of Scripture and *analogia Scripturae*.

By perspicuity we mean that Scripture is understandable to ordinary people. It does not make us dependent on people with specialised learning to get the basic truths of the Bible. This was why people like Wycliffe



were so eager to get the Bible into the hands of common people – they knew that, with the Holy Spirit's help, ordinary people can read and understand it for themselves.

*Analogia Scripturae* refers to the principle that Scripture interprets Scripture. That means that we have confidence in the integrity of the Bible so that one part can be compared to another to see that we are getting the right meaning. It means that when we come to a hard-to-understand part of the Bible, we use easy-to-understand parts to shed light on it.

When Genesis 1-11 are studied, whether broadly or in detail, the message clearly conveyed is that it is literal history, albeit crafted into literary forms. There is no reason to suggest otherwise until we begin to look at sources outside Scripture itself. And this is where the problems begin. As soon as an authority other than Scripture is given an ear, there is a direct challenge to God's authority. This is why the Reformers were so hot about *sola Scriptura* (Scripture alone). They saw that if Roman Catholic tradition or, for that matter, any other authorities would be accepted, it would quickly undermine the Gospel message, leaving sinners falsely secure or saints paralysed with doubt.

When I read the testimonies of these ex-YECs again, I saw very quickly that they all had the same pattern of attributing authority. It is interesting to see that each of them went through a serious crisis of faith when going through the process of rejecting YECism. They each intuitively realised that to accommodate an old-earth position, their principles of Biblical interpretation would have to change. Two of them managed the mental gymnastics required to reinterpret Scripture to fit in with their new source of authority. Babinski just chucked the Bible out altogether.

Here's what I saw in each of them. They gave Jesus authority over their salvation and moral lives but entrusted their interpretation of the age of the earth to their YEC teachers. That is, they took the teaching of the young earthers as authoritative and relied on them to provide the answers to scientific problems. That works fine as long as the YEC teachers are right, and, being human, having limited knowledge, they are not always so. When Morton, for example, saw evidence for geological features that did not seem consistent with what his YEC teachers taught, he eventually aban-

doned them *and their viewpoint* altogether. When his foundational authority for his understanding of history was shown to be in error, he (quite reasonably) rejected it. His mistake, I believe, was to rely on YECs rather than the Bible for the age of the earth.

Read through the rebuttals to *Refuting Compromise* and the testimonies of these men and watch carefully for their source of authority. Neyman believes that 99% of scientists can't be wrong<sup>6</sup>. I believe Neyman seriously underestimates the influence sin has on our thinking. The Bible seems to be very clear that apart from God's grace, there is none who seeks for God (Romans 3:11) and that without the Spirit, man will not understand spiritual things or accept divine authority (John 3:3, 1Corinthians 2:14, Romans 8:7).

Morton assumed that if the YECs couldn't explain certain geological features, then secular explanations of millions of years must be right. This seems terribly foolish. YEC is young as an apologetic science. It has developed fairly recently as Christians have woken up to the fact that unbelievers and blasphemers have quietly wrested control over the minds of our children in regards to our origins. Naturally YECs do not have answers (yet?) to all the questions or models to all the natural processes in the world. Morton could have seen his puzzling geological features and taken the initiative to develop an explanatory model consistent with both observed facts and Biblical history. Instead, he chose to change Biblical history to fit existing long-age explanations. His authority for believing the age of the earth was young was YEC theories, not the Bible, so when YEC explanations failed, he naturally chose other man-made authorities. Zorn's testimony is similar.

This pattern of dependence on human authority is seen

(Continued on page 28: *Creation*)

# 'Thank you

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(Continued from page 25: *Creation*)

throughout old-earth theories. Examine the Reasons to Believe website<sup>7</sup>, for example. They accept *human* interpretations and theories as reliable, then call up Scripture to show that it can be made to look consistent with the theory. They appeal frequently to academic credentials, as though this confirms the truthfulness of someone's theories. And what bugs me most is that they seem to be completely oblivious to the fact that crediting human interpretation of data as being Truth equates to giving it divine authority! For example, the "Big Bang" is accepted by some, e.g. Hugh Ross, as a historical fact. They then have to manipulate Scriptural interpretation to accommodate this. In reality, the "Big Bang" is more like a tenuous hypothesis under constant fundamental review (see reference<sup>8</sup> for an example).

Babinski is perhaps the most consistent of the three. He believed that the opinions of learned men were sufficient reason to abandon the Bible's authority completely. At least here is someone who can see that there is an inherent and unbridgeable gap between accepting the Bible as authoritative and man's opinions.

The fact is that the Bible teaches very plainly that earth's history so far, is about 6000 years. To take a different view requires manipulation of the text using foreign hermeneutical principles that develop in response to someone trying to marry two different (competing)

sources of authority. For example, interpreting the six days of creation as representing *ages* of creation requires a theory from somewhere else that says the world *could* be many ages older. The text of Genesis 1 seems to go the extra mile to emphasise that it means 24-hour days, so why would you question God's intended meaning unless you had an alternative theory? I'm not saying we aren't allowed to ask such questions. Indeed they are useful and challenging. What I am saying is that we must be careful not to usurp God's authority by replacing it with human ideas. That counts in every area of life – science, politics, ethics, medicine, etc. God invites us to investigate His creation, to master and 'subdue' it. But where God has spoken, clearly explaining something, as His creatures, we are bound to accept His word – even more so if we have confessed His only Son Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

#### References:

1. Sarfati, Jonathan, *Refuting Compromise*, Master Books, 2004.
2. [http://www.answersincreation.org/refuting\\_compromise.htm](http://www.answersincreation.org/refuting_compromise.htm)
3. <http://www.answersincreation.org/whyileft.htm>
4. <http://www.answersincreation.org/zorn.htm>
5. <http://www.edwardtabinski.us/articles/yec.html>
6. <http://www.answersincreation.org/RC6.htm> . One of the most telling statements Neyman makes relates to Satan's words to

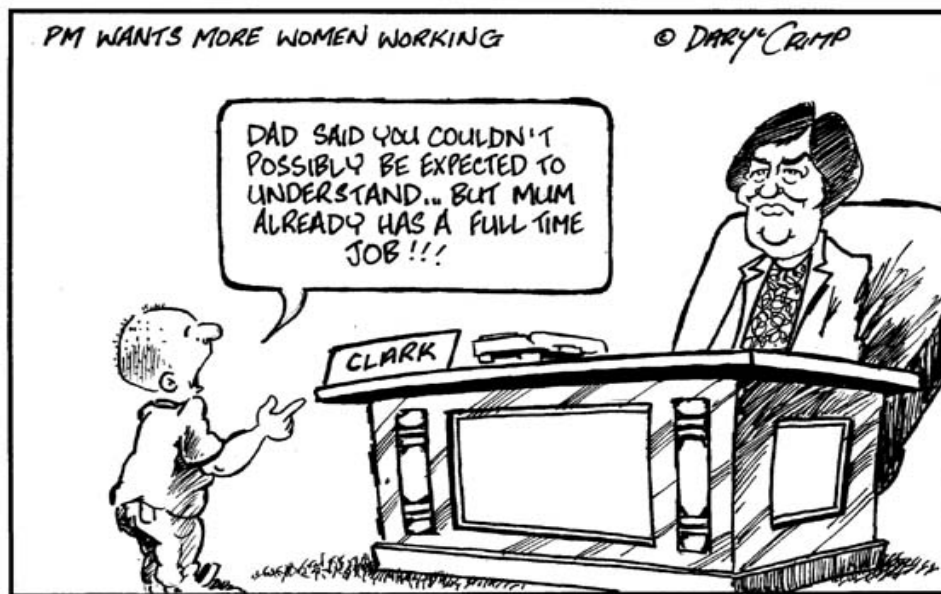
## Letters



### Very Encouraging

Thanks for the great magazine. We're always encouraged and challenged (not to mention "educated") by the articles you present. Our family recently had a review which went very well. We had received some information from y'all which helped us prepare. Thanks for the support you're giving to New Zealand homeschoolers. We do appreciate your efforts and praise God for the freedom and privileges we enjoy. Thanks for helping to ensure they continue.

J M Sutton  
(Mama to six incredibly awesome H/S children).



Sent to us by a Keystone reader, "Just made for homeschoolers!" [www.nzcartoons.co.nz](http://www.nzcartoons.co.nz)

Eve in the garden. He asserts, "In this matter, *Satan knew* Eve would not die physically." (Emphasis added). My immediate response to this, especially considering Satan's nature, was simply to say Satan lied. Neyman's point is that since the physical death of Adam and Eve was not instantaneous, the death promised them by God (if they ate the fruit) was only spiritual. However, Sarfati addresses this issue briefly on pp 71-72 of *Refuting Compromise*. Briefly, he suggests that like a branch chopped off a tree, the process of death began because Adam cut himself off from the source of life (God).

7. <http://www.reasons.org/index.shtml>

8. <http://www.answersingenesis.org/docs2005/0112quasar.asp>

(Continued from page 27: *Rose*)

not threats, force and cynicism. As Einstein warned us years ago, "It is a very grave mistake to think that the enjoyment of seeing and searching can be promoted by means of coercion."

Every child is a gifted child.

#### Notes:

1. 1987 Interview, *Growing Without Schooling*, issue 59 (1987), pages 29-30.
2. Armstrong, Thomas. *In Their Own Way: Discovering and Encouraging your Child's Personal Learning Style*. Los Angeles, CA: J.P. Tarcher, 1987.