

# Keystone

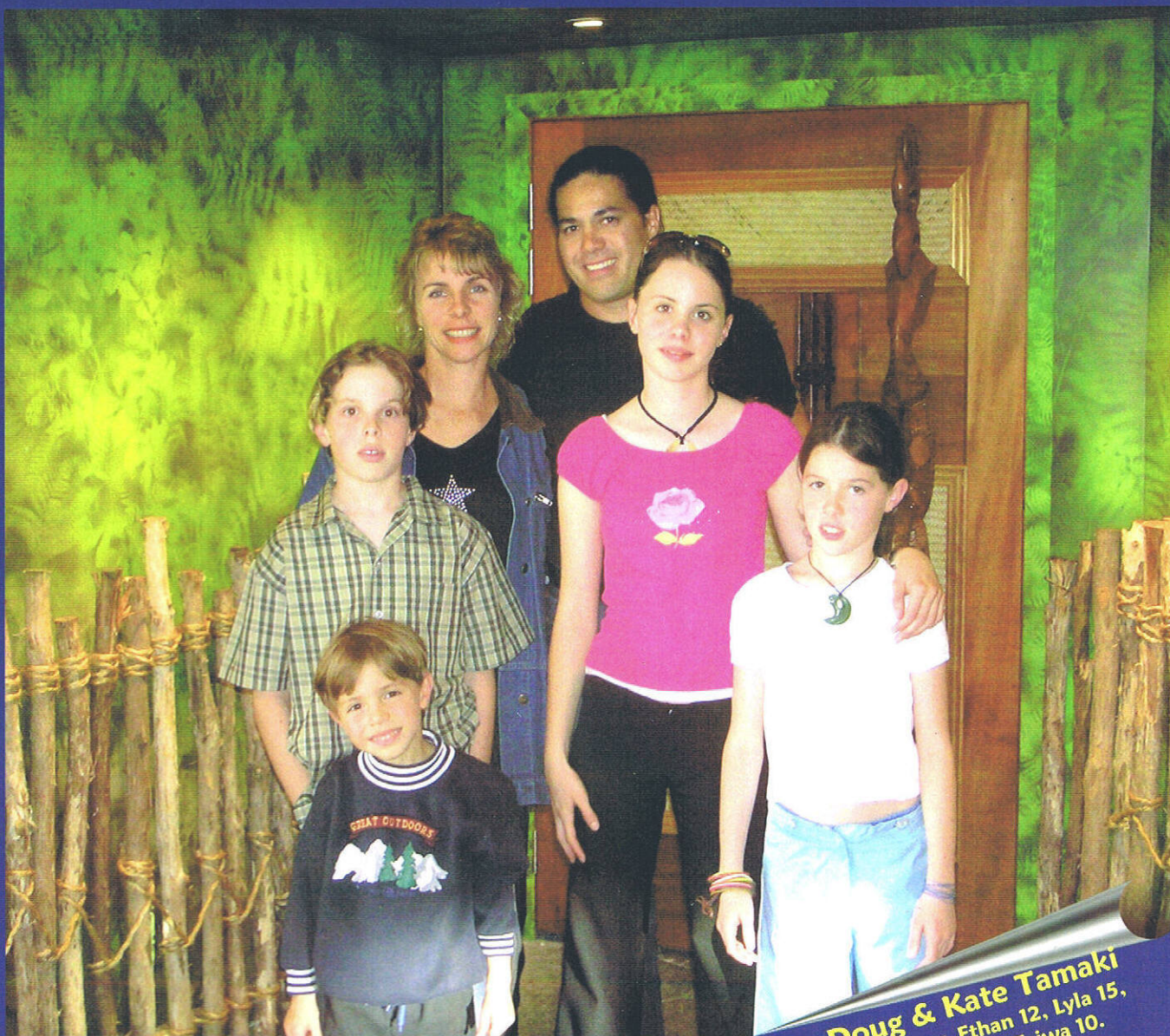
A Bi-Monthly Journal for Christian

Home Educators

Vol. X No. 2

March 2004

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



**Doug & Kate Tamaki**  
Kate, Doug, Ethan 12, Lyla 15,  
Tawera 5 and Taiwa 10.



TOM ELDREDGE  
Foreword by Doug Phillips

Many church shepherds are catching on to the fact that, despite a smorgasbord of programs, the majority of children born to believing parents will reject the faith of their fathers and blend into an increasingly pagan society. They grieve at the destruction of the family within their flocks, but they are at a loss for what to do.

www.HomeEducationFoundation.org.nz

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Kate, Doug, Ethan 12, Lyla 15, Taiwa 10 & Tawera 5.





(Continued from page 9: *Compulsory*)

Senior Lecturer in Philosophy of Education in the Department of Policy Studies in Education at Massey University, says the number one reason we have schools in this country is as a baby-sitting service! That’s the abdication. And when we say that some people really shouldn’t be allowed to home educate, that’s the meddling: it’s the same offensive game the state plays, social control of those of whom we disapprove.

One crazy form of abdication is framed in terms of fairness and justice: how could parents be so callous and manipulative as to impose their will onto their children? Such ideas are absurd: if ***we parents*** don’t impose our will, wisdom, knowledge and understanding upon our children, it is certain that ***someone else’s*** version of these things ***is going to be impressed*** upon them. This is precisely what takes place at schools, and this needs to be recognised by us fathers in particular as one of the main reasons we home educate: we want our children to embrace ***our*** beliefs and understandings, ***our*** religion, ***our*** faith, ***our*** worldview, ***our*** Saviour, ***our*** God and definitely ***not*** the secular version of these things or the pot-luck milieu of whatever multi-cultural mix they may get at school.

### Political Correctness

Now I’ve done it! Political Correctness demands that no one speak against multi-culturalism. It sounds so intolerant, racist and prejudiced. That’s only because the politically correct have captured the language so as to make someone sound like a bigot when he does not want his children coming home with certain ideas from outside of his mono-cultural, Christian paradigm. I for one am happy to confess that I really don’t want my little primary aged children to pick up ideas about it being OK to have multiple wives; to construct one’s own meaning from interacting with a text rather than assume the author had a specific meaning in mind; to practise female circumcision; to offer daily, colourful sacrifices to Rama and Sita; to believe we evolved from pond slime over millions of years; to pray to idols; to watch and even participate in orgies, incest and all forms of pornography; to rely on bullying and intimidation and blackmail as valid forms of negotiation; to wear nose rings; to look at history as a series of totally meaningless, random events; to use Christ’s name as a cuss word; to see women as nothing more than sexual playthings and servants of men; to hold the pursuit of money and pleasure as the highest good; to believe that the four most important authorities in the world are the UN, the majority vote of your national parliament, your school teachers and your own personal choice; to view mathematics as a human invention rather than as God’s invention that man discovered; to think that homosexuality is a valid lifestyle or that divorce, de facto set-ups, serial boyfriends and girlfriends and abortions are all acceptable social norms. This is the kind of multi-culturalism one will find in today’s New Zealand state schools. My four eldest aged 24, 22, 20 and 17 have, are and will continue to face and deal with these things – graciously and friendly, but also firmly and clearly – without themselves being confused by any of these things, for they were taught from a solid Biblical foundation of unchangeable truth and from a reasonably consistent

world view. They did not grow up in a multi-cultural environment which said all cultures and cultural practises are equally valid, that truth is negotiable or relative or changes from place to place or person to person.

We are quite happy to be called intolerant: we do in fact refuse to tolerate the intolerable.

### We’re Always Responsible

We fathers need to come to grips with the fact that we are responsible and will always be responsible for our children’s education. Even when the state forcibly removes our responsibility to see to the schooling/education of our children; even when it forces us to ensure they attend the state schools for six hours a day, five days a week, nine months a year for 10 years; guess who will be blamed (that is, said to be responsible) if our little Johnny still turns out illiterate? You got it....***you*** will, little Johnny’s parents!

The great news in all of this is that by the grace of God the home always exerts the greatest influence over children. This explains why some children from godly and orderly homes can come through the state system still intact, sane and with positive habits and attitudes. But all the studies tell us that schools cause far too many casualties.

The sooner we can get rid of compulsory schooling as well as the effective monopoly the state has over schooling, the better off our country will be.

### Notes:

1. Of course, in NZ ***all*** schools must be registered – with the state – even totally private schools. And the state reserves to itself the right to define a school as it sees fit in the circumstances. You will not find a definition of a school in the NZ Education Act, which helps explain why we actually have the absurd situation of a state school being open, staffed and consuming tax dollars while there is not a single student enrolled or attending.  
Now that presents an idea: why don’t we individual home educators, or maybe a group of us, band together and apply to become a registered school? Just think of all the funding we’d get! And the unbelievable provisions of the Integration Act would guarantee that we could keep our thoroughly Christian character! I am told at least one family of home educators in NZ have in fact taken this route. Well, it appears the Minister of Education, Trevor Mallard, has declared a temporary stop to integrating any more private schools into the state system, so maybe that route isn’t open any more. I would actually object to this route because of the ***other*** regulations we’d automatically be subject to as a registered school (building codes, OSH regs, square meters per child, wheelchair access, etc.). The money isn’t worth the loss of freedom. Our family has enjoyed nearly two decades of freedom, and we’d never give it up for government money. What a lousy deal that would be.
2. *Manawatu Evening Standard*, 6 March 2004, “The Best and Worst of Days”, p. 4.
3. *Manawatu Evening Standard*, 4 December 1990
4. Phillip Capper, PPTA, *Dominion Sunday Times*, 14 October 1990
5. *Christchurch Press*, 5 November 1985.
6. Experts in perversion. Don’t just take my word for it. Ring the local hospital or health board and ask for the sexual health services and ask them to please send you a set of the materials handed out to high school kiddies aged 13 and over at sexuality workshops: a “tutu pak”, a sexual health W.O.F. questionnaire and a condom/lubricant/information card pack. Then explore the websites promoted therein: you will be treated to tours of incest and sex-with-the-teacher possibilities and tips from the FPA to young bucks on how to seduce young girls. All courtesy of your tax dollars.
7. This is not true, of course. Such rebellion is a function of feeling rejected by parents and getting conflicting messages from the other authorities in their lives: the teachers.

# Editorial



The book advertised on the back cover, *Safely Home*, may prove to be a real eye-opener. I’m needing to read it for the second time because it is so full of seismic implications regarding the way we think about our entire home educational programme. This book lays the foundational thinking for understanding the difference between the Hebrew and Greek methods of approaching the educational task.... and indeed, how these two groups approach all other areas of life as well.

The Classical Greeks were mostly theoretical...that is, the famous Greek philosophers we always hear about. They looked down with disgust at manual labourers and craftsmen and wouldn’t think of dirtying their hands in performing physical experiments to test out some of their scientific theories. These are the guys whose writings were dusted off at the end of the Middle Ages (in the 1400s & 1500s) and proclaimed to be the wisest of the wise, bringing light once again to mankind. So they called it the Enlightenment. It was in part a reaction against the stultifying effects of the Church of the time which had grown too powerful and tyrannical.

We live in times with similar attitudes, for intellectual and academic prowess is held in high honour and enjoined upon our young people, while the social skills that make life happen: motherhood, homecraft and loving patriarchy are scoffed at and denigrated even more than the essential work of technicians, tradesmen, farmers, nurses, etc.

Most of the articles in this issue are related to laying out the difference between this Classical Greek approach, which is regarded as the cornerstone of the free West’s intellectual and economic advances, and the ancient Hebrew approach to life and learning. The Hebrew focus is not on the intellect but on the heart.

To illustrate: the Greek way to find out what you believe about life is to ask you a series of questions. The Hebrew way is to follow you around for a few weeks, participating with you in your lifestyle. The first is intellectual and theoretical. The second is based on experience and relationships built up over time as well as information gathered by the intellect in conversations with the subject and others round about. The first gathers the official party line. The second, the Hebrew approach, gets to the heart of the matter, warts and all.

This helps to explain why so much of the Bible was written in the narrative style, just relating the history, more than in a systematic theological way. This also helps explain why Christians in the West, used to the Greek systematic intellectual approach, developed confessions, catechisms and statements of faith which are systematic, logical and comprehensive condensations of what the whole Bible teaches on important issues in theology, worship, church and private life. The Hebrew approach is not anti-intellectual: it just collects far more data: from around and behind the scenes, giving a fuller, richer, more comprehensive picture.

# Contents

## Feature Family

Doug & Kate Tamaki of Rotorua.....5

## The Faith of Us Fathers

Compulsory Schooling Is Not a Christian  
Concept by Craig Smith.....7

## Bits of Books

Christ and Civilization, Part 2 (Final)  
by John Robbins.....10

## Home Education Research

Project on Learning  
by Professor Graham Nuthall.....13

## Learning Disabilities

Foetal Alcohol Syndrome & Foetal  
Alcohol Effects, Part 4 (Final)  
by Linda Dillon.....14

## Graduates Speak

Ask Now of the Days that Are Past  
by Wesley Strackbein.....20

## In Line with Scripture

Psalms 34:8.....22

## Exploring God’s Creation

An Ever Faithful God  
by Peter van den Brink.....22

## Worldviews in Focus

Deciding if You Are a Humanist  
by Craig Smith.....23

## Over a Cuppa

Keeping Going When the Going  
Gets Tough, Part 8  
by Craig & Barbara Smith.....26

Letters.....28

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.

**The Home Education Foundation** is a charitable trust established to serve, promote and strengthen the home education community in New Zealand. Since November 1998 the Foundation has contracted Craig & Barbara Smith (whose six children are all totally home educated) to serve the home education community full-time. They are continuing to build on their volunteer work since 1986 in the areas of publishing (such as *Keystone* and *TEACH Bulletin*), counselling, correspondence with politicians and educationalists, lobbying, researching issues of concern to home educators, running National Leadership Forums (annually since 1996) and National Christian Home Education Conferences (six since 1987), initiating the National Home Education Awareness Week, moderating five home education email discussion groups, producing media releases, speaking at local seminars, hosting overseas speaker tours, and networking among local support groups and with overseas home schooling organisations. Their efforts are conducted under the eye of the Home Education Foundation’s Trustees and a Board of Reference which represents 19 locations all over New Zealand.

The Home Education Foundation, Christian Home Schoolers of New Zealand and the projects they take on are supported entirely by home educators subscribing to *Keystone* and/or *TEACH Bulletin*, investing in books the Foundation sells or making tax-deductible donations either by cheque, credit card or by automatic bank payment (ask us for a form). The Foundation can also be supported through Telecom and Clear who both give a percentage (5% & 2.5% respectively) of your toll bill to the Foundation, *painlessly and without costing you an extra cent!* Telecom subscribers can ring 0800 724 665 and ask to support “Christian Home Schoolers & Home Education Foundation”, reference 10898651, ph. (06) 357-4399, through Telecom’s “School Connection” Programme. TelstraClear subscribers can ring 0508 888 800 and ask to support the Home Education Foundation, ph. (06) 357-4399, through TelstraClear’s “Friends of the School” Programme. Please ring today!

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(Continued from page 5: ***Tamaki***)

selves in the Word of God. The children have been doing a lot of reading of good books. They have read about some very inspirational people, for example: *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott, *Race You to the Top* by Tony Christiansen, *The Education of Little Tree* by Forest Carter and *Ten Boys Who Made History* by Irene Howat, and *Rich Kid Smart Kid* by Robert T. Kiyosaki. This last book revolutionised my ideas on teaching finance and how kids learn. It was great!

We have utilized the offerings of the local home education support group as well. Someone approached the local gym about doing classes for homeschoolers. The gym put together a programme, and we joined all the children up. It has been great. The children have taken to gymnastics like fish to water.

Last year, I signed the three oldest children up for art classes. The owner of an art shop in town took the classes. The children were able to get a lot of good one-on-one instruction as the class sizes were about six participants, max! They learned all about shading and highlighting, and Taiwa even learned about painting with water colours - a skill which can be quite tricky to learn. The instructor was really very good with children, and the children have since entered art competitions, submitting pieces that have been really enhanced through the skills they have acquired.

**Genevieve:** Can you tell us a little bit about each of your children?

**Kate:** Well, Lyla at 15 has developed quite an interest and skill for administration/office type work. She is really good at it and does a bit of typing for Doug on the odd occasion. We are doing a computer course together at the moment. She also likes to cook and organise parties. And she bakes a good banana cake. Everyone wants her to do one for them! Lyla also performs in the youth productions called the MIX held every three months. She sings, plays keyboard and dances.

Doug used to play rugby and league when he was younger. In fact, he captained the School Boys New Zealand Maori league team. Ethan (12) has developed a similar passion for the sport. He loves to play rugby, creating things with his hands and loves drawing.

Taiwa (10) likes to try her hand at everything - and she is good at everything too! She loves to write and does a lot of unprompted writing—journaling mainly. She enjoys drawing, piano, singing, cooking and playing the guitar.

Tawera can do what everyone else is doing. He has developed quite a flair for drawing and painting through copying his older siblings. He is our performer! He re-enacts videos that he has seen and talks about being on stage with his mates in a band - and he is 5! The children all enjoy socialising and have no problem getting on with people.

The two girls, Lyla and Taiwa, and I are taking singing lessons together. They both love singing, and Taiwa especially is always singing. They both also take piano

lessons. Doug has been honing his guitar skills, and both Ethan and Taiwa are learning guitar now too (and loving and excelling at it!). We are hoping to put together a family band eventually.

**Genevieve:** What are some things you have learned? Ways you have adapted? Things you have changed over the years?

**Kate:** The girls enjoy to write more these days. I think part of this may have been our approach to writing with the children. We have tried to keep things relevant rather than writing for the sake of writing. And so the children will document things, journal or for example: write about the trip to the South Island from which we have just returned.

We went through the stage of forcing the children to do things—for instance learning the piano. We insisted they learn to play. Their desire began to diminish as we pushed our wants on them. They became more reluctant. It wasn’t from the heart. Doug and I realised something wasn’t working, so we let it rest for five months. When we asked again, “Who would like to play an instrument?” the girls were in for piano, and Ethan decided he’d really like to learn the guitar. We helped them to take ownership of their own learning and are encouraging them in their own dreams and visions rather than ours.

We are still learning and working on many areas. But by God’s grace, we are beginning to see good fruit. I see the children as Kingdom children. I tell them, “You are going to be mighty in the land.” I tell our boys, “You are mighty men of God.” One of the ways we have made the children begin to feel more like kingdom children and to be more distinguishable from the world is in their dress. We allowed the children to wear whatever they liked to Church for a long time but decided that wearing streetwear to Church wasn’t good enough anymore. The change was a bit of a struggle at first, and we had a few fights. However, the girls are dressing more like young ladies. Taiwa has found it a bit strange because she’s a bit of a tom boy. But the boys are getting into their suit and ties all by themselves. They are taking ownership of their clothes for themselves now. The interesting thing is that with the change in dress has come a slight change in attitude. Instead of identifying with their peers, they’ve begun to identify with the adults. Little things have indicated this, such as comments like, “He is wearing a tie like my tie.” Friends in church say things like, “You’re looking sharp,” and that makes them feel good. I’ve even started to see kids at Church dress differently too: hair swished back, nice shirts and trousers. It comes down to knowing who we are. That is: ambassadors for the most high God. As we walk in that and feel confident in that, we are distinguishable from the world, for man does look on the outward appearance. So we need to ask, “What are we saying to those who see us?” I’m beginning to realise that when we raise the standards, others will follow too!

**Genevieve:** That is quite inspiring. Thank you so much for sharing your experiences and testimony and children with us!

tion...Because much of modern education is driven by ancient Greek ideals, the Christian must be especially wary so that he can rebuild his educational philosophy on the one true Rock, Christ Jesus.

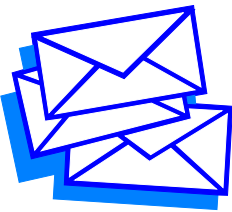
We get stuck into home schooling by doing maths, science, history, etc., building knowledge to knowledge, just as Adam and Eve did, so that our children will have a good education. But: *we are to build our worldview exclusively on Holy Scripture, taking every thought captive to the obedience of Jesus Christ. To the extent that our mature children should study classical culture and writings, it is to identify the many false philosophies and intellectual strongholds which have infected Western civilization, and against which the Christian soldier is to wage war...The extent that Classical Christian education emphasizes important biblical disciplines such as masteries of languages, logic and reasoning, history and the fundamentals of communication skills such as grammar, rhetoric and reading comprehension, we applaud it...The point is that we must have a system of education which is intensely personal, familistic and relationship driven so that virtue is added to faith, and knowledge to virtue, as required by Scripture; a system that trains the believer to 'think God's thoughts after him' through a presuppositionally biblical approach to truth; a system which rejects the idea that either our methods or our philosophy of education are neutral; and a system which emphasizes that the supreme goal of education is not simply to fill the mind with facts, or to get a credential, but to see the child 'Transformed after the image of the God who made him.'*<sup>2</sup>

So how do we achieve all this? We've already made a marvellous start by bringing them home to educate them ourselves. As we constantly re-evaluate all things around us, we see that home education is not just for our families and us. It is for our grandchildren and great-grandchildren and for the future edification of the Church. We're just making a start, but we've done some of the hardest work of all: breaking with the pattern of the world to more closely follow Christ ourselves and disciple our children for Him. This is by far the most valuable and far-reaching aspect of our home education. As we re-evaluate our activities, we will find we'll need to assign new priorities to things like spending time with our children and building personal relationships with them. We may find some things high on the priority list at present may get moved down or bumped off altogether; perhaps items such as striving for a top position in academia or earning top dollar and credibility within the business community. We pray the Lord will give us all the vision and the courage to do what will bring Him glory in the raising of our children. "Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who greatly delights in His commandments! His descendants will be mighty in the land." – Psalm 112:1-2.

**Notes:**

- 1. Available from the Home Education Foundation — see back cover.
- 2. Doug Phillips <http://www.visionforum.com/hottopics/controversies/hebrewgreek/>

Letters



**Rotorua Seminar**

I attended the seminar on Saturday just gone (13 March 04) with my wife Wendy, and just wanted to say how inspiring and motivating we both found it. Wendy has already put into place aspects of reading out loud (while the kids were hanging out the washing!). I am so grateful that you two are doing the work you do, for as a relatively new Christian from a non-Christian family, I have no family role model on which to base such things as daily worship with the family.

Ray Abernethy  
Te Awamatu

**Publications**

Thank you for these wonderful publications and all the great inserts. Have a fantastic '04!

Loran Reid  
Auckland

**Waring Tour**

I've just got home from the Diana Waring seminar in Rotorua (26 January 04) and I have to say for all people's raving, it still isn't high enough praise. Diana certainly has a gift for encouragement, and she uses it exactly as God intended. Anyone who is still wavering about going to the remaining seminars, I can thoroughly recommend it. (And ours was only a single hour!)

Mary  
Rotorua

(Continued from page 22: **Faithful**)

God is. Solid objects remain solid because He faithfully makes them so. Forces function predictably because He makes them do so. Every breath you take, every sense you experience is a gift from God. Enjoy Him. Honour Him. Thank Him.

(Peter van den Brink, MSc, is an analytical chemist at the Wool Research Organistaion in Christchurch. He has been married to Ruth for six and a half years, and they have two children: Jonathan (4) and Hannah (2), whom they plan to home educate. Peter may be contacted at [p.vandenbrink@paradise.net.nz](mailto:p.vandenbrink@paradise.net.nz))

(Continued from page 20: **Ask Now**)

The God of our fathers, the God of the covenant, will not suffer to be forgotten.

(Used with permission. This article originally appeared in *Patriarch Magazine*, copyright 1999. Wesley Strackbein's parents, Roger and Jenny, began home schooling Wesley, the oldest of their seven children, in 1985. Having finished high school studies at home, he spent 1996-7 with the Home School Legal Defense Association near Washington, D.C. Returning to his home state of Texas, Wesley joined Doug Phillips of Vision Forum in San Antonio, where he currently serves as their marketing director.)

Doug & Kate Tamaki

of Rotorua

It was in the beautiful farming country of the Waikato where Doug and Katie met in 1984. It wasn't until years later, after the big OE, that they decided to settle back in good ol' NZ and start a family.

Doug later partnered up with his brother Mike to start a tourism business they called 'Tamaki Tours'. It was a hit with tourists and locals alike, and they began to prosper. The re-branded 'Tamaki Maori Village' won numerous awards both national and international, which gained recognition from media and business sectors alike. A window of opportunity and a determination to succeed saw the Tamaki Group open a new venture in Rotorua and acquire tourism ventures in the South Island.

Business in the Tamaki household is very much a part of the day-to-day teaching of their now fast-growing children: Lyla 15, Ethan 12, Taiwa at 10 and the baby of the family, Tawera, at 5. Doug and Kate have been home schooling their children officially for nine years but have been imparting life skills to their children unofficially since they were babies. Katie found it hard for the first four years, putting together her own curriculum and trying to use a structured classroom situation with desks, workbooks, etc. This approach was probably driven probably by fear, ignorance and old mindsets, resulting in anxiousness about a mountain of information that they felt they were obligated to get through each day.

The timing was certainly right therefore when Kate attended a seminar run by Craig and Barbara Smith which revolutionised her view of home schooling. Now equipped with a vision, inspiration and new ideas, she is back on track. Home education is now enjoyable for the whole family. They spend time around the kitchen table, on the couch or lying on the bed: wherever feels comfortable. Reading good books, memorising Scripture and building good relationships with each other are all part of the routine. The idea is to establish good habits the children will take into adult life, ones they will teach their own children: ie, a daily routine of walking, prayer alone, breakfast & prayer together, read and discuss the bible, sing to the Lord. This is how we try to start each day. Having found this wonderful plan and purpose in teaching and training their children, Doug and Kate now have a passion and desire to see other parents training their children for the high calling of God on their lives. Glory to God!

**Interviewer Genevieve Smith:** Can you tell us about how you, Kate, and Doug became Christians?

**Kate:** I became a Christian about 14 years ago. We were living in Rotoma at the time the process began. The only radio station that I could get in that little farming community was Radio Rhema. And so, at nights, I would listen to the ministers as they gave their talks. One time I remember a minister explaining that you have to give 100% or forget it! Christianity is not

a half-and-half thing. You have to live all for the Lord. I remember this striking a chord with me. Later on I had a rather dark experience one night in bed. I sensed a dark feeling of something evil clouding over me, telling me lies. I remember saying, "I've got Jesus," as a defence against what I was hearing. Immediately, the shadow dissipated. In the morning as I was thinking back over the experience, I wondered where I got that from! Why had I claimed Jesus at a point of fear in my life? I wasn't raised that way! I guess it was the Lord working in my life to bring me to a point of salvation. When Lyla was about five months old, Doug's brother encouraged me to have her dedicated. He was ministering in a Church in Rotorua. I decided to do that and it was during the dedication service that I really gave my heart to the Lord and my standing as a child of God became official!

Doug became a Christian seven years ago. He used to ask all the time, "But if God is real, why doesn't He show me?" He was looking for tangible evidence. At one point Doug went along to hear Barry Smith. He specializes in speaking on the end times and the tangible work of God in the world. It was just what Doug needed to hear at the time. He didn't give his heart then though. Later on he had a series of dreams. They were of Doug and I standing on the beach at the coming of the Lord. The first time he dreamed the dream, seeing Jesus coming on a cloud, I went up to be with Jesus on the cloud, but Doug couldn't even look. The second time he dreamed the dream, I went up, and he could see, but he couldn't go. The third time he could go. During this time my cell group was meeting in my house. Doug was working during the evenings, but he would often catch the end of the meetings. One night he came home and gave his heart to the Lord while in bed. It was on his birthday. Now his physical birth is on the same day as his spiritual birth.

Doug says that when friends asked him about his decision to become a Christian, what touched him was not ever anything I said so much but the way that I lived. I never preached at him. To hear him say that after he became a Christian was an answer to prayer! I had purposed not to pressure him. I sought the Lord, fasted and prayed regularly. I surrendered it all to the Lord so that I wouldn't be a hindrance in Doug's coming to the Lord. It had to be a decision he made because he wanted to, not because I wanted him to.

**Genevieve:** Your style of teaching has changed over the years from following a school model to being more relaxed. You've said you still put together your own curriculum. What materials or resources have you used and found really helpful?

**Kate:** I use the Bible - a lot! And for many different subjects! Memory work: it is the Bible. Writing: it is the Bible! We memorise passages and copy verses from Scripture. It has been great to just immerse our-

(Continued on page 29: **Tamaki**)

## KEYSTONE

is the Journal of  
Christian Home Schoolers of New Zealand.  
It is read by subscribers in New Zealand,  
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Canada, 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: keystone.teach@xtra.co.nz

www.HomeEducationFoundation.org.nz

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

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

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

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

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

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

Consequently, the children grow up *in spite* of the parents, with little reference to them, their convictions, their plans, and worst of all, their responsibility before God to be responsible for their children. Is this what we want for our children. No!

Tom Eldredge in *Safely Home*<sup>1</sup> says about schools: "It is time for Christian leaders to re-examine the Word of God to discover what He has revealed regarding the education and training of children. We can no longer continue to adopt what we have learned about efficiency in our factories to the training of our children. We have developed a thirteen-year program [public schools] run by professionals and specialists in which children experience a routine of ever-changing, superficial relationships with teachers and classmates. This program teaches children some hidden messages: that no one really cares and that their life in this world is a survival-of-the fittest type existence. When these children become adults they naturally expect to experience the same types of shallow relationships."

We did not want our children to grow up as we did in these superficial and shallow relationships. After Genevieve's comment about interpersonal relationships and discussing the need to work on relationships as a family, she said the priority there was knowing one's own children. As we evaluated our family relationships, which we reckon are pretty good on the whole, we realised that we don't really know our children as well as we would like. In fact, we'd say, we don't know them the way we *should*: that to properly shepherd our children and have their hearts as the writer of Proverbs constantly urges, we needed to have been maintaining a close walk with them day by day. The fact that we are with them nearly 24 hours a day, seven days a week doesn't mean we know them that well. It is something we specifically need to be working on daily from when they are little. We need to listen: when they read a book, they want to tell us every detail. We need to listen like it is the first time we heard it. We need to be discussing with them many of the things going on in *our* day. Then keep doing that when they get older. Genevieve invited us to ask all sorts of questions of her and her siblings on an ongoing basis, so we would learn all about them and what they are thinking. We need to be their best friends, not like when a parent tries to be up on all the latest teeny-bopper stuff, hoping to connect with the child in that way. We parents should be the older-wiser confidant to whom our children look first for advice because they are so comfortable and trusting of us, knowing we always have time for them and have few higher priorities than them. This starts when they are little. If your TV or newspaper or hobbies take up the prime time, and you often say you're too busy with them when your child wants your attention, they'll learn a lot sooner than you think that these things are for you higher priorities than they are. Don't let that happen! It takes constant vigilance. If you feel maybe too much water has already gone under the bridge and your children are getting older, then just begin asking questions. It is never too late. Yes, it's hard! Neither of us had any such close, warm relationships with any of our parents or siblings. We have had a hard time coming to grips with this. By God's grace our children are willing and wanting close relations, so

as Craig especially began to turn his heart to the children, their hearts began to turn to him. (Malachi 4:6, Luke 1:17) What a joy to have our children wanting to have such a close relationship with us! But it takes work. We believe most children are crying out for better relationships with their parents – and that many times they do this via acts of incredible rebellion and apparent lunacy.....they are dramatic — and desperate — calls for attention. We parents need to do the drawing out, we need to take the initiative.

How can we add all of this to our lives as well as the things mentioned in previous articles! We will just stress out, crash and burn! Well, no, not necessarily. Not if we take a total new look at how we do things.

Our interest in Classical Education led us to the Blue-dorns, www.triviumpursuit.com, authors of *Teaching the Trivium*. Their definition of Classical for the Christian includes anything that is *of good form and lasting value, and which conforms to a Biblical standard within a Biblical worldview*. We noticed a difference between them and other Classical enthusiasts. The difference was the way in which they looked at the ancient Classical Greek writings. Many don't conform to a Biblical standard within a Biblical worldview; that is, they're too pagan, too vile and too perverted for mixed company, let alone our children. The Bluedorn's perspective led us to investigate this further.

Tom Eldredge in *Safely Home* points out that the first conflict in recorded history was a battle over education. God was building a relationship with Adam and Eve. It was not quick enough for them. They took a short cut to knowledge, sacrificing their relationship with God. Eldredge says: *Since then, Satan has never forgotten that man tends to sacrifice relationship for knowledge...We are so efficiency-minded today that we leave little time for things in life that take time: things like relationships, discipling our children and helping others...Our failure in the educational world exists because we have failed to understand the importance of relationships: relationships with God, relationships in the family, and relationships within the local Church.*

*In many respects, the gymnasium [Classical Greek schooling system] became the antithesis of the biblical and Hebraic approach to education. Where Hebrew education had stressed learning in the context of family relationships, multi-generational training, and the fear of the Lord as the beginning of wisdom and knowledge, Greek education and the establishment of the gymnasium emphasized the development of the child as a creature of the state who finds his identity as an individual, not a member of a family...Traditional Hebrew education with its emphasis on a reverence for God, familial relationships, holiness, humility, and moral development was the very antithesis of the Greek ideal, with its deification of reason and its glorification of the body. The Hellenization of the Jews contributed to cultural downfall and judgment. The hearts of children turned from their parents.*

*The Greek system only worked by removing children from their parents and handing them over to experts who were responsible for guiding the next genera-*



# Over A Cuppa



## Keeping Going When the Going Gets Tough — Part 8

by Craig & Barbara Smith

“*Be still, and know that I am God.*” – Psalm 46:10. How are we going with being still like this? We have had the holidays – a good opportunity to take some extended time alone with God to think on the year ahead. I had some forced time on my hands after an operation and nearly two months of recuperation just after I wrote part 7 for the November 2003 issue of *Keystone*. I had a wonderful time in the Psalms! I made all sorts of promises to myself that I would keep up these wonderful extended times with the Lord in His word after my recuperation finished. But, well, you know how it is....I got busy...isn’t life like that? We have to ruthlessly **make the time** to “*Be still*”, set it as a priority and take the time from some other activity. This is really tough. And that is what this series of articles is about: how to keep going when the going gets tough. Our first article touched lightly on the need for us to plan for time alone with God each day. We had three articles on dealing with marriage difficulties and one on child discipline. We explored the need for each of us to be readers and how to be effective readers, and then we looked at what we should be reading and some guidelines to help us to be discerning readers.

So how do we make more time for the important things in our lives? In part 7 we looked at Support Groups and our involvement in the local Church. This time we want to explore other areas in our lives and see if we are doing the best with our time and talents.

Some of us work really hard and appear to get great results in our home education. Some of us work just as hard and appear to get fewer results. Stop looking at each other! Let us instead examine, first, what results are we actually aiming for; second, how focussed we are on getting them; and, third, what distractions are hampering us. We all struggle over various curriculum, different philosophies of education, marriage difficulties, discipline problems, etc. We desperately *need* to find ways to keep going when the going gets tough.

When Craig and I began home schooling, we created a wee school in our home which even included a teacher’s desk. We used a variety of curriculum until we discovered more by accident that the children loved us to read all sorts of books to them. They also loved to have long discussions around the dinner table and getting extra time with us. That is, even though we were with them all day, they wanted their own individual one-to-one time. So Craig started getting up earlier each morning, investing individual time with a different child each day of the week. They all loved it! We also realised that when we interacted with our children

rather than leaving them to interact with books on their own, we got far greater results.

So we morphed through three different educational philosophies: schooling at home, curriculum centred and delight directed, our family’s favourite. Craig actually mis-read the article he had on “Delight Directed” learning: he thought it meant whatever delighted *him* would direct what he taught the children. The official version said what delighted the child should direct the studies. Craig reckons he developed a new philosophy of Home Education! You know why our children loved this approach? We reckon it was because they loved to study the things their Mum and Dad were interested in, just like the toddlers who want to play with *your* pots and pans, papers and pens, rather than *their* bright expensive toys.....because they see and sense your far greater interest in the pots and pans than in their toys.

Later we became interested in character training, thinking that this was the most important aspect of home education. We were telling this to Genevieve, our then 22-year-old daughter, shortly after she arrived home from the States in December 2002. But she said, “No, the most important aspect of education after learning to fear God is **interpersonal relationships**. When we looked back on our 19 years of home education, we saw that the most enjoyable times, the times our children remember the most, the times when our input was most effective, were the times we majored on one-to-one interaction. Now this isn’t rocket science: we’ve heard it all before, but we get to thinking and worrying about and stressing over all the “work” the children “should” be producing (we’re not sure for whom) and all the “school work” we think we should be doing with them. So we do the bookwork, etc., rather than just sit and talk or play games or simply enjoy some unstructured time together because the bookwork / formal teaching scenario appears a better use of time. We now suspect most of us think this way only because we underestimate or give no value at all to the quality of our interpersonal relationships *with* the children and *among* the children. These relationships need work, for both maintenance and improvement....just like our marriages do. We should be making time for each child just as we should be doing with our spouse.

We used to let our children go to the normal range of things like youth groups, sports clubs, etc. But we had to ask the question, “Who has the personal relationship with our children?” Some children, especially those who go to school, really have no-one training them as in Deuteronomy 6 and Proverbs 22:6, not even their parents. Some children go to school, Sunday School, Youth Group, Children’s clubs, ATC, Catechism, sports practice, the neighbours, watch a bit of TV/ Videos each day. The parents get the time left over, usually when the children are rushing in the mornings and tired at night. Many of these clubs and the schools give out homework and practise exercises. So by the time the homework is done, there is no personal time for parents with their children. In fact, when the children go to all of these activities, no one person or authority has responsibility for the overall training of the children or building strong relationships with them.

# The Faith of Us Fathers



## Compulsory Schooling is Not a Christian Concept

by Craig Smith

Men, we need to understand many things in order to lead our families aright. Elijah condemned the Israelites of his day for faltering between two opinions (I Kings 18:21), and James condemns double-minded men who apparently do nothing more than harbour some doubts (James 1:6-8)! From a simple pragmatic point of view, if we don’t have a firm grasp of issues with which we deal everyday, issues that define and greatly affect our daily lives, we may find ourselves pushed by circumstances in directions we do not want to go simply because we cannot muster a clear argument against doing so.

The concept of “compulsory state education” is one such issue. It forced us to coin a name for ourselves (home educators, home schoolers, home-based learners or whatever we are) and to appear to others to be a tiny minority fringe group. “Compulsory education” has assumed the defining benchmark position against which all things else are measured. If one is not part of the compulsory school scene, one is “outside the system”, not operating along normally accepted lines. In NZ we need to approach the Ministry of Education in order to gain an “exemption” from the “normal” state of affairs, which is compulsory attendance at a registered school.<sup>1</sup>

Further, compulsory education is of necessity defined as state education, organised and run and funded by a centralised civil government, for they alone have the legitimate power to *compel* school attendance. The law of the land is enforced by the police and the armed forces. That is their legitimate role, as we see in Romans 13. But this same chapter tells us that civil governments are to carry out only two functions: reward those who do right and punish those who do wrong. “Right” and “wrong” are also defined in the Scriptures, and providing children with an education is not part of these definitions. Education is primarily reserved for parents, fathers in particular (Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Ephesians 6:4), with a secondary role for the church (Nehemiah 8:2-8, Ephesians 4:11-13).

History clearly shows that when civil governments take over a social responsibility that is not part of their Biblically defined role, they create more of the problem they were set up to solve. State schools were going to close down the prisons and eliminate crime. Have they? No. Prisons are full to bursting. Three times as many police in NZ were stabbed in 2003 as in 2002. Unemployment benefits were going to help people back into work. They have created permanently unemployed, people now dependent on these benefits. Sex education to curb teen pregnancies and STDs has caused both to skyrocket.

State education has seen the overall educational level of the entire population go into free-fall, including the occurrence of genius and child prodigies.

It is becoming increasingly hard to deny that today’s state schools resemble prisons. One can find barbed wire fences, remote cameras, floodlights, metal detectors, security officers and ID cards students must swipe here and there as they move around campus. It is all for the safety and security of the students and school property, we are told. Let me get this straight: the students are being kept safe at *public schools* from hoodlums and society at large, almost all of whom are *public school* graduates??! Well, I’m not be surprised when the children start to behave like inmates or people under siege and the teachers like prison guards or crowd-control security agents. Actually, this guard-inmate relationship has been in place for many decades already. Two Palmerston North newspaper journalists wrote this month describing schools in this city back in the 1950s and 1960s:

Mervyn Dykes wrote: “The deputy principle had a line of boys waiting outside the prefects’ room to be caned. At the end of the line was a little third former who became increasingly agitated as the line shortened in front of him. ‘Sir, I...’ ‘Shut up!’ He was grabbed and hauled into the room. Whack! Whack! ‘But sir, I only wanted to buy a monogram for my blazer.’”

Tina White wrote: “They all graduated from teachers’ college with an LTS – Licence to Strap. The rule was, if you did something wrong, you got punished. End of story. Unfortunately there were times when they got the wrong person, and if you talked back, trying to explain, you’d just get a couple of extra whacks for good measure.”<sup>2</sup>

The concept of compulsory education has an almost totally unperceived stranglehold on everyone whose ever been through the system. Occasionally I hear long-time home educators say something that shocks me to the core. “If we didn’t have a compulsory school system, how would all those children who wouldn’t otherwise attend ever get an education?” We need to be clear about some basic elements of compulsory state schooling:

### Schooling Is Not Education

The real question is, “How will all those children who *are* compelled to attend state schools ever get an education?” That which is dispensed by state schools is “schooling”: it is not at all the same as “education”. The two things barely have any overlap. Forcing children to attend school is not giving them an education....well, certainly not the useful academic kind we all like to think they’re getting (see “Secular Education Is Not Education” section below). Being schooled for 10 years does not guarantee children will learn anything useful at all. It can only guarantee two things: that the children “do their time” and that they’ll be consistently exposed to the highly-prized state school brand of socialisation. Just as in state prisons, school inmates are training the other inmates in the arts associated with being street-



wise. That is precisely the socialisation from which we home educators fled so gladly in the first place. What about the bullying, the drugs, the finger signs, the attitudes, the porn-behind-the-bikesheds, the negative peer pressure, the “dummy” or “weirdo” labels from teachers and fellow pupils alike that follow children all through school? Why do some of us who should know better ever wish it on other people’s children?

Research is clear that children who do well at school do so because their parents are totally supportive at home, so much so they might as well home educate and miss all the junk which forms the “hidden curriculum” of every school institution.

### Secular Education Is Not Education

The Education Act’s Section 77 says of state primary schools, “The teaching shall be entirely of a secular character,” which means “without any form of religious instruction or observance”. The Lord God above, His Son Jesus Christ, “in Whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Colossians 2:3) and the Holy Scriptures are obviously banned from the classroom. Since it is the *fool* who says in his heart, “There is no God” (Psalm 14:1, Psalm 53:1), what are we to think of the state school classroom teacher who embraces that very philosophy in order to *teach others*? Since it is the fear of the Lord which is the *beginning* of knowledge and wisdom (Job 28:28, Psalm 111:10, Proverbs 1:7, Proverbs 9:10, Proverbs 15:33), and since the Lord is officially banned from the classroom, where does that put the *best* which secular schooling has to offer on the scale of true knowledge, wisdom and understanding?

### Compulsory Means Control

Compulsory schooling is a method of control and social engineering. Why are most of us parents so slow to admit this, when the bureaucrats count on it and speak of it freely in their literature and to the media? Dr Colin Knight, past principal of Christchurch College of Education, lamented the social, emotional and intellectual damage being done to children due to unresearched, government-decreed practices in schools. He said changes in what went on in schools were mainly brought about by politically initiated reviews and reports on questionnaires and Gallup polls, by parliamentary debate and political expediency.<sup>3</sup> “What I would like to see in the political debate about education,” declared PPTA past president Phillip Capper, “is a recognition that public education is an exercise in social engineering by definition.”<sup>4</sup>

### Control Is the Creed of Communism

Communism has proven to be the most evil and destructive social/economic/political system ever yet devised by the mind of man. Its anti-Christian architects, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, insisted in their *Communist Manifesto* that compulsory, state-funded, secular schooling was one of the essential ten points for the political takeover of communism throughout the world.

For communism to succeed, they needed to strictly censor all media, which the former communist countries did by pulling down the “iron curtain” in Eastern Europe and the former USSR and by pulling down the

“bamboo curtain” in China. They needed to simultaneously pump the citizens full of communist world view propaganda and forbid the teaching of contrary views. This they did via compulsory schooling, where students were encouraged to revile the ideas and religious beliefs of their parents and grandparents and even to turn them in to the authorities should these oldies dare to disagree with any pronouncement of those paragons of wisdom and virtue, Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Khrushchev, Pol Pot, etc.

### Divide and Conquer

By severing the children from their parents and breaking the monopoly parents naturally have over their children’s affections and character development – which includes attitudes and values (see next paragraph below) – state schools have proven to be very efficient at delivering a peer-dependent, malleable population who do as they are told with a minimum of objection. Politicians world-wide and of every political persuasion (except consistent libertarians) have seen the benefits such a schooling system can have for their particular cause. In New Zealand, a past Undersecretary of Trade and Industry, Mr Neilson, publicised a six-point plan of his, point three of which was the introduction of “peace studies” into the schools to help ensure future voters would look upon Labour as “the natural party of Government.”<sup>5</sup>

### The State Pushes Attitudes & Values

An MoE document titled “Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” was introduced by Lockwood Smith when he was Minister of Education back in 1990. Right there, on page 21 for all to see, is the statement that the purpose of state schooling is to ensure the students develop the “attitudes and values” (as well as knowledge, skills and understandings) that they’ll need for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Lovely words. But since when does a secular, politically guided and tax-payer funded body ever have the competence to determine which attitudes and values anyone’s children should have? Assuming the readers here are Christians, surely we all agree that such state organisations don’t even get near the ballpark as far as the attitudes and values we want for our children are concerned. This is clearly, obviously a grab for mind control and social engineering at its most blatant.

And let us not think this was some aberration that occurred 14 years ago which has since righted itself. Let me quote the current Minister of Education, Trevor Mallard, from a speech he made in July 2000 at the launch of the UNESCO and Living Values Trust “Values Education” seminars: “*Whether we like it or not* schools and teachers have a strong influence on the developing values of young people, and they have that influence *whether they plan to or not*. We have to acknowledge that all people live by a set of values and that *there is certainly no such thing as value neutrality in education*. It is not an easy thing to meet the *obligation* to include attitudes and values as an integral part of the New Zealand curriculum.” (Emphases added.)

of atomic particles.

Question #7 is one of the most clear, concise and comprehensively anti-Christian comments you’re ever likely to read. Where is the source of meaning, of purpose? We cannot control any aspect of our personal beings<sup>2</sup>; therefore, to grasp at least an illusion of being in charge of his own destiny, the humanist reserves *to himself alone* the power to impart meaning to his existence. Again, he attempts to do this by fiat. Haunted by the drive for meaning which God wires into him; able to recognise and articulate the dilemma of ascertaining the meaning and purpose of all that is seen around him, using the God-given intellectual capacity to do so yet without acknowledging the Designer/Creator/Sustainer who gave it to him; identifying and isolating the core issue of authority which God has built into the universe, that he who imparts ultimate meaning and purpose is he who will also wield ultimate authority, and desiring that authority for himself; all of this reveals that the humanist must rely totally and completely on God even while he is climbing up onto God’s lap in order to slap Him in the face.

Secular humanists are losers. They hold to a totally bankrupt worldview. Yet such folks are running our Parliament, financial institutions, hospitals, museums, libraries, all forms of media, the schools and universities. These same folks have captured many theological seminaries and today occupy far too many pulpits and pews throughout the country.

Sadly, some of the most able Christians, working hard to understand a Christian worldview and to bring it to bear on the political and social systems of this country, are whipping the carpet out from under their own feet in that while they try to think Biblically in formulating their worldviews, they insist on “speaking secularly” into the public arena. This neatly trims off *God’s* voice of ultimate authority, that *He is the moral force* behind their pronouncements, that their research statistics reflect *His determination* of how reality will operate, that they try to base all their working assumptions *upon His revealed word* in the Bible: that is, right at the point where such acknowledgement is most essential, when it is introduced into the marketplace, they reduce His word and His wisdom to just another human voice in the marketplace.

Question #1 also needs to be read along with the final paragraph. Notice that the writers cannot comprehend how a consistent Christian could willingly consider new evidence or learn more about life on earth, for such knowledge might cause the believer to change his beliefs. They must see Christianity as a stagnant body of propositions and statements. Further, it seems they believe that should Christians allow their faith to be exposed to open investigation or to allow themselves to investigate “new evidence of any kind....in every field of human thought and behaviour” no consistent believers would be left!

These humanists have made at least two hugely erroneous assumptions regarding the Faith. It is more accurate to say they’ve exposed their ignorance of the nature of Christianity (and of philosophy, logic, epistemology and the scientific method). First, the Faith is not a stag-

nant body of propositions whose integrity would be compromised and probably damaged beyond repair by the introduction of “new evidence” from wherever. The essentials of the Faith are composed of both propositions that cannot be proved (but must be accepted by faith) as well as historical facts. In the first category are the existence of God, His omniscience and omnipotence, His inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, our everlasting souls in need of salvation, hell and the coming judgment. Historical facts include the Fall, the Flood, the virgin birth, Jesus’ death on the cross, His resurrection, His ascension and fulfilled prophecies. New evidence properly interpreted (see next point) will always eventually serve to further confirm and further elucidate the propositions and the historical facts.

Second, a Biblical worldview is not threatened by “new evidence”; instead it interprets the evidence according to its own presuppositions. The humanists do exactly the same. That is, a piece of evidence comes along, and the humanists will interpret it as something which supports their position while simultaneously mitigating against Christianity. This same piece of evidence is interpreted by Christians as supporting the faith while at the same time undercutting humanism.

For example, the fossil tooth upon which the entire story of “Nebraska Man”, a supposedly humanoid forerunner of modern man found in North America, turns out to be a pig’s tooth. This evidence, say the humanists, goes to show that truth is always self-correcting, new evidence giving rise to a new and more accurate picture of reality. It does not disprove materialistic, Darwinian evolution but only illustrates the fact that a free flow and exchange of information and ideas will produce an ever-more-useful picture of the data. The Nebraska Man scenario was useful for a time, but the positive pig’s tooth identification is even more useful in closing down dead-end and ultimately fruitless areas of postulation, research and investigation. The Biblical worldview, on the other hand, says that a fossil tooth will either be that of human or some non-human animal, probably pre-flood. For experienced researchers to mis-identify a pig’s tooth and, further, to use this one tooth alone to construct full-sized models of male and female “Nebraska Men”, complete with excess body hair, sloped foreheads and heavy lower jaws is to demonstrate an excessively confident pre-commitment to evolution when no corroborating information exists.

In addition they fail to recognise their own reliance on a set of basic assumptions accepted by faith, such as: the material world is all there is, existence ceases at death or that Darwinian evolution is random yet ever onward and upward. The humanists’ claim that, being materialists, they alone are able to assimilate *any* new evidence — even contradictory or mutually-exclusive “evidence” — shows that their overall philosophy is ultimately indefinable. Because it holds to no absolutes or unchanging truths, it can offer no sure answers.

### Note:

1. While God alone is infinite, our souls are everlasting.
2. I have some choice over where I live, but not that I am alive; I have some choice over what I eat but not that I need to eat; I can have a bit of influence on my future, but my past is totally out of my reach.

only two worldviews. One emanates from the mind of God the Creator. The other, of which there are thousands of variations, emanates from the mind of man the creature. The two worldviews simply are not on the same planet!! Our one is bound by the fact that we are created, finite<sup>1</sup> and human, that we are made from the dust of the earth on which we walk. God’s one is outside of and totally, utterly separate from ours since He is uncreated, infinite and divine. In fact, we humans are but a tiny portion of God’s total worldview, for we ourselves originally emanated from His omniscient mind. In His grace and love and mercy to us humans, He has revealed all He reckons we need to know about His worldview (but not about the world) in the Bible.

Now just to show you how totally different the two worldviews are and even how perverse, arrogant and 180 degrees wrong humans get it, a common thread running through the thousands of human worldviews, showing that they are all ultimately one worldview, says that God is an emanation from the mind of man!! (The reality, of course, is that man is an emanation from the mind of God.) Now the variations on this theme go from those who say God in His totality is a figment of human imagination to those who actually honour and seek to submit to Him, yet who still project onto Him some attribute the Scriptures never say He has. The humanist who wrote these eight questions clearly espouses this kind of warped thinking: see his questions #2, #3, #7 and #8. The two worldviews are at their cores inverses of one another, antagonistic and mutually exclusive.

In the final paragraph he makes it sound as if humanists are seekers after truth, willing to consider things even if they lead to changes in their most cherished beliefs. Yet questions #3 and #8 demonstrate that regularly *changing* what they believe is an essential part of their belief system. They do not believe in *unchanging* propositional truth; they do not believe in absolutes. They like the idea that things change from time to time, for that gives them two things all sinners want above all else. First, a measure of control over what goes on in their own and others’ lives. Since change is a constant, they can instigate change whenever they like, large scale or small scale, from personal likes and dislikes right through to what constitutes right and wrong. The NZ Parliament is engaged in such macro-change at the moment by legitimising the prostitution industry and redefining bedrock concepts such as marriage and family to mean virtually any *ad hoc* arrangement or liaison. This is all totally deceptive, since they cannot change the essential reality of anything — for reality was created and set once for all by God — but only how they think about it! Second, the idea of constant change eliminates the possibility, theoretically at least (not in reality, of course), of ever having to give an account of themselves, of being held ultimately responsible, because the parameters keep shifting.

Being one’s own boss. Never being held accountable. This is a fool’s paradise, for it can only exist if God does not. This is the world the humanist hopes in and by faith believes in. He is at his most pathetic when he believes he can call such a world into existence simply by saying it does. As with trying to be their own

autonomous boss, and to never be called to account, this too is an attempt to copy God, to be like Him, to supplant His authority over the earth with their own authority. God created the world by fiat; that is, His all-powerful Word, when spoken, called into existence things which did not exist. Not content with such mere creative powers, the humanist attempts to work far greater changes. He would call his version of reality into existence *as well as cause* the *extinction* of the infinite, omniscient, omnipotent God of all the universe....and all by his simple humanistic fiat word.

It is interesting that this humanist tries to entice us with the mysterious question, “Have you been a humanist without knowing it?” Well, the scary bit is that ever since the Fall in the Garden of Eden, *humanism has been the default position* of all us humans! We are all *already* humanists....the question for us Christians is: having been redeemed from the Pit by the blood of the Lamb, born again by the Sprit of God, given a new heart and a new mind and adopted as His children, “Are we still thinking and functioning like humanists?” when we should be thinking and functioning as Christians with a thoroughly Biblical worldview.

Think about your own position. Have you ever worked to un-learn the humanist ways you picked up from the secular school system, the secular society all around you, possibly the secular home and family life you may have grown up in and the fallen stuff which comes out of your own sinful heart? Not all secular humanist ways are blatant. II Corinthians 11:3 indicates things can be very subtle: “But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.” And the classic warning of I Corinthians 10:12 must be remembered at all times: “Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.” For one of the defining characteristics of our sinful natures, of which we will not be fully rid until we reach Glory in heaven, is deceitfulness (Jeremiah 17:9, Ephesians 4:22, Hebrews 3:13, James 1:22).

Have you worked to adopt thoroughly Biblical understandings of various aspects of your life? Over the years we have critically examined our taste in music, humour, reading and viewing material, recreational activities, how we handle our finances, family devotions, the neighbours, our attitude toward Sunday and the Fourth Commandment and especially educational and child rearing/child discipline issues. It would also be a profitable exercise to regularly evaluate ourselves to see if we can identify areas of our lives where we have changed, where we have moved closer to a more consistently Biblical position.

Let’s look at these eight questions: I reckon Christians can answer “Yes” to #1 and #5 without hesitation and have a fair amount of sympathy with #4. Questions #2 and #3 are clearly anti-Christian. Question #6 is typical of a troubled mind unwilling to accept that we humans are at the pinnacle of creation, for the thought that in this position more responsibility is heaped upon us and more accountability will be required of us is simply too frightening to contemplate. Question #8 reveals the materialistic nature of humanists, unwilling to get serious about life if it is only the random bumping around

## Loss of Authority and Responsibility

Compulsory schooling raises the question, “Who’s in charge here? Who’s responsible for children’s education?” When parents have had the authority and responsibility for their children’s education *forcibly* removed from them, there will be serious consequences downstream. We home educators sometimes fail to see or even comprehend these next points, for we have made the effort to obtain exemptions from compulsory schooling so that we may go to the *extra* effort of fully educating our children: that is, *we* got the authority and responsibility for our children’s education *back* from the state. We, therefore, do not suffer these consequences.

So what are the consequences of losing this authority and responsibility to the state? Are the consequences really so bad? Well, just think about it for a moment. If you are no longer responsible, why would you expend more than the minimum effort to think and plan and do anything for the children? Schools and teachers are the *professionals*, not like those slovenly parents, who hardly spend any time with the kids and only complain about it when they do, wishing fifth birthdays and the end of holidays would come sooner than they do. And it makes good economic sense to herd all the kids into one place, does it not: division of labour, economies of scale and all that? Teachers teach; we parents need only feed and water them and get them to school, the place of learning, on time. Even if parents wanted to impart something to the kids, it had better not contradict or cause confusion in regards to the school programme. It would also have to be done when the kids are at home and when parents are not overly committed or exhausted from their involvements outside the family. And the fact is, these outside involvements grow and overshadow concerns for the children since children are rarely home anyway and are under the care of *professionals*....so who needs to worry?

Some parents, themselves graduates of the state school system, worry so little they never quite get the knack of even feeding and watering the kids. So schools now provide breakfasts and lunches for growing numbers, matching the growing sense among parents that since they don’t have to be responsible for education or social training or dental care, hey, why be responsible for feeding all the time? And then we find that a growing number of parents are also leaving to the “professionals” the responsibility for really basic training. I am referring here to toilet training, hygiene, dress, grooming, speech and basic social graces. All those other emotional and psychological needs of children, what the schools refer to as “pastoral needs”: sex and sexuality education, drug education, grief/stress/loneliness counselling, etc., are also provided for at school by careers and guidance counsellors, social workers and those wonderful experts from the Family Planning Association and the AIDS Foundation.<sup>6</sup>

The schools actually use the phrase “pastoral needs”....as in pastor, minister, priest of a church. Slowly but surely the truth is coming out of the closet: the official “secular” philosophy of state schools is another religion: that of secular humanism, one opposed to virtually every tenet of Christianity. It is hard to understand how

we got into this position: Christians are not only required by law to send their children to be instructed in this foreign religion five days a week, but through compulsory taxation, they are even made to pay for the subversion of their own children. The worst part is that many “Christian” parents are exceedingly happy about how well their children are doing in the enemy’s camp. They don’t see the issues.

## Conflicting Authorities

When children perceive they have conflicting authority figures over them — the teacher(s) at school and the parents at home — what are they to do? I recall that many of my peers at school told *their parents* (not the teachers) where to go. They became sullen and rebellious, “turning on, tuning in and dropping out” as we said back then. But nobody worried too much for, as all the experts told us, rebellion is a natural part of the turbulent teen years.<sup>7</sup> I personally developed a split personality and became a master of deceit really, being one kind of person at school and a totally different kind at home. Most kids fell into one of these two groups. Why would we say such consequences are not so bad, especially when many of us home educators have discovered that, once outside the school system and away from the peer pressure of the playground, the classroom and the youth group, teen rebellion just plain fails to materialise? I’m not saying teen rebellion is a myth: it is a serious condition. But it is one brought on by institutional schooling situations and the malady spawned by these institutions: parental abdication.

## Abdication or Meddling

If MoE bureaucrats are not competent to map out my children’s educational, social and pastoral needs....and as far as this writer is concerned, they definitely are not.... and if these same bureaucrats ought not to be doing so in a compulsory way....and this writer also believes they most definitely ought not....then how can any of us come out with statements in favour of compulsory schooling for those children who, we opine, “wouldn’t otherwise get an education”? Yes, there are incompetent, irresponsible, dead-beat parents out there: and more are being raised up every year due to the previous generation of incompetent parents, compulsory dumbed-down schooling and welfare dependency. For these folks the churches need to re-gain *their* Biblical calling: that of providing social welfare services through the deacons’ committees. The church needs to take the government in this area back away from the state. In assuming this role to itself, the state has created a growing social welfare dependency problem. Not all parents are drongoes: if most had to see to the education of their own children in the absence of a state schooling system, they would: just as they did for thousands of years before compulsory state schooling appeared less than 200 years ago.

What is the real problem, the one we’re thinking about when we say we should hang onto compulsory schooling for those kids who wouldn’t otherwise go to school? It is the usual: sinful hearts wanting to abdicate their own responsibilities on the one hand and meddle in responsibilities not their own on the other. People want convenience first and foremost: Dr John Clark,

(Continued on page 30: *Compulsory*)



# Bits of Books

## Christ and Civilization, Part 2

by John W. Robbins



### War and Peace

The pagan world was not peaceful. Athens, usually considered one of the most peaceful of the Greek city-states, was at war more than two years out of every three between the Persian Wars and 338 B.C., when Philip of Macedon was defeated. The following three centuries were even worse. Athens never enjoyed ten consecutive years of peace.

Livy (b. 59BC, d. AD17) reports that the Roman Republic was at peace only twice in its entire history, once at the end of the First Punic War in the mid-third century B.C. and once in 30 B.C. after Augustus' defeat of Antony and Cleopatra. War was a way of life in the ancient world.

In the opening pages of *the Laws*, Plato makes Clinias say that "what most men call peace is merely an appearance; in reality all cities are by nature in a permanent state of undeclared war against all other cities." But in his dialogues Plato depicts a sanitized Athens of intellectuals discoursing on philosophical questions, strolling about the city, eating and drinking from house to house.

"Plato's dialogues portray Athens in vivid detail, as a world of young and godlike intellectuals meeting in private houses for conversation or social drinking, strolling in suburban parks or walking down to the Piraeus for a festival, listening to famous visitors skilled in rhetoric or philosophy from all over Greece.... (This is exactly the picture I always had and was fed during my schooling in the 1950s and 1960s in California: it was a picture held up as an ideal to which we mere mortals should aspire. – Ed.) Yet for most of the time which Plato describes, Athens was fighting a long and bloody war in which at least half the population died, many of them from a particularly horrifying plague which scarred even those who survived it, and which was partly the consequence of the unsanitary conditions in which vast numbers of citizens were camped, at first in the heat of summer and later all year, on every available space of open or sacred land within the city walls. In reality travel was dangerous and very much restricted; and the way down to the Piraeus must have been as filthy, as stinking, and as crowded as the slums of Calcutta."<sup>1</sup>

As for Rome, "In the half century of the Hannibalic and Macedonian Wars, ten percent and often more of all adult Italian males were at war year by year, a ratio that rose during the wars of the first century B.C. to one in every three males."

Finley traces the prevalence of warfare in the ancient

world to pagan religion:

"Neither the enormously powerful Roman Mars nor the weaker Greek Ares received the slightest competition from the minor divinities of peace. It was always assumed that divine support was available for a war.... [T]he gods through their oracles and signs [never] recommended peace for its own sake..."<sup>2</sup>

It is revealing that despite perpetual war in Greece and Rome, war was neither the title nor topic of a single ancient philosophical treatise. The Pax Romana during the first two centuries of the Christian era, although an improvement from earlier centuries, was punctuated by wars on the Empire's frontiers and the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, with the loss of an estimated one to two million lives.

### Economics, Slavery and Work

At the time of Christ, the population of Roman Italy comprised an estimated five to six million free citizens and one to two million slaves. Many slaves worked the mines of the Roman Empire, and they were sometimes forced to live below ground until they died. Slaves were forbidden to marry, and the power of masters over their slaves was absolute. The castes of Roman society—slaves, plebeians, notables, and nobles—were not so rigid at the time of Christ as they had been in earlier centuries, but Roman society remained radically unequal.

The Republic and Empire's military conquests resulted in the influx of hundreds of thousands of slaves to Rome. These slaves were used not only for work but also for entertainment in the gladiatorial contests that both high and low loved to attend. The enthusiasm of the Romans for gladiatorial gore both produced and reflected a savage desire for and delight in the infliction of pain. Thousands of slaves died entertaining the Romans. Because they were vivid expressions of the cruelty and will to rule of the Roman elite, the gladiatorial "games" were part of the official celebration of the Emperor in every large city.

Apart from the gladiatorial combats, "numerous acts of the most odious barbarity were committed: Flaminius ordering a slave to be killed to gratify, by the spectacle, the curiosity of a guest;... Vedius Pollio feeding his fish on the flesh of slaves;... Augustus sentencing a slave, who had killed and eaten a favorite quail, to crucifixion.... Old and infirm slaves were constantly exposed to perish on an island of the Tiber".<sup>3</sup>

Slavery was not only the ubiquitous practice of the pagan world, it was the theory as well. The best and brightest of the Greek philosophers, Plato and Aristotle, defended slavery, for slaves were naturally inferior beings. The status of slaves, women and children reflected the judgment of Aristotle that "the deliberative faculty is not present at all in the slave, in the female it is inoperative, in the child undeveloped." The Christian notion that all men are created in the image of God, and that the image of God is rationality,<sup>4</sup> was foreign to pagan thought and societies. Murray (p. 216) commented on the status of women in Athens:

somehow inherent to nature. After all, why does matter have gravity? Why do opposite charges attract? Why are acceleration, mass and force related in such well defined mathematical terms? To the unbeliever, this is simply the nature of things.

A Christian, however, understands that it is God who controls everything. It is not the law of gravity that causes an object to fall. Rather, an object always falls because God makes it do so – and He does so in such a consistent way that we are able to describe (and even predict) its motion very precisely. There is a subtle, yet important difference between those two views. One says that nature acts by itself, having its own inherent powers. The other says that the Creator is intimately and directly involved in every action. Some might argue that God made the universe like a huge clockwork machine that he watches and perhaps occasionally adjusts. A few scattered Scripture verses show us that God is more involved than that. He knitted us together in the womb (Psalm 139:13) and controls the cast of every lot (Proverbs 16:33). In fact, in him we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28). God does more than just monitor the activity in creation; He is personally and directly involved with the motion of every atom! God moves the stars and planets in their courses, He makes the trees grow and He fills your lungs with air every time you draw breath.

The amazing thing is that God does all this in such a consistent manner that we can observe his action and describe them so accurately that we can now predict the motion of the planets and stars on the basis of what we can learn from an apple falling from a tree. What an awesome God! Every time you place your foot on the path and once more find that it is a solid place to stand, it is God controlling the atoms and molecules to make the path and your foot behave that way – just like last time you took a step! And he does this for the righteous and unrighteous alike.

So faithful is He that he sends rain on the evil and the good. So faithful is He that matter continues to function in normal ways even when our intended use of it is evil. He does not require us to be aware of His actions, nor does He cease to be faithful when we are not grateful. Our familiarity with God's faithful activity often renders us utterly unconscious of it, just as we are unconscious of the beating of our heart, yet we depend on it every minute. Our gratitude is not a condition for God's faithfulness – but He does deserve it.

What about miracles? Miracles are not so much a suspension of the laws of nature as they are simply moments when God chooses to act differently to how He usually does. Each miracle, such as those performed by Jesus, is a special reminder that it is God Who is in control. They are events that underscore the wonder of God's usual faithfulness, making us aware that He is not a subject of the "laws of nature", but directs everything according to His will – and He *usually* does so in a predictable manner!

Next time you stumble, or graze yourself, or even just as you are walking along, consider how near and active

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

# Worldviews in Focus

## Deciding if You Are a Humanist

by Craig Smith



(The following in italics is from *Humanism as the Next Step* by Lloyd and Mary Morain, Humanist Press, Amherst, New York.)

*Have you been a humanist, perhaps without even knowing it? To help you make up your own mind we offer the following guidelines:*

*(1) Do you believe that we will continue to learn more about the past, present, and future of planet earth and its inhabitants?*

*(2) Do you believe that humans are a part of nature and that there is no God or supernatural power especially concerned for their welfare?*

*(3) Do you believe that religions' sacred scriptures and ethical and moral systems were the creations of mortals and that these have served different purposes at different times and places?*

*(4) Do you believe that the kind of life we live and the helpful and just relationship that we have with other humans is of primary importance?*

*(5) Do you feel that our environment needs to be taken care of and protected for future generations?*

*(6) Do you frequently experience joy and comfort and an undefined mystic sense from the realization that you are a part of nature and of all that lives?*

*(7) Do you believe that the meaning of life is that which we give to it?*

*(8) Do you recognize that many philosophical questions such as, "What is the meaning of life?" and "Why am I here?" are irrelevant when our existence and experience are viewed as processes within the totality of nature?*

*If you answer "yes" to most of these questions you can classify yourself as a humanist, for you view humankind in naturalistic and humanistic terms. You have faith in our future here on earth and believe the highest goal for human endeavor is a better world for all.*

*Are you willing to consider new evidence of any kind and in every field of human thought and behavior, even though this may lead to a revision of some of your most cherished beliefs? We cannot see how anyone who is consistent in belief in a theistic religion or a non-naturalistic philosophy would be able to answer this in the affirmative. Humanists can.*

Worldviews are reasonably easy to work out when you realise that in all the universe there are, ultimately,



# In Line with Scripture



## Exploring God's Creation



### An Ever Faithful God

by Peter van den Brink

**O taste and see that the LORD  
is good! Happy is the man who  
takes refuge in Him!** — Psalm 34:8

At the University of Chicago Divinity School each year they have what is called “Baptist Day”. It is a day when all the Baptists in the area are invited to the school because they want the Baptist dollars to keep coming in.

On this day each one is to bring a lunch to be eaten outdoors in a grassy picnic area. Every “Baptist Day” the school would invite one of the greatest minds to lecture in the theological education center.

One year they invited Dr. Paul Tillich. Dr. Tillich spoke for two and one-half hours proving that the resurrection of Jesus was false. He quoted scholar after scholar and book after book.

He concluded that since there was no such thing as the historical resurrection, the religious tradition of the church was groundless, emotional mumbo-jumbo, because it was based on a relationship with a risen Jesus, who, in fact, never rose from the dead in any literal sense. He then asked if there were any questions.

After about 30 seconds, an old, dark-skinned preacher with a head of short-cropped, woolly white hair stood up in the back of the auditorium. “Docta Tillich, I got one question,” he said as all eyes turned toward him.

He reached into his sack lunch and pulled out an apple and began eating it. “Docta Tillich ...” CRUNCH, MUNCH ... “My question is a simple question,” CRUNCH, MUNCH ... “Now I ain’t never read them books you read ...” CRUNCH, MUNCH ... “and I can’t recite the Scriptures in the original Greek...” CRUNCH, MUNCH ... “I don’t know nothin’ ‘bout Niebuhr and Heidegger...” CRUNCH, MUNCH ...

He finished the apple. “All I wanna know is: This apple I just ate — was it bitter or was it sweet?”

Dr. Tillich paused for a moment and answered in exemplary scholarly fashion: “I cannot possibly answer that question, for I haven’t tasted your apple.”

The white-haired preacher dropped the core of his apple into his crumpled paper bag, looked up at Dr. Tillich and said calmly, “Neither have you tasted my Jesus.”

The 1,000 plus in attendance could not contain themselves. The auditorium erupted with applause and cheers. Dr. Tillich thanked his audience and promptly left the platform.

Have you ever stopped to wonder about how amazing gravity really is? More to the point, how amazing it is that gravity works in such a consistent way? If you hold up an object and release it, it falls. If you pick it up again and repeat the exercise, it will do exactly the same thing. In fact, you could spend a lifetime studying gravity and its effects, and apart from some minor aberrations that reflect the youth and mortality of our universe, gravity will prove to be very consistent.

I was taught that at sea-level, without air-resistance or other interference, an object falls, accelerating at 9.8 metres per second per second. Isaac Newton observed the same thing (though he used feet and inches, whatever they are). Beginning with observations such as this, he went on to discover principles in nature accurate enough to describe the motion of planets and stars and to predict the existence of yet undiscovered ones! Interestingly, as I understand it, the stars and planets were already doing what they were doing before Newton figured out the mathematics of gravity. Newton merely discovered that he could describe some of the principles, or “laws” that govern the motion of things.

In science, a “law” is a *description* of how nature behaves. There are laws for all kinds of things such as gravity, thermodynamics and electricity. The key thing to remember is that the laws themselves do not actually control the matter; they simply describe its behaviour. For example, Newton’s laws of motion: 1. Unless acted on by an external force, an object will continue to do what it’s doing. 2. An object accelerates in direct proportion to the force acting on it and inversely proportional to its mass ( $a = F/m$ ). 3. For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. Once again, the interesting thing about these principles is that they were operating long before Newton muddled us with the mathematics. Furthermore, they haven’t changed since then either.

I always find the use of the word “law” in science a bit misleading. We can joke that in order to fly, all we really need to do is break the law of gravity. However, trying to do so is often painful. But it’s not a law that requires enforcing – it is simply a description of how matter behaves. The observations of a law have been so consistent that it is considered to be a scientific presupposition – something assumed to be true.

But here we can fall into a trap along with the naturalists who believe that there is nothing to the universe except matter and energy. For the unbeliever, it is a small step of logic to say that the laws of nature actually control the behaviour of matter. The “laws of nature” are considered to be causeless causes, principles

“We idealize the Greeks as the originators of Western civilization. But we should remember that (polygamy apart), the position of Athenian women was in most important respects the same as that of the 200,000,000 women who today [1986] live under Islam...”<sup>1</sup>

In any society in which slavery plays a major role, idleness becomes a virtue. It was so in the American South, and so it was in Rome. The Romans held labor in contempt and scorned those who worked with their hands. The workingman was base and a social inferior. All freedmen were artisans and shopkeepers; most shopkeepers and artisans were freedmen; and all were despised. “No one,” Aristotle had written, “who leads the life of a worker or laborer can practice virtue.”

The eloquent Demosthenes, defending himself before an Athenian jury, presented his argument this way:

“I am worth more than Eschinus [the plaintiff], and I am better born than he; I do not wish to seem to insult poverty, but I am bound to say that it was my lot as a child to attend good schools and to have had sufficient wealth that I was not forced by need to engage in shameful labors. Whereas you, Eschinus, it was your lot as a child to sweep, as might a slave, the classroom in which your father served as teacher.” Demosthenes easily won his case.

Seneca, the tutor and later the victim of Emperor Nero, wrote that “The common arts, the sordid arts, are, according to the philosopher Posidonius, those practiced by manual laborers, who spend all their time earning their living. There is no beauty in such occupations, which bear little resemblance to the Good.” The great Roman senator Cicero believed that “wage labor is sordid and unworthy of a free man, for wages are the price of labor and not of some art; craft labor is sordid as is the business of retailing.” Capitalism could not develop in a society in which such a view of labor prevailed. (Christianity brought a new and obviously radically different world view and conception of work into this pagan world: one which honours working with your hands and in fact informs you that your labour is done as a service to the Lord – see I Thessalonians 4:11-12 and Colossians 3:23-24. We can also see the return of this pagan attitude in the way that modern “artists” are heavily subsidised in this country and overseas, even or perhaps especially when they churn out disgusting trash like the Virgin Mary in a condom and a crucifix in a jar of urine. – Ed.)

Rome’s control over the economy was hampered by the primitiveness of the economy. But wherever economic activity could be controlled, the worldly philosophers and statesmen believed the state had the right to control it. A basic feature of the constitution of Sparta was complete control of economic activity. Athens owned the silver mines of Laurium. *Economics*, a treatise probably written in the third century before Christ and incorrectly attributed to Aristotle, recounts how rulers filled their coffers by robbery and exploitation of their people. The book assumes that every sort of private property is at the disposal of the state. Hasebroek, writing in *Trade and Politics in Ancient Greece*, reports that the control of economic ac-

tivity in the cities was tyrannical.

As for Rome, “wholesale uncompensated confiscation of private estates and peasant farms to provide bonuses for soldiers was not an uncommon practice.... Eventually all generations of workers—oil-suppliers, butchers, fish handlers, bakers, transport and mine workers and minor government officials—were frozen in their occupations to stabilize taxes and balance the budget.”<sup>5</sup> Fustel de Coulanges concluded, “The ancients, therefore, knew neither liberty in private life, liberty in economics nor religious liberty.”<sup>6</sup>

### Life and Death

In the ancient world, abortion, the exposure of infants, infanticide and suicide were common and legal. At the coming of Christ, the Roman governor in Judea, Herod the Great, in an attempt to murder Jesus, ordered that all the male infants in Bethlehem and the region surrounding it, from two years old and younger, be put to death.

The head of a Roman family had the power of life and death—*patria potestas*—over his children and slaves. At birth, the midwife would place the newborn on the ground, where he would remain unless the father took the child and raised him from the earth. If the father did not lift the child, he—or more likely she—was left to die in some public place. The pagans abandoned their children for many reasons: poverty, ambition or concern about their “quality of life”: “so as not to see them corrupted by a mediocre education that would leave them unfit for rank and quality,” to quote Plutarch. The early Christians rescued thousands of children discarded by the pagans. Pagans also rescued thousands, and they would rear them to be slaves and prostitutes. If infants were born with defects, they were frequently killed rather than exposed. Infanticide was not merely the practice of the pagans, it was their doctrine as well: Plato and Aristotle endorsed infanticide, and Seneca wrote: “What is good must be set apart from what is good for nothing.”

According to Roman law, the power of the father over his children remained as long as he lived. An adult Roman man could do nothing without his father’s consent; his father could even sentence him to death. It is likely that the Mafia inherited its focus on the family from its Roman ancestors.

The contrast between ancient paganism and Christianity is clearest in these matters of life and death. In his *History of European Morals*, Lecky wrote (Vol. II, p. 9-11):

“The first aspect in which Christianity presented itself to the world was as a declaration of the fraternity of men in Christ. Considered as immortal beings, destined for the extremes of happiness or of misery, and united to one another by a special community of redemption, the first and most manifest duty of a Christian man was to look on his fellowmen as sacred beings, and from this notion grew up the eminently Christian idea of the sanctity of all human life.

“It is not the laws of nature that determine behavior or



ethics, for “nature does not tell man that it is wrong to slay without provocation his fellowmen.... [I]t is an historical fact beyond all dispute that refined, and even moral, societies have existed in which the slaughter of men of some particular class or nation has been regarded with no more compunction than the slaughter of animals in the chase. The early Greeks, in their dealings with the barbarians; the Romans, in their dealings with gladiators, and in some periods of their history with slaves; the Spaniards in their dealings with Indians; nearly all colonists removed from European supervision, in their dealings with an inferior race; and an immense proportion of the nations of antiquity, in their dealings with new-born infants—all have displayed this complete and absolute callousness....”<sup>3</sup>

Rather than the laws of nature, Christianity changed ancient culture:

“Now it was one of the most important services of Christianity that, besides quickening greatly our benevolent affections, it definitely and dogmatically asserted the sinfulness of all destruction of human life as a matter of amusement or of simple convenience, and thereby formed a new standard, higher than any which existed in the world.

“The influence of Christianity in this respect began with the very earliest stage of human life. The practice of abortion was one to which few persons in antiquity attached any deep feeling of condemnation.... In Greece, Aristotle not only countenanced the practice, but even desired that it should be enforced by law when population had exceeded certain assigned limits. No law in Greece or in the Roman Republic or during the greater part of the Empire condemned it.... A long chain of writers, both pagan and Christian, represent the practice as avowed and almost universal. They describe it as resulting not simply from licentiousness or from poverty but even from so slight a motive as vanity, which made mothers shrink from the disfigurement of childbirth.... They assure us that the frequency of the crime was such that it gave rise to a regular profession.

“If we pass to the next stage of human life, that of the new-born infant, we find ourselves in [the] presence of that practice of infanticide which was one of the deepest stains of the ancient civilization.... Infanticide...was almost universally admitted among the Greeks, being sanctioned, and in some cases enjoined, upon what we should now call ‘the greatest happiness principle,’ by the ideal legislations of Plato and

Aristotle, and by the actual legislations of Lycurgus and Solon”.<sup>3</sup>

But it was not only public violence that was condoned and encouraged at the time of Christ; suicide was also a virtue. Murray wrote (p. 229): “Suicide was accepted, even admired. The courage of the man who decides to end his suffering and accept eternal rest was extolled by the philosophers, for suicide proved the truth of the philosophical notion that what matters is the quality and not the quantity of time that one lives”<sup>1</sup>

### Notes:

1. Oswyn Murray, “Life and Society in Classical Greece,” *The Oxford History of the Classical World*. New York, 1986, p. 205.
2. M. I. Finley, *Ancient History*. New York, 1987, p. 68.
3. Lecky, *History of European Morals*. London (1869) 1946, I, p. 127.
4. “The spirit of a man is the lamp of the Lord, searching all the inner depths of his heart” (Proverbs 20:27) is one verse among many that teach this idea.
5. E. G. Welton, *Athens and Jerusalem*. Atlanta, 1987, p. 34.
6. *The Ancient City*. 1901, pp. 222-223.

John W. Robbins received an A.B. from Grove City College; an M.A. and Ph.D. from The Johns Hopkins University in Political Philosophy. President and founder of The Trinity Foundation, 1977-present. Worked on Capitol Hill as chief of staff to a Member of Congress, 1981-1985.

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sought to teach lessons from them, I began to wonder what I could learn from my family’s past. And as I was struck by the fact that Moses left his family a detailed history of their existence complete with genealogies dating back to time’s dawn, I purposed to research and write a history of my family to leave to my offspring.

That was two years ago. Since that time I have moved from the confines of my Virginia apartment back to my home in Texas and have devoted a serious amount of my time to researching my family history. I have dug in courthouses for land deeds, scanned the Internet for war documents and visited various grave sites.

The most rewarding aspect of my work has been the time I have spent with my Grandpa, my father’s dad. We have spent dozens of hours together over the last year discussing our family’s past. His detailed knowledge of the lives of our ancestors and his no-nonsense approach to their failures and successes has helped set the tone of my research.

There are three main goals based on principles found in Deuteronomy that I hope to achieve in this endeavor.

My first priority is to understand how God has made Himself known to my family and to marvel at His plan as it has played out in their history. Moses implored the children of Israel to do just this when he said: “For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, ask from the one side of heaven to the other, whether there hath been any such thing as great as this, or hath been heard like it? Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard and live?” (Deut. 4:32-33).

While God dealt with this generation in a unique way never seen before or since, He has nonetheless made His power known to families of all generations according to His covenant. God works through families. I rejoice to see the testimony He has established in mine.

My second goal in researching my family history is to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of those who have gone before me; to abandon the sins of my fathers so that I can walk faithfully in God’s covenant.

Moses had a good deal to say in Deuteronomy about the older generation that left Egypt. Because of their stubborn and rebellious hearts, they were denied entrance into the land of Canaan (Deut. 1:34-35). Moses exhorted the people to “Remember, and forget not, how thou provokedst the LORD thy God to wrath in the wilderness...” (Deut. 9:7). He made it clear to his audience that they were to follow a different path: they were to learn from their parents’ mistakes.

God’s measuring rod for faithfulness is His covenant. Those who keep it can expect blessings; those who break it, cursings (Deut. 28). I pray that I can avoid the sins of my fathers and that I can leave a legacy of blessing to the next “thousand generations” (Deut. 7:9).

My final objective in delving into the lives of my ancestors is to pass on a family heritage to my children; to give them a sense of belonging; to make known to them God’s workings in the lives of their fathers so that they can pass on the testimony to their children.

If there was any one thing Moses stressed most during his discourses, it was this very point: “Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons’ sons” (Deut. 4:9). And teach especially the meaning of the covenant (Deut. 4:10-13).

Though not penned by Moses, Psalm 78:2-7 captures the goals of my mission well:

*I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and the wonderful works that he hath done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he hath commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.*

Heavy-hearted, the great lawgiver concluded his family history with a few last strokes of his pen. The final words formed a frightening song of judgment against his people. Though he was saddened by the fact that he would never enter the Promised Land, what brought him the greatest sense of grief was an altogether different thought, one he knew was undeniable: that his kindred in a few short generations would forget their history and call upon other gods. His voluminous writings, his labor of love, would all too often be ignored.

After putting his manuscripts in order, he placed them in the possession of the Levites for safekeeping. The ark of the covenant was to house these scrolls that would later be known as the five books of the law.

Then he gathered the congregation before him to give one last address. Calling heaven and earth to witness, Moses spoke in the ears of his flesh and blood the words of the song that would spell their offspring’s doom. An indictment against forgetfulness, it gave the Israelites no excuse should they cease to remember the God of their fathers. Their only hope was to heed its admonition: “Do ye thus requite God, O foolish people and unwise? Is not he the father that hath bought thee? Hath he not made thee and established thee? 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” (Deut. 32:6-7). It was these words from Moses’ song that kindled in my heart the desire to know my family history as I sat in my cold basement dwelling two years ago. Deuteronomy 32:7 is the model verse of my research; it’s what ultimately led me to return to the home of my roots.

Certainly not every man is obligated to make such a drastic move. But it is the responsibility of every man, as Moses made plain in Deuteronomy, to know and understand how God has worked in history, particularly in the life of his own family, and to impart to his progeny that heritage.

We must remember. Ask now of the days that are past.

(Continued on page 28: **Ask Now**)

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# Graduates Speak

## Ask Now of the Days That Are Past

by Wesley Strackbein

Tugging at his beard, pondering several millennia past, the grey-headed patriarch picked up his pen. His heart raced as he saw what lay before him. For many years he had been painstakingly working on a sacred volume, a history. Many a scroll were filled with his writings. He had spent more hours than he could count perfecting each parchment. Each line he had meted out with care. And now his labors were coming to an end. The story of his ancestors, his family history, was almost complete.

At center stage in his narrative was the God of his fathers. In startling fashion he had been made aware of just how important it was to understand God’s dealings with his ancestors when God Himself met him on Mount Horeb some forty years before. From a burning bush the Lord God called him to lead his family out of the land of Egypt. He was given explicit directions by God on how he was to approach them upon his return from the desert. “Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, the Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, hath sent you: this is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations” (Exod. 3:15). Without an understanding of how God had worked in his family’s history, without a knowledge of the covenant God had made with his forefathers centuries earlier, such a declaration would have been meaningless.

The weight of this truth pressed deeply upon Moses’ mind as he wrapped up his writings. Soon, he was to go the way of the earth; he had only a month more to live. The generation of Israelites which he now directed was a much younger generation than his own. With the exception of Joshua and Caleb, the closest person to his age in the Israelite camp was a whopping sixty years younger. It was important that this up-and-coming generation know their family’s past. It was critical that this people about to take the land of Canaan, the land of promise, understand the God of their fathers - the God of the covenant.

So pouring over the manuscripts which God had commanded him to write (Num. 33:2), Moses prepared a final series of discourses to deliver to the young families that were about to cross the Jordan. 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.

It was through this book that I journeyed anew on a cold Virginia day in my basement residence several winters ago. A year removed from my native home in Texas, I now made my abode in the coldest corner of a



large townhouse. Having just returned from a pleasant visit down south with my family over the Christmas holidays, I determined to revisit the life of another old friend, one who had already become one of my biggest heroes. Wrapping myself in a blanket, I again read the last installment of the Pentateuch. And the message of the aging patriarch, his penetrating words, pierced my heart.

“Remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and the Lord brought thee out with a mighty hand” (Deut. 5:15). “Remember what the Lord God did unto Pharaoh and Egypt” (Deut. 7:18). “Remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt: and thou shalt observe and do these statutes” (Deut. 16:12) “Remember thy servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” (Deut. 9:27). “Remember the Lord thy God” (Deut. 8:18).

While I had read Deuteronomy many times before - at one point during my schooling, I was required to type it in its entirety - never before had I apprehended the urgency nor understood the import of Moses’ words. The prevailing theme of his discourses now resounded in my ears: know and understand how God has worked in your family history; don’t forget your past.

Over the next few weeks, I read and reread Deuteronomy. My cold dwelling place became lit with the warm light of serious study. As I observed the urgency with which Moses warned his family to understand God’s covenant dealings with their fathers, I began to wonder how God had interacted with my forbears. As I discovered that in Moses’ final addresses he simply recalled to mind episodes from the wilderness journey and

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# Home Education Research



## Project on Learning

by Professor Emeritus Graham Nuthall  
University of Canterbury, New Zealand

(The Project on Learning is a long-term research project on how students, during their middle school years, 9 — 11, learn from their classroom experiences. The focus is on how students’ knowledge and thinking are progressively shaped by classroom activities, and how teachers influence this development.)

One of our major findings, based on many years of research in many classrooms, is that student learning is not the focus of what goes on in schools. We found that most teachers, most of the time, do not know what their students are learning or not learning. But then, when we look in the wider education system, we find the same major problem.

We give awards to our best teachers without paying any attention to what their students learn. The Education Review Office evaluates the effectiveness of schools without obtaining any direct evidence about student learning. The Qualifications Authority accredits courses and institutions without paying any attention to whether students in those courses or institutions are learning anything or not. The Ministry of Education carries out “network reviews” of schools (amalgamating smaller schools) without any evidence about whether the changes will affect student learning.

Put simply, the education system is a fraud. It is a multi-billion dollar industry whose main purpose is to promote learning, but it does not pay any serious attention to learning.

What has happened is that we have well-established beliefs about what good teaching looks like that do not take student learning into account. For example, we expect to find, in ideal classrooms, busy active students, interested and involved in a variety of “school-like” activities. These classrooms are attractive places, with the brightly coloured work of the students around the walls. The students take home attractive reports of the interesting projects they have completed in class. This kind of classroom is what teachers are trained to create.

Effective learning requires two things. First, students must be interested and motivated to learn. Second, their minds must be engaged in a way that transforms what they know and can do. We have developed an education system that focuses on the first part, and ignores the second.

This lack of understanding of what causes student

learning means that putting more resources into education, such as reducing class sizes, increasing the training of teachers and putting more computers into classrooms, will have little or no effect on student learning. So long as teachers do not understand what causes students’ learning, they cannot learn from each other or from their own experiences.

Some facts: We found that students learn no more from experienced teachers than they learn from beginning teachers. We found that students learn no more from award winning teachers than from teachers who were considered average teachers. We found that teachers were, through no fault of their own, largely unaware of the critical learning experiences of most of their students.

This does not mean that students do not learn from some of their classroom experiences. What it means is that most teachers do not know which experiences these are.

Some more facts: We found that students already knew 40 - 50% of what teachers tried to teach them. We found that there were enormous individual differences in what students learned from the same classroom activities. Hardly any two students learned the same things because there are much greater individual differences in how students experience classroom activities than teachers are aware of.

The world of the classroom as students experience it is very different from the classroom as the teacher experiences it. Student experience is largely dominated by relationships with other students. While students give the appearance of being engaged in the teacher’s activities they are simultaneously engaged in sustaining friendships, putting down outsiders and arranging out of class activities through whispering, note-passing, facial expressions, accidental bumping and knocking things off desks.

They are also engaged in subtly negotiating their way through the teacher’s requirements by cutting corners, copying, procrastinating and avoiding the hard parts, usually with the secret help of friendly peers who are also engaged in the same avoidance techniques. Many become very skilled at hiding what they can’t do and don’t understand.

Even more facts: In our detailed studies of individual student learning in a range of different classrooms, we found that low ability students learned just as much as high ability students when they were exposed to the same experiences. In other words, the least able students were capable of learning just as much as the most able students.

If the least able are capable of learning just as much as the most able, why are there such large differences in what students actually learn? We looked closely at the experiences of more and less able students and found that a significant proportion of the critical learning experiences for the more able students were those that they created for themselves, with their peers, or on their own. The less able students relied much more on



the teacher for creating effective learning opportunities.

Since teachers do their best to maintain the ideal of the busy active classroom, but some students fail to learn in their classrooms, the blame has been shifted onto the students. Our society has come to believe that the reason some students don't learn is because they lack ability, come from poor backgrounds or have different learning styles, when the cause of the problem lies in the classroom.

But the underlying reason is that the ideal classroom that teachers try to develop and maintain (and that is widely supported by administrators, researchers and parents, as well as teachers) may not, and often does not, create the conditions needed to ensure student learning.

This does not mean that we should put all the blame on teachers. They are doing what they are required to do. Teachers like the rest of us are concerned for student learning and assume that learning will flow naturally from interesting and engaging classroom activities. But it does not. And for that, we blame the students or their parents.

As one very experienced senior secondary school teacher said after participating in a class on research on teaching: "I've always believed that if I was teaching, the students were learning. But now I know that's not true."

We have another major problem with the results of tests and examinations. It is widely believed that the results of tests and examinations are a good measure of what students know and can do.

But our research on how students undertake tests and examinations shows that they are primarily a measure of student motivation. When a student is highly motivated to do the best he can on a test, then that test will measure what he knows or can do. When that motivation is not there (as it is not for most students most of the time) then the test only measures what they can be bothered to do.

So when test results show that girls do better than boys, or Pakeha students do better than Maori or Pacific Island students, then the first explanation must be differences in motivation, not differences in achievement or ability. The public debate about achievement differences based on test and examination results is just another example of the way any real and important differences in learning get buried under misunderstandings and irrelevant issues.

(Professor Graham Nuthall retired in 2001 after 38 years with the University of Canterbury School of Education. He is known both nationally and internationally for his classroom-based research which focused on the interactions between students, their teacher and the curriculum within the classroom and how these interactions determine learning. Professor Nuthall is currently battling leukaemia. Please pray for him and his wife Jill.)

# Learning Disabilities



## Foetal Alcohol Syndrome and Foetal Alcohol Effects, Part 4 (Final)

by Linda Dillon

Try to eliminate background noise and distractions. Get rid of hanging mobiles and other flashy distracting items in your school area. Close the drapes if the child is spending a lot of time looking at things going on outside. We have a few simple school rules, such as, "Stay in your seat unless you have permission to get up." "Do not talk, sing, hum or make other noises during school."

My advice is not to take the summers off from homeschooling! If we take just three weeks off, Val and Gene forget many things they have already learned, and we have to repeat months of schoolwork. We homeschool all year round and take week long vacations for camping trips, grandparents visiting, Christmas, etc.; but we only homeschool in the mornings to avoid burnout.

Many teachers report success with FAS/E children when they involve all of the child's senses in the learning process. The children learn and remember better when teachers use picture cards, songs, computers, tape recorders, role-playing, hands-on activities and demonstrations.

When we first brought home our Russian sons, we spent a few months just getting acquainted and helping them learn English. Then it took three years of hard work and repetition for the boys to master first grade phonics and math. This may have been partly due to learning English as a second language and partly from fetal alcohol related learning disabilities. Things are going a bit faster now, and both boys are reading simple books. Val, age 11, is in the third grade in most subjects, and Gene, age 9, is in the second grade. I think Val is a bit embarrassed that our biological son, Paul, age 10, is in the fourth grade. I expect that this grade level gap may continue to widen over the years.

Often our boys need to do a certain workbook page more than once to really understand it, spending a few days on the same concept. We bought a copier to make as many copies of the same page as needed. We don't move on to the next thing until one thing is learned.

Sometimes our son Gene will play and fool around and make his schoolwork take all day. He can find all kinds of things to do while he is wasting time. Now we offer a reward, such as a special snack, for children who get their schoolwork finished in a timely manner. This will usually do the trick and motivate Gene, but not always. Other days Gene will rush through his schoolwork much too fast without reading the directions or asking for help, or he will just make up answers. One day he

a lot of trouble noticing the punctuation when they are reading out loud. They don't pause at the end of sentences or when a new person has begun to speak in the story.

Giving each child a small garden space was very successful. The children were very proud when the food they grew was on the dinner table.

For physical education, FAS/E children often do better with individual sports such as riding a bike, swimming, gymnastics, dance and track, rather than team sports like soccer. During a soccer or baseball game they tend to start daydreaming, or looking at birds in the sky, so that when the ball comes their way, they aren't ready.

We have several educational computer games such as Jump Start Reading and Math for different age levels and Reader Rabbit programs. The children love to play them, and they are learning about the subject matter and also about how to operate a computer. Educational computer programs are great for FAS/E children because they will patiently wait for the child's answer, gently correct a wrong answer, and reward the right answer with immediate positive feedback. If the child wants to play the same game over and over again, the repetition reinforces what they have learned.

When the children have a page of schoolwork with no errors, or very few errors, we save the page for Dad to admire when he gets home. This praise and admiration from Dad means a great deal to them. Their eyes light up and they are really pleased.

Now that I've told you how much trouble Val and Gene have with their schoolwork, I want to say that academics are not the most important thing in life. The Lord has blessed us by bringing us all together as a family. The boys are learning to love others and to love God. Our prayer is that they grow up to be good citizens, and fulfill their God given future.

### A Look At The Future

Many FAS/E adults cannot live alone or manage money without help. They need to live with their parents, a sibling, a trusted friend, or spouse, who helps them manage their affairs and pay their bills on time, etc. Many parents have reported disastrous results when their FAS/E young adults have their first bank ATM or credit card. During the high school years an emphasis on independent living skills is appropriate and important, such as banking and budgeting money, reading a bus schedule, and calling to make a doctor or dentist appointment.

Role-playing works well with FAS/E children. At our house we do role-playing to practice things like how to call 911 in an emergency. First we talk about what kind of emergency is serious enough to call 911, like if the house is on fire, or someone is very badly hurt. Then I pretend to be the operator and the children practice giving their name, address, phone number, and stating the nature of the emergency. Our address and phone number is posted on a piece of paper next to the phone for children who can't remember them.

Role-playing is also a powerful tool for learning to make good choices, resolve conflicts, and take responsibility for one's actions. Young people can practice appropriate social interaction, communication skills, and work behaviors while still in the safety of their own home. Impulsive behavior can be improved by rehearsing things like how to act in a restaurant, on a bus, at a movie theater, how to greet someone, and how to thank someone.

We have already started talking to our boys about the dangers of alcohol and how it killed their Russian mother. Children whose parents were alcoholics have a much higher chance of becoming alcoholics themselves if they ever start to experiment with alcohol. When our boys get a little older we plan to do role-playing about how to turn down an offer of an alcoholic beverage, and ask for juice or a soda pop instead.

Sometimes children with FAS/E have conversations that are fluent, but empty of any real content. They often have difficulty starting a conversation and may not respond properly in a conversational situation. They may be off in their own world, daydreaming, and the comments they make don't fit in with what is going on around them. This makes it difficult for them to make friends and have meaningful relationships. During the dinner table conversation at our house our son Gene will blurt out things that either don't make any sense, or don't relate in any way to the topic of discussion. While eating birthday cake one time he said, "A piece of cake, a piece of house." When he does this we give him feedback and practice things he could say to join in the conversation in a meaningful way. This will be an important social skill later in his life.

There is hope that FAS/E children will grow into responsible, happy adults. Look for their strengths and build on them, helping them to find hobbies, and possibly employment, that utilize their talents. These children are often artistically talented in drawing and pottery, or musically talented with singing or playing instruments. Their creativity may be in the areas of inventing things, building things, gardening, storytelling, or even cooking.

Homeschooling a child with FAS/E is challenging, but not impossible. I'm hoping that after reading our story, other parents will have the courage to homeschool their child. Your child is God's beloved creation, cherished by Him. Pray that you will be able to see past the problems, to see the child that God sees. When you lose your temper, get down on your knees and ask God's forgiveness, then get up and keep on going. Keep trying, even through the hard times, with love, compassion, prayer, consistency, and patience. I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me. – Philippians 4:13

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had every single answer wrong on a page of addition problems. When I asked him about it, he admitted he had made up all the answers because he “just didn’t feel like doing that kind of math today.” I gave him a fresh copy of the same worksheet. We are trying to teach him that this rushing behavior doesn’t pay off in the end.

Often students with FAS/E have memory difficulties. They learn a concept one day, then the next day they can’t remember it, but the next week it suddenly comes back to them. Their memory can fail because the information is not perceived accurately in the first place, or it is not stored properly, or it cannot be retrieved from memory. Often visual information can be remembered more easily than information that is presented orally.

It took years for Gene to learn his colors. We played the M & M game many times, where we put an M & M on the table, and if he could name the color he could eat it. We tried teaching colors by association such as “green like the grass,” “blue like our van,” and “yellow like the sun,” etc. He finally learned his colors at about age eight.

Many children with FAS/E have trouble with math. Both of my Russian sons have difficulty with math, particularly telling time and counting money. A hands-on approach with money has worked the best, such as counting real dollars and coins. The Monopoly board game is also great.

During the day we randomly ask our boys, “What time is it?” At 11 and 9-years-old they still forget which hand is the hour hand and which one is the minute hand. Sometimes they forget which way the hands travel around the clock. Sometimes they forget that each number on the clock stands for five minutes. They think if the minute hand is on the four, then it is four minutes after the hour. If we remind them to start at the top and count by 5s, they can figure it out.

Visual cues help a lot in math. For addition and subtraction Gene needs to count the numbers out with his fingers or use pennies or buttons. Val understands the concept of multiplication, but so far he has not been able to memorize the multiplication tables. Some educators recommend letting FAS/E children use a calculator for math, since memorizing the multiplication tables is very difficult for them.

Gene sometimes has directional confusion in math. He has trouble with reversing numbers such as writing 21 for 12, etc. Also when he is adding up numbers with hundreds, tens and ones, he will start at the hundreds side instead of starting with the ones.

Sometimes FAS/E children have difficulty understanding the passage of time, such as yesterday or tomorrow, and how long it is until a birthday or Christmas. We have a large calendar on the wall. Every day I mark a big X on the date for that day. Our children have learned to look for themselves to see what day of the week it is and to see what birthdays, holidays and other events are coming up.

Spelling is very difficult for our boys. Both boys are

slowly working their way through a second grade spelling book. Often they need to study their words and take their spelling test over again several days in a row to get them all right. They put a sticker on their perfect spelling tests, and we keep them in a special binder that is fun to show to visiting grandparents.

Each day I have the boys read a Bible story and write one sentence that summarizes what happened. They sometimes have trouble figuring out what the main point of the story is, but it helps if I ask them to “narrate” the story back to me verbally. For example, in the story where baby Moses was put into a basket in the river and was found by Pharaoh’s daughter, Gene wrote, “The evol keing wonted to cill avre bady thar wus.” (The evil king wanted to kill every baby there was.) I asked him, “And then what happened?” After talking it over, he was able to change his sentence to tell the most important thing that happened in the story.

Gene, especially, is musically inclined, and he can learn things if they are in a song. Learning the ABC song and pointing to the letters helped my children learn the alphabet. Bible verses set to music work well too. We all enjoy singing along with videos such as the two “Hide ‘em in Your Heart” videos by Steve Green. My children know all the Bible verses on the videotapes. One song that is particularly useful as a reminder around our house is, “Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God...” (Philippians 2:14-15 NIV).

The children began to take piano lessons, but by the time they got to eighth notes, counting out the rhythm became very difficult for Val and Gene. The boys like to listen to music, especially Gene who loves to sing.

Hands-on science is the most effective. We have been looking through a telescope at the moon and the planets as an exciting activity to go along with our study of *The Astronomy Book*. My children already love collecting rocks and looking at them with a magnifying glass. My husband bought a second hand rock tumbler and a rock hammer, and that is fun too.

Science videos from the library also work well. After watching a video about mammals, reptiles, birds, insects or whatever, I have them write one sentence about something they learned from the movie. We supplement our science books as much as possible with hands-on activities and visual demonstrations. Each child keeps all his science papers in a special binder that he is proud to show off.

For history I am a great fan of the Charlotte Mason method of reading “Living Books.” My children love to hear adventurous stories about people that lived in different periods of history. History comes alive when you read about the daily hardships of life in a wagon train, life in a log cabin or the first battle of the American Revolution. But I find if I read a book with vocabulary that is too difficult, they do get wiggly in their seats and lose interest.

Each day the children read to me out loud a chapter of a book that is at their reading level. Val and Gene have

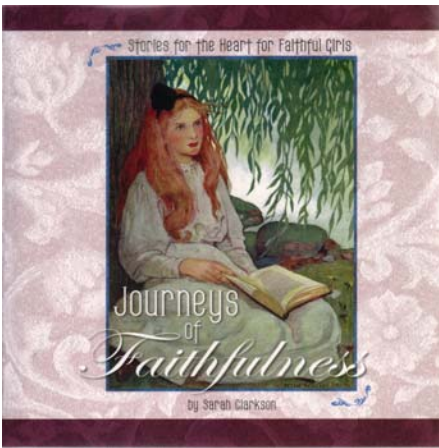


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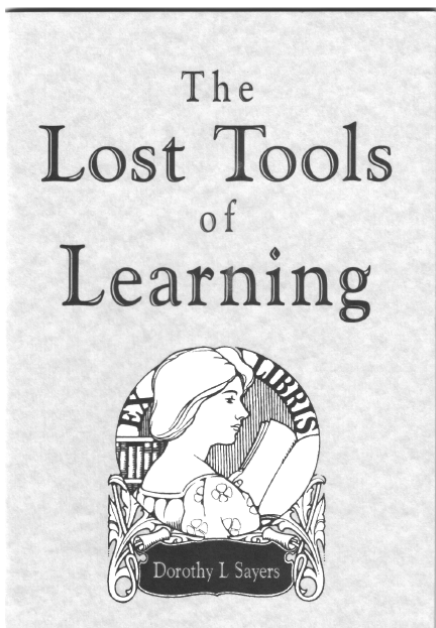
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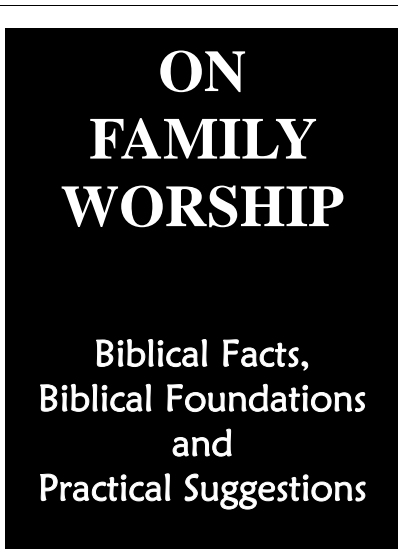
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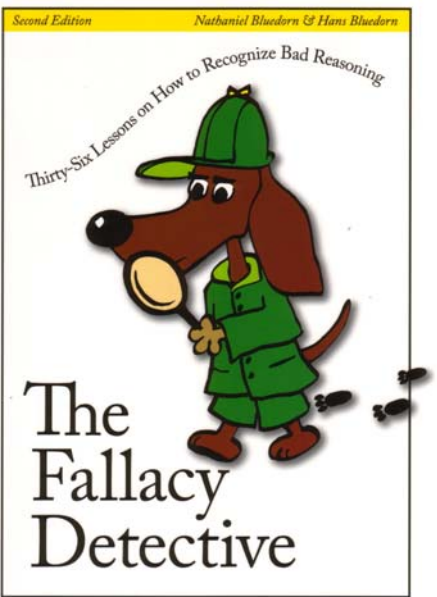
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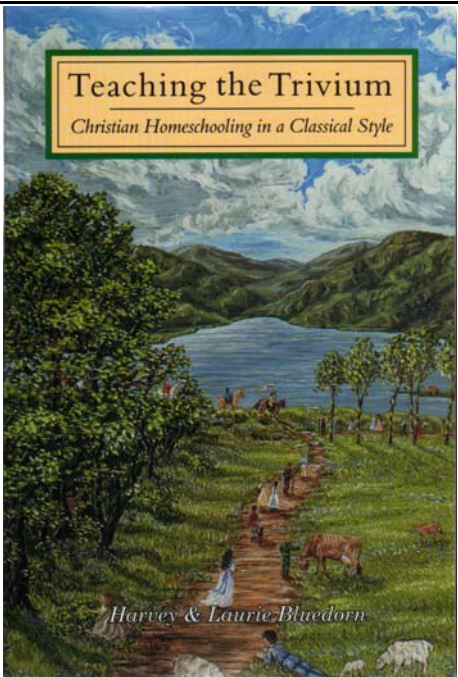
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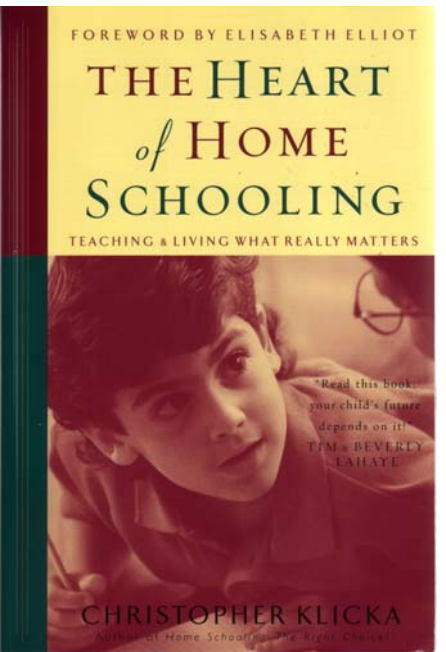
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