

Keystone

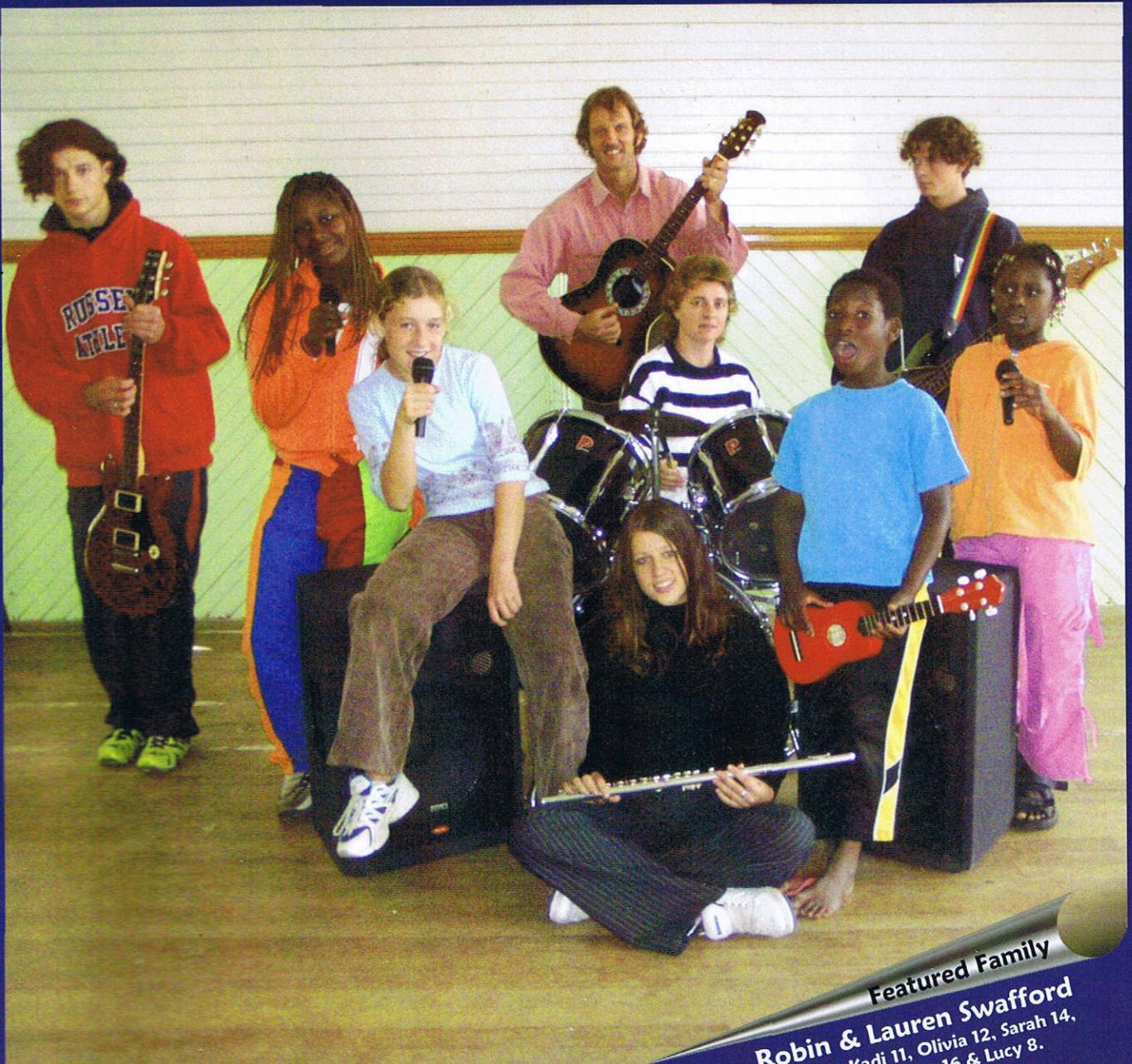
The Journal of Christian Home Schoolers

of New Zealand

Vol. X No. 3

May 2004

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



Featured Family

Robin & Lauren Swafford
Aidan 18, Kadi 11, Olivia 12, Sarah 14,
Sorrie 9, Reuben 16 & Lucy 8.

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*"And He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children
and the heart of the children to their fathers."
Malachi 4:6*

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(Continued from page 20: **Letter**)

so!! Even if a child is struggling at home, they will still receive more help than they would get at a school. They have someone who loves them and is willing to teach them. Parents, don't forget that maths is important, but God is still more important!! You are fulfilling one of God's greatest commandments!! Please be encouraged: you are doing the right thing!! May God continue to bless you and your family as you keep on learning.

Deborah Rennelk
South Island, NZ

(Continued from page 25: **Sinful**)

elders.

In any case we see the truth of the simple saying, "Ideas have consequences." That's why it is so important that we understand our own world view and as Christians seek to ensure that the world view we are carrying in our minds is as thoroughly Biblical, by God's grace, as we can make it. For it is inescapable: we **do** behave according to our world view....in fact, our world view is exposed for everyone else to see in our behaviour patterns, should anyone care to observe them closely. And when it comes to obedience, that is not an optional thing: we must follow His commands wherever they lead us, even into inconvenience, economic hardship and persecution. As James 1:25 says, such a doer (as opposed to a mere hearer) of the Word will be blessed in his doing.

(I have modified the SB Resolution a wee bit in this article for readability. The Resolution in its original form may be seen at: <http://tinyurl.com/36h4v> . This is the Exodus Mandate website, people who have been warning of the dangers of state schooling for years. Another site which gives a lot of background and possible avenues of action is at: <http://tinyurl.com/3y94c> . Both are well worth a look.)

(Continued from page 29: **Teaching**)

of goals and aspirations over the years, but the older I get, the more I just keep longing to hear the phrase, *Well done, thou good and faithful servant*. During this season of my life, the most daunting task before me is to raise our children to love the Lord and to live for His pleasure. As parents, homeschooling is just one of the tools that the Lord has given us to fulfill that task.")

Over A Cuppa



Today I Caught a Glimpse

by Janice Kerswell
of New Jersey, U.S.A.

We buried a friend today — a comrade, a buddy. She died of cancer at 44. Facing a casket is always so final. There is something about the polished box and the gold handles that makes me think back over the past few weeks, months and years of my own life. I know that you've also been there. Enough said.

I've been working on our school/life schedule for next year. I can't find a way to "fit it all in", but today while I sat sobbing in the pew, I realized that in my attempt to avoid any gaps or miss anything crucial, I have left out some important "subjects."

This year we will laugh every day....many times....often. Mommy will sing....a **lot**. I will dance....a **lot**. I can't dance, but I will. I will play the board game "Sorry" every time my dear six-year-old asks me.... every day if I have to, until **he** gets sick of it. I will complain less about the mess in their rooms. I realize that spending time having tea parties with my daughter is more important than surfing the web for the "perfect" Latin program. I don't care if the deck furniture **ever** gets re-stained, but yes, I will watch *Herbie the Love Bug* with you again honey....for the millionth time....let's make popcorn....can I brush your hair while we watch it?

I will teach them how to make pizza while singing to the Italian opera that is blaring on the stereo, and I promise to talk like Julia Child as I teach them to make an apple pie. I will cook twice as much dinner and share it with a friend "just for nice." I will have the widow from next door over for tea more often....I will just let her talk....I will listen....the laundry can wait. I will call people on the phone just to say "Hi." I will visit/call my folks more.

I will worry less — play more.
Think less — act more.
Frown less — smile more.

As I write this, I feel better. I thought the answer was to pull some of the things off the schedule, but here I just added all these things....and now my life feels wide open....comfortable....peaceful. I feel like the burden to **do** has been lifted. Someday I will truly discover the difference between being a "human-being" and being a "human-doing." Today I caught a glimpse. I just wanted to share. Enjoy your little people. Enjoy your journey.

Editorial



As we three (Barbara, Genevieve and I) each proof-read this issue before it went to the printers, we each kept saying to ourselves, "This is a **good** Keystone." It just seemed to have a good balance of articles which supported one another and were mostly pretty punchy. We sure hope others think the same!

In fact, I would like to pull out and highlight some of the statements from this issue which we reckon are keys to some of the wisdom being uncovered or perhaps re-discovered by home educators now that we've been out of both the compulsory state school system and also any private schooling institution for some years. Some of us old-timers are starting to see and evaluate things according to a home education perspective; we are used to the idea of family-based education as the norm, rather than the state school classroom and all that it spawns as the benchmark for what is "normal". Consequently we see things others don't see, and we see possible reasons for current problems as well as possible solutions. Some of these statements are by myself and Barbara; another by a pioneer who started home educating 13 years before we did; another by thoroughly home educated teenagers; another by a more recent home educating mum. Here they are:

"Here is an agent of the state sitting in judgement on my chosen lifestyle, evaluating the way I relate to my own children. I do not need, nor do I want, confirmation or affirmation or approval from a secular state upon my Christian lifestyle." — CS

"The lovely folks from the MoE and ERO are the face, but not the heart, of these huge, powerful state agencies. We home educators may read from their personableness and friendliness messages that are not shared by the official MoE or ERO policy positions." — CS

"We have a responsibility before God and our parents to make the most of our time, our opportunities and our lives." — A & EB

"**If** a home-located alternative learning arrangement meant simply tacking on a prayer each day, or an extra course in Bible study, it **wouldn't** be worth all the time and expense. **But I teach my children at home because I believe that all of life is religious.**" — VBB

"Given that the very eternal lives of children are at stake here, Christian parents who do not see the problem with compulsory, secular, state schooling are in denial." — BNS

"The Hebrew way, the Biblical way to spiritual maturity, is not via studying in order to gain knowledge. It is by studying in order to know how to more perfectly obey, do, practice, follow, perform, think, speak and otherwise behave according to the Scriptures." — C&BS

"Today I caught a glimpse of what life is all about. I just wanted to share. Enjoy your little people. Enjoy your journey." — JK

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

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

The Home Education Foundation is a charitable trust established to serve, promote and strengthen the home education community in New Zealand and beyond. Since November 1998 the Foundation has contracted Craig & Barbara Smith (whose seven 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 TelstraClear 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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Teaching Tips

The Benefits of Long Division by Pencil

by Janice Kerswell
 of New Jersey, U.S.A.



John & Janice Kerswell and children.

I have been thinking a lot about formal math instruction for the last couple of months. A group of home schooling moms from our church gets together once a month to pray for each other. At our last meeting the topic of formal math came up in conversation. Several of the moms commented about how useless long-division was. Comments like: Why did we ever have to learn that? What was the point? Why should a ten-year-old struggle over long-division? We should just let them use a calculator.

I couldn't keep silent any more. I told them what I had told my ten-year-old six months ago when he was complaining about long-division. He asked, "Why do I have to do this anyway? I hate this. It's too hard." My reply was along these lines:

We do long-division for three reasons:

1. You have to work neatly in order to do complex long-division.
2. You have to stay focused in order to do complex long-division. You can't stop in the middle, stare into space and go back to the problem without making a mistake.
3. When you finish the problem, you have to multiply the quotient and the divisor to check your answer. If the product does not equal the dividend, then you have to *go back and carefully find your mistake* — without throwing a fit.

Why is that process useful? Because of long-division's sake? Of course not. Think about all of the things that you do in life that require neatness, diligence and patience? Mathematics is an excellent tool to develop those skills. It is the one area of the curriculum that doesn't require a lot of creativity, so it can be done independently without excuses. My children are required to finish their math papers within a limited amount of time. There is no time allowed for talking, staring into space or goofing around. They have to work independently, quickly and carefully — keeping their brains focused on the task at hand. It is easy to tell if they have been working or not; the paper doesn't lie. It is an excellent exercise in self-control, and self-control is one of the fruits that my children

need help to develop. I use arithmetic to develop that.

I realize that some leaders in the homeschooling movement do not promote formal, text-book math instruction in the early grades. Self-control can be developed through

folding laundry, washing dishes, cleaning bathrooms and a host of other ways. My children do those things too. Those tasks, however, require the use of their bodies. An age-appropriate amount of arithmetic trains them to sit at a table, hold still and focus their minds on the task at hand. It is an entirely different skill. I am grateful that my children are mastering it. It makes teaching them a pleasure.

Arithmetic, when applied appropriately, can be used to meet higher goals, and I feel like sometimes people fail to see it as a useful tool.

(Janice writes: "My husband, John, and I live just outside New York City with our three children. We have been homeschooling for five years. I have had plenty

(Continued on page 30: Teaching)

Christian Home Education

<http://www.home-school.com.au>

Suppliers of
Singapore Maths
 Curriculum products in Australia and NZ

I am awaiting a shipment of Singapore Maths products and expect to be able to offer a full range of Singapore Maths Products from the middle of June 2004.

In the mean time <http://www.home-school.com.au> offers resources, home education information, articles, suggested reading and tips.

Website :

proach, each family member recognises how much each needs the other: the children see the vital nature of their contribution, even if it is only making the beds and washing the dishes, for it allows mum and dad more time to devote to the big task of winning the world for Jesus Christ and for adorning the Gospel with their good works of excellence and gracious attitudes and unstinting hospitality and edifying conversation.

You can see how radically different this hands-on, relational, interactive Hebrew approach is to the theoretical, intellectual, individualistic Greek approach to doing things that we all grew up with. The Hebrew approach creates and values families and closely connected communities. The Greek approach values and creates the lone ranger, the “autonomous individual” which the state school system is actively promoting and which the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is always talking about.

Yes, the family is the powerhouse of evangelism, education, discipleship training and Gospel effort, especially within a Biblical church fellowship and under mature church leadership. We may well feel some pressure from our local churches to get more involved in church activities, but we home educators need to help the church see that we are in fact fully engaged in doing church work. As the home education movement matures beyond the pioneering stage, the institutional churches will, Lord willing, recognise this more readily than at present and begin to encourage us more directly. More on this in a future article.

Tom Eldredge in his book, *Safely Home* says,

The sad truth is that rather than building a distinctively biblical approach to life, education, and work, the Christian community has been absorbed into the culture, such that the priorities of many of our local churches and church leaders are often at war with the Christian family.

The way of life God designed for His people supports itself in every way. There is no conflict within God's design. Each of God's institutions was designed in such a way that it does not diminish the importance of the family. God even set aside one day a week for the Israelites to spend together as a family: the Sabbath.

From sundown on the last workday in the week, until the same time Sabbath evening, God's people were to go home and rest (Exodus 16:29), reflect on the goodness of God over the past week and worship Him. It was a prime teaching opportunity for the father. It also served as a weekly reminder that life was not based on survival of the fittest but on relationship and faith. The Sabbath said, trust in God to provide, look how He is providing! Jesus taught that this special day was not to be observed as a mere legalistic requirement. The Sabbath was made for man's mental, physical and spiritual refreshment (Mark 2:27, Isaiah 58:13-14). It was to be a day of sharing and hospitality (Exodus 20:10). It also served as a time for teaching, a time spent in every home preserving the spiritual heritage of the family.

God has established the pattern and time sequence in creation for the education of children. The first six years of life present an opportunity that cannot be postponed. At no other time in the child's life is it as easy for the child to learn language. In fact, the child will never learn another language as well as the language he learns during those years. It is also a time when the child can absorb facts phenomenally. The Hebrew mother, in a loving and joyful way, cultivated a thirst and love for learning in her children and created the opportunities and moments in which to give them the treasure of knowledge.

The Hebrew mothers were diligent and creative in the way they taught their children. Hebrew mothers know if they were not diligent in their training of their children, they as mothers would be brought to shame (Proverbs 29:15; 22:15). The Scriptures teach that when a woman serves her family well, her children and husband will arise up and call her blessed (Proverbs 31:28). Hebrew mothers knew the importance of wisdom, language and the Word of God (Deuteronomy 6:6-9).

The Hebrew father had three responsibilities: to instruct his son in the law, to bring him into wedlock and to teach him a handcraft. By the time a son reached age thirteen, he was held responsible to know the law and to keep it. Since the father was responsible for this part of his son's training, it is evident that the father's involvement started early in the life on his son. In fact, the Hebrew fathers began teaching their sons the law as soon as they were able to speak, enabling the son to develop a manly spirit.

The Hebrew mothers did not wait for learning readiness in their children: they developed it. Much if not most of Hebrew training was oral (Proverbs 1:8). Even before a child can read, he absorbs tremendous amounts of information and grows in knowledge and understanding as he listens to his parents. Parents can help children to learn by speaking clearly and repetitiously so that children will hear what they must hear.

Mothers need to relearn how to make the maximum use of their homes as worship centres, hospitality centres and education and craft centres. Some of these craft centres will no doubt become platforms for the development of home industries. Often home industries are the first steps towards deliverance from the many forms of bondage in which today's families find themselves.

Home education is not an end in and of itself. It is a God-ordained means to a biblical end: The training of the child after the image of the God who made him; the building of the family; and the promotion of a multi-generational legacy of faithfulness.¹

Notes:

1. *Safely Home* by Tom Eldredge. See ad page 18.
2. Emphasis added
3. Heart of Wisdom website: <http://homeschoolunitstudies.com/TG/Philosophy/11BiblicalvsGREEK.htm>

Robin & Lauren Swafford

of Collingwood

Swaff (Robin) and I (Lauren) met at Lincoln University and were married, in the summer holidays between the 3rd and 4th years of our Agricultural Science degrees 21 years ago. We had both become Christians at age 18, Swaff at boarding school and myself at my first year of university.

Three years later while working on a Nelson dairy farm, we gave birth to our first child the same day the farmer and his wife birthed their fourth child. I couldn't comprehend why the wife was considering home educating their children, and yet looking back, all of their children ended up going to public schools and all of ours have been home-educated.

Swaff and I became involved in a group that was trying to establish a Christian school in Nelson, but when Aidan was 3 ¾, we moved to a dairying job in Golden Bay (NW of Nelson), a Paradise-on-earth on the far side of the notorious Takaka Hill! Being isolated meant no available Christian school, but the Lord placed us in a church family where two families were home schooling their children...and did we watch them closely, especially noting the children's ability to relate well to all age groups.

I became very involved in the local Playcentre with our three preschoolers, becoming a Supervisor and being fascinated by child development. It was a natural progression of this that led us to home educate Aidan when he turned five.

The local families we knew well were using the ACE curriculum. As we knew of no alternatives, we slotted into that system and brought the 'schoolroom scenario' into our home.

Also at this time we fostered a 15-year-old Nelson boy who had been having respite care with us since he was 11. Graham tested out at 7-year-old reading and maths levels, and after reviewing phonics and two years of ACE, he reached an 11½ year level before stopping to milk on the farm and then leaving home just before 18. Our fostering experience was extremely stressful. His reaction to his mother's neglect and rejection of him was shown in his rejection of me as the 'Mum figure'. We had suicide threats, angry scenes and an 'emotionally frozen' teenager who refused to face up to any of his past pain and so couldn't grow close to anybody – he physically went stiff if touched at all. My stomach was physically tight for months until the day he left. Fortunately our children were under eight when he left, and the bad habits they saw and at times copied soon disappeared. Our advice for families considering



Lucy 8, Sarah 14, Kadi 11, Lauren, Olivia 12, Sorie 9, Robin, Reuben 16, Aidan 18.

fostering would be to aim for children considerably younger than your own, thus lessening the negative experiences and habits in the foster child and also their uptake by your own children.

ACE was useful during my 4th pregnancy as I could lie on the couch and vaguely oversee Aidan and Graham. As Reuben began schooling, I realised that this system was not suited to our ADHD son who needed action and hands-on activities. I borrowed a Weaver curriculum unit on 'Creation' from the Shands in the Marlborough Sounds, and we had a wonderful time of learning together. We were amazed by Reuben's desire to get up early and complete his ACE maths and English before breakfast so he could relax and enjoy our Creation studies. Unfortunately, with two preschoolers, I felt I couldn't sustain the hours I put in preparing for each day's learning, so it was back to full ACE but with a deeper realisation that our family needed a different approach.

When Reuben was 10, we began him on the ACE-provided Essential Learning Systems computerised learning enhancement programme. Many families have used this programme and seen huge improvements in their child's ability to learn. We used it intensively for eight months in an attempt to help him to stay focused more on his work and hopefully learn more. He already had a good reading level, but his spelling and handwriting were poor. We did not complete the recommended 10 months as he totally lost heart in it. Although we saw writing and spelling improvements, we noted no change in his ability to be still and focus. Our little boy who was in constant motion (e.g. walking around and around the table or room while reading or talking to you — made us dizzy! — and if sitting, he'd always have an arm or a leg swinging), is now a typically active teenager.

Enter major family events!! After Graham left, I longed to have more children. After much discussion we decided to adopt two overseas children, looking specifically for children that would not readily be adopted. In 1994 we began the process of adopting children from Sierra Leone, West Africa, a country ravaged by civil rebel attacks and foreign greed for diamonds. Having chosen two young children, we heard that a sibling to one of our children had been found – would we consider adopting her as well? After prayer and counsel from friends, we agreed with the prospect of fitting seven children into two twin bedrooms! Immediately we were offered a sharemilking job with a house with **huge** bedrooms – a boys' and girls' dorm – God proved faithful!

KEYSTONE

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

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

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

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

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

tament Law. Now he wanted to study the wisdom of the Greeks. The rabbi recalled God's words in Joshua 1:8: "You shall meditate on it [Biblical Law] day and night." "Go, then," said the rabbi. "Find a time that is neither day nor night, and learn then Greek wisdom."³

Let's invest our time, our days and nights, studying.... and doing!.... the really important things, the things that God tells us to teach our children. That is, teach them to live a life of obedience in all areas by ourselves living a life of obedience in all areas and ensuring our children are involved with us in all our activities. This contrasts to our normal method of lectures supplemented with workbooks and texts as we strive to see our children acquire superior Biblical and secular knowledge. We can still acquire this superior knowledge, in fact we must, but we can do it in the context of doing things and being involved in planning and executing activities, rather than in the context of lectures and discussion for the sake of gaining the knowledge. In the classroom or lecture model of instruction, there is no immediate use for the knowledge just gained, except perhaps for the purposes of sitting an exam. And then, of course, that body of knowledge is quickly forgotten. But as we plan and do things in obedience to the many things the Scriptures commend to us, we can gain knowledge in the doing, a more practical sort of knowledge. We can also make use of the lecture/classroom model, but with the added dimension that we are learning this for the specific objective of putting it into immediate use.

No, this is not neglecting our academics. John D. Beckett explains in his book *Loving Monday*, "A Biblical worldview has [great] implications for those of us in the secular, Greek-thinking West. As we allow it, the Bible speaks to us concerning government, economics, education, science, art, communications and business. Really, it speaks to all of life."³ Have a look at the very first words God Himself spoke to Adam and Eve at their creation, Genesis 1:28: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." What sort of academics will we need to fulfill this one commandment? Animal husbandry, physics, chemistry, biology, geology, mining, metallurgy, engineering, mathematics, statistics, soil sciences, meteorology, horticulture, agriculture, genetics, etc., etc. Combining the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20 with the call to bear both the message and ministry of reconciliation as Christ's ambassadors in II Corinthians 5:17-20, we find we will also need to master, in order to obey these verses, communications in all its forms (written, spoken, non-verbal body language, electronic), art, history, languages, cultural studies, inter-personal relationships, music, poetry, education., etc., etc.

Meditating on God's Word *is* educating your children is building good relationships. The objective of medi-

tation and study is to obey more properly and consistently what we find in God's Word. To obey in this way we will need to master the academic disciplines. Now, it is clear that no one person can master all of these academic disciplines listed in the previous paragraph. Here is where each person, as he matures, senses God's personal calling to him to specialise in one area of work in His Garden or another. That is, Johnny does not become a carpenter because he likes to work in wood, although if his calling from God is

**The Hebrew mothers did
not wait for learning
readiness in their children:
they *developed* it.**

carpentry, he will most probably like it. But Johnny's work as a carpenter is to glorify God by bringing every thought and every effort and every product of that occupation into captivity to Christ, acknowledging Him as Lord over all. His service in this industry provides others with things they need to advance God's kingdom in their particular spheres of specialty and influence.

Home educating mums have a far more direct line in building God's kingdom on earth than does Johnny the carpenter. They are training up disciples for Jesus Christ from the time they are conceived until the day they leave home, launching them into a world that could be transformed, as history has shown us, by the committed and focused efforts of any one of them, an Augustine, a Whitfield, a Wesley, a Carey, a Wilberforce. That is, such mums can and should be wielding undisputed authority, under God and under their husbands, over the lives of their children for 16, 18, 20 years. There is simply no other position of such immense power and influence under the sun. The imprint that a God-fearing mother's handiwork can have on the mind, heart, soul and character of a number of children she might rear, an imprint that is felt and passed on to one or two further generations, numbering dozens of people, is immeasurable and second only to the impact of our Triune God's own sovereign work of accomplishing His will on this earth in the affairs of men. We have mostly lost sight of this unbelievably powerful position of mother hood. Why else would any woman willingly trade it for as little as \$7.50 an hour?

Meditating on God's Word is educating your children *is* building good relationships. The key to these good relationships is that this task is so immense, so comprehensive, so far-reaching that all involved recognise it is far bigger than any of them can handle as an individual. They are working on this task together as a family unit. Team work, between husband and wife, between mum/dad and the children, among the siblings, is essential for making any progress in fulfilling this task. This task becomes an integral part of, not additional to, the family's *raison d'etre*, its reason for existing as a family unit, with each member holding a vital portfolio in the running of the family corporation. (This language may sound strange, for few of us have thought in these terms. We are instead used to thinking of our children as the little people we raise as our contribution to society, and once they're off our hands, we can get back to enjoying the good life.) In this Hebrew ap-

When the Going Gets Tough



An Integrated Lifestyle

by Craig & Barbara Smith

In Part Eight of “Keeping Going When the Going Gets Tough” (*Keystone* of March 2004) we discussed the need to be building strong **interpersonal relationships** with our children and spouse. We discussed how it is hard work, very hard work. It doesn’t just happen all by itself. We need to be working on it **diligently** (when we sit in our house, walk by the way, lie down and rise up) with our children. We can have no rest from this. Tom Eldredge in *Safely Home*¹ says “we should devote enormous amounts of time to them (our children), even to the point of *weariness*.”²

So we need to have strong interpersonal relationships with our children, and we also need to look at what, why and how we are teaching them.

Psalm 119:98, “Thy commandment makes me wiser than my enemies for it is ever with me.”

Psalm 119:99, “I have more understanding than all my teachers, for thy testimonies are my meditation.”

Psalm 119:100, “I understand more than the aged, for I keep thy precepts.”

When we teach the commandments, statutes and ordinances **diligently** to our children, then they will be wiser than their enemies, then they will have more understanding than their teachers. When our children apply and keep the precepts, then they will understand more than the aged. In Deuteronomy 6, God is commanding us to teach His commandments, statutes and ordinances **diligently** to our children, and we should talk of them when we sit in our house and when we walk by the way, and when we lie down, and when we rise. To our ears that means all the time. If we do this with our children all the time, with our whole hearts, then when they are older and on their own, we believe they will do likewise. Look at Proverbs 6:20-22. “My son, keep your father’s commandment, and forsake not your mother’s teaching. Bind them upon your heart always; tie them about your neck. When you walk they will lead you; when you lie down, they will watch over you; and when you awake, they will talk with you.” If we spend 5-10 minutes each day teaching our children the commandments, statutes and ordinances, then when they are older and look back on their father’s commandments to them and their mother’s teaching, that is how much time they will invest in the commandments, statutes and ordinances: 5-10 minutes each day. But if we command and teach our children **diligently** when we sit in our house, walk by the way, lie down and when we rise up, then when our children are grown and

look back on their father’s commandments to them and their mother’s teaching, they will likewise teach them diligently to their own children. Remember Proverbs 22:6: “Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it.” We are required to **train** our children in a very definite manner as opposed to the other child-rearing strategy of just letting them grow up in spite of us. Training requires hard work. Those in bodily training pommel their bodies. We need to train our children in the commandments of God. There is no rest from it. It is a 24-hour-a-day job, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Psalm 1 also talks this way. The man of God who does not seek counsel from the wicked or stand with the sinners but whose “delight is in the law of the Lord, and on His law he meditates **day and night**....*In all that he does, he prospers.*” Teach diligently....meditate day and night. This is all hard work. But the blessings of obedience are repeated: “In all that he does, he prospers.”

You say this is just going to add to your stress, not take away from it. “Am I supposed to educate my children as well as spend all my time in building good relationships, and then spend all day and night in meditation on the Scriptures? How can anyone do that?” You see three huge tasks enumerated here. Looking at it that way is most definitely a recipe for burnout. We want to show you that all three are done at once. Meditating on God’s Word *is* educating your children *is* building good relationships.

Abraham Joshua Heschel encapsulated this approach to study by saying that the Greeks study in order to understand while the Hebrews study in order to revere. God’s Word and ways are ineffable: only by doing them does one understand them.³

This is the great divide between the way virtually all of us have been trained up by our schooling — to see *the acquisition of knowledge* by schooling as the road to success. As Christians we even apply this to the Bible, thinking that by studying it and knowing what it says we gain spiritual maturity. No. The Hebrew way, the Biblical way to spiritual maturity, is not via studying in order to gain knowledge. It is by studying in order to know how to more perfectly obey, do, practice, follow, perform, behave according to the Scriptural commandments, ordinances and precepts. That is, we study the Bible to learn how to love and revere the Lord. This is to know Him: to love Him, which is to obey Him (I John 5:3). **Then**, having studied and followed through *by doing* what we found in our studies, **then** we will gain knowledge. It is a different type of knowledge: heart knowledge borne of walking the walk, walking in obedience with the Lord we love, as opposed to pure theoretical head knowledge. This head knowledge approach is how we were all taught at school. It is the Greek method. It is the kind of knowledge that puffs up rather than builds up (I Corinthians 8:1). Knowing the Lord by loving Him in obedience is what builds up and gives us true knowledge of Him.

We could put it another way: The Jewish Talmud tells a story of an elderly rabbi’s counsel to his young nephew. The boy already knew the Torah, the Old Tes-

In February 1996 I suffered a major nervous breakdown following a too-hecktic year of home schooling, Playcentre supervision, orchestra involvement, etc. Although I had warning symptoms from August ’95 and pulled out of extra activities by the end of the year, I still went on having migraines, one of which culminated in the breakdown. I was unable to move by myself for two days, too scared to go outside the house for a week, bedridden for six weeks and on potent medication. I still remember Swaff gently supporting me as I bravely walked once around the house after one week. There followed many panic attacks and the inability to piece together the words people spoke to me, let alone reply. I learned to avoid situations that could cause me to be introspective, including church, and spent days in bed or on the couch being encouraged by Radio Rhema. Through this period the farmer we worked for picked up the slack on the farm, and his wife did housework and brought tea every night – Godsend!

You can probably imagine that we and others had some major concerns about my ability to cope with more children, especially as healing from mental disorders is usually very slow – in fact I learnt to look back a fortnight to see slight signs of improvement rather than be discouraged by expecting anything more rapid. I had an incredibly strong sense that the Lord was asking me, “Who’s voice are you listening to?” and wanting me to trust Him. Then one day as the radio played, I tuned in to the final phrase of Chris and Rosie Boom’s song ‘Dancing in Somalia’ and heard ... “They need Him in Sierra Leone, you must obey his will”. Case closed!

Still slightly ‘shaky’ in myself, Swaff and I prepared to go to S.L. for our court case in June ’97. Tragically on May 25th a rebel coup occurred with rebels entering the main prison in the capital city and arming the prisoners with AK47s. Any Government personnel were killed if discovered, the city was ransacked, including our papers at the Social Welfare Department, and looting, raping and killing were rife. Our children were in a city orphanage with 15 other children destined for adoptions into Canada, USA and NZ. We have stories of them lying for two days on the upstairs floor while rebels demanded to come in to find the white American woman who was the overseer. While expatriates were being rapidly evacuated, all adoptive families were lobbying governments worldwide in an attempt to rescue our children. Finally the U.S. Secretary of State gave the all-clear for the children’s evacuation, and a brave Lebanese carpenter took three loads of frightened children through the rebel-filled streets to get them to the evacuation hotel. After spending the day sheltering under a hedge from torrential rain over the road from the hotel, the hotel manager finally heard from the USA that the children were allowed in, and they slept the night in the foyer. U.S. Marines helicoptered them out at dawn and rebels ransacked the hotel 12 hours later - Phew!! That was a little close, Lord!

A couple of days travelling north to Guinea on the *USS Kearsage*, seven weeks in poor conditions in Guinea, with the High Commission for Refugees representative doing all within her power to relocate the children back over the border to S.L. refugee camps. Finally the USA and Canadian officials were ready for their children to

come to their prospective families. NZ however refused to allow the eight NZ-bound children to come home, stating that we had to reapply to adopt them through the CYFS system in NZ. The day the other 10 children were to be flown out to Chicago, the USA again showed mercy to our children and granted them three-month transit visas to allow our NZ adoptions to proceed (Praise the Lord again!).

The eight NZ children arrived in the USA and were cared for by total strangers in a foreign environment. During the five months it took for us to reprocess our adoptions through the NZ courts, our children again had to face a major change as their three-month visas expired, and we had to move to a new community which was a Political Haven for Illegal Aliens. During this second phase of our USA stay, I was forced to leave the children and return for our court case in NZ. Again our children had grown attached to someone who filled the ‘Mum’ role in their lives only to have her leave and be replaced by other caregivers. CYFS opposed our adoptions on the grounds of my health, and that we were isolated geographically (Golden Bay), ideologically (Christians) and sociologically (home schoolers)! We thought these three factors were positives! We won our case, and Swaff and I arrived home with Kadijatu (4), Sorie (3) and Lucy (2) on December 19, 1997.

It has been a blessing to us to have these African children with their outgoing personalities and love of dance and music join our family. We have also been greatly encouraged by other Sierra Leonean and African families in NZ who have welcomed us into their lives.

While adjusting to having a larger family, I began to assess Kadi’s pre-reading skills and to my horror found that she could not even trace along a straight or wavy line with her finger. Sorie and Lucy spent much of ’98 amusing themselves while I tried to work intensively with Kadi. In ’99, when making an effort to include Sorie in more of the activities, I became aware that his learning difficulties were at least as serious. We ended up with assistance from a speech therapist, a neuro-developmental therapist and a private educational developmental therapist. We also enrolled Sorie with Correspondence School Special Ed. Services and used the material for Kadi (she was too old to enrol at 6) and are still using copies of that material with Sorie. It is astounding to see the impact of early childhood trauma on our children’s brain development – basic brain pathways were just not developed as our children sought to survive the traumas they had faced. In contrast, their survival skills are highly developed.

It has been an enlightening experience to educate these two children who struggle to grasp basic concepts and to accomplish basic tasks. I have spent at a guess 100 times more effort with Sorie than an average child needs who has had normal stimulation through early childhood – but that’s what commitment to our children sometimes demands. I am so rewarded by tiny indications of progress that went totally unnoticed with our other children, such as his putting a slight emphasis on a word while reading that shows he has grasped the

nuance of meaning intended.

In March 2000 we attended a Nelson region home educators' camp where we heard for the first time of the Waring history curriculum, which could be studied together as a family. Although I had been hoping to change our style of schooling for quite a while, Swaff now felt that this course could work for our family. By now we were both just feeling like 'policemen' constantly on our children's academic tails while also being unable to keep up with what each child was studying about and having no opportunities for 'together' learning and discussion.

So we announced to the children our intention to ease out of ACE. This was a threatening prospect for the children as all their friends still used this curriculum, and for me it was as daunting as when we first began home schooling nine years earlier. We continued with ACE Science and Literature, picked up *Spectrum Spelling, Italic Handwriting* and *Making Math Meaningful* (MMM), a very hands-on approach to all maths, and began 'Together Time' to study history (based on the Waring study guides) from morning tea till lunch three mornings a week.

After two years of getting everyone to study all the history nitty-gritty that I got sidetracked into, we decided late last year not to order a million books for each unit from the National Library which overloaded me with preparation and caused many hours of dry reading. So for our last two units we have picked only the key events and found all the important information in our books at home and from the local library. The children have read more biographies and novels relating to the period and done one presentation on a research topic of their choice – much more relaxed. Personally I am retaining more of the key points studied, as I am not overloaded with less relevant information.

At the beginning of 2004 I still felt challenged that we had too much of a 'school' atmosphere in our home rather than an 'education' atmosphere – I was overseeing academics from morning till dinner time many days. Being inspired by Raymond and Dorothy Moore's book *Stress-free Home Schooling* and the Waring's books *Reaping the Harvest* and *Things I Wish We'd Known*, I rehashed our daily schedule. Thus we now have:

8:30 – Family prayer time

8:35 – Individual devotions (which I do with the younger two).

8:50-10:15 – Academics (in the dining room area).

10:45-12:15 – Together Time: Mon. & Thurs. it's Maori language. Tues. & Wed. it's History.

1:30 ---? – Home/Farm/Community Service: there's a variety such as Rest Home visits, preserving, gardening, farm help, making cards, board games, etc.

Fridays don't appear on the schedule after morning break as we either have home educators' field trips, library visits to study a topic of the children's choice or read at home. This is a great way to end the week for all of us!

During spring calving we spend eight weeks with far more responsibilities on the farm and at home. We stop subjects that need Mum or Dad (history, maths, spelling) and pick up fun activity books, largely from Curriculum Concepts. Each child slots in their subjects between their extra jobs at any time of the day. Our older boys have worked part-time for other farmers at this time and the younger ones earn 'spring money' at home.

Now about us individually: Aidan (18). We were somewhat unconventional in his final year of schooling last year in that we enrolled him in the local Area School to do Year 13. This was for two reasons: (1) he couldn't decide whether to follow his interests in music (plays clarinet and lead guitar), outdoor adventure/sporting or a police career, and (2) as a result of (1) we had trouble finding subjects that motivated him. Eventually Aidan, Swaff & I worked out the following: four bursary subjects; National Computing Certificate – Level 2 through Correspondence School; and Year 12 Outdoor Education. Our thinking was that, with passing bursary, which he did, in the future he could easily gain entrance to university, if required, when more confident of his career choice. This year we encouraged him to do a one-year Contemporary Music Performance tertiary course at the Nelson School of Music as it teaches him skills he will always use even if music is not his ultimate career and gives him a year to further mature before choosing his future direction.

Reuben (16) is doing MMM-Algebra and Apologia-Physical Science and will soon also do Apologia Chemistry and Physics. He is enrolled with the Correspondence School for Computing, German and Maori. Reuben is enrolled in a Building Course run through the local school. He spends Fridays from morning tea onwards either on a building site or learning the theory of building. He hopes to finance his piloting dreams by working with a builder for a few years. He plays violin in the Golden Bay orchestra, bass guitar in church, lead guitar and vocals with a school band aiming to enter the Rock Quest and has been involved in the leadership of an after school youth group. In his spare time he fiddles with gadgets...kinaesthetic learner!

Sarah (14) studies MMM-6 and Apologia-Biology. In the afternoon she does German and Computing with Reuben and some ACE Literature. She plays flute in the orchestra and takes Children's Church classes. She enjoys reading, horse riding and is a creative cook, working summers at a local cafe.

Olivia (12) studies MMM-4, Apologia-General Science, Spectrum Spelling, Edvantage Computing and ACE Literature and Typing. Finding Apologia has been wonderful for our children, especially Olivia. She has gone from not enjoying ACE Science to enjoying science with comments like, "Can I do extra today to get on to the next experiment!" She loves cats and flowers, making many creative cards with pressed flowers and is just getting into making recycled paper.

Kadi (11) studies MMM-3, Italic Handwriting, Spectrum Spelling and ACE Science, Animal Science, Literature and Typing. Kadi tries so hard to learn and has

7. Since the state schools are by their own confession humanistic and secular in their instruction, the education offered is officially Godless and totally unacceptable to Christians.
8. State schools are adopting curricula and policies teaching that the homosexual lifestyle is acceptable. (NZ schools are obliged in addition to recognise divorce for any reason, de facto setups, serial partners and prostitution as valid.)
9. Homosexual organizations are approved student "clubs" in state schools.
10. Since children are like arrows in the hand of a warrior (Psalm 127:3-5) to be aimed for the greatest impact in the kingdom of God, it is foolish for Christians to give their children to be trained in schools run by the enemies of God, just as it would be foolish for a warrior to give his arrows to his enemy.
11. Training to be a faithful witness should be a vital part of a Christian child's education.
12. Since thousands of Christian parents send their children to state schools where they receive a Godless, anti-Christian education seven hours a day, 180 days a year, being taught that God is irrelevant to every area of life, many of these children are converted to an anti-Christian worldview rather than evangelizing their schoolmates.
13. Research by the Nehemiah Institute has discovered that acceptance of a secular humanist worldview by Christian children attending state schools has increased dramatically over the last fifteen years.
14. The Southern Baptist Council on Family Life reported in 2002 that 88% of the children raised in evangelical homes leave church at the age of 18, never to return.
15. Since the Bible teaches that the companion of fools will be destroyed (Proverbs 13:20), and that people are prone to be deceived into thinking that evil company will not corrupt them (1 Corinthians 15:33), it is incumbent upon ministers of the gospel to warn God's people that their children are being corrupted by spending half of their waking hours instructed by teachers who are required by law to inculcate a Godless education.
16. Since many adult Christians teach in state schools, they should not be discouraged from labouring as missionaries to unbelieving colleagues and students; rather, they should be commended and encouraged to be salt and light in a dark and decaying state school system.

With these points as givens or starting points in their thinking, the Resolution authors then proceed with a big "therefore, because of all these things, we strongly urge the SB Convention to:"

1. encourage all officers and members of the SB Convention and the churches associated with it to remove their children from the government schools and see to it that they receive a thoroughly Christian education, for the glory of

God, the good of Christ's Church and the strength of their own commitment to Jesus, and

2. encourage all churches associated with the SB Convention to work aggressively to counsel parents regarding their obligation to provide their children with a Christian education, and
3. encourage all churches associated with the SB Convention to provide all of their children with Christian alternatives to government school education, either through home schooling or thoroughly Christian private schools.

There are some fairly heavy implications emanating from this document for all Christian home educators as well as for all Christians. First, it would appear, from the way the SBs have presented their understanding of the Scriptures, that for Christian parents to send a child to a state school is by definition disobedience to the Lord. That means it is a sin. Second, if it is a sin, it appears that our involvement in home education is a lot more than a mere preference of some kind, but is in fact a vital step of obedience to the Lord. Third, if our home education is a matter of obedience to Christ, it seems to immediately impart to our home education enterprise a more holy or a more serious tone: we have to do this right, for we really have no choice. That is, the option some of us have in the backs of our minds, that we can always send the children off to school if this home education doesn't work out...that this is *not* an option. Fourth, if it is a sin then we now have an obligation to warn our fellow believers, those who are sending their children to state schools, of their disobedience. Of course there are all kinds of downstream implications of doing this: coming across as some kind of self-appointed judge going around condemning everyone, upsetting many very comfortable lifestyles, alienating good friends and family, putting church leadership in the position of either having to side with you or side line you. None of this is at all attractive.

I must say, I have been thinking along the lines of this resolution for a couple of years already. I see a need to warn others that state schools are thoroughly unacceptable places to send children from Christian families. (Now, there may be the odd exception: I know a small school near here where the principal is a Christian, all the staff are Christians and they basically filter out a lot of the garbage. However they are not free to deal with anything from an overtly Christian perspective, for if any unbelieving child should report it to an unbelieving parent and that parent were to complain to the MoE, that school staff could get into a world of trouble.) Yet the impact of such a warning is such that it seems to me we need to formulate a strategy in how to go about it. Publicising this SB Resolution is a good start: for us outside of the SB denomination, we can let the issue be raised by these total "outsiders". The international media is already picking it up, and we can each help spread the awareness of this move. That in itself will spark off debates about the issue in many places or simply raise awareness of the issue. I can see myself re-working the SB Resolution into a form I could then present to my own church denomination, either a discussion document for the congregation or just for the

(Continued on page 30: *Sinful*)

Worldviews in Focus

Is It Sinful to Send Christian Children to State Schools?

by Craig Smith



Something is really going to hit the fan in the USA soon. It promises to be so big, it will very likely splatter all the way over to New Zealand, Australia and the UK.

The Southern Baptist (SB) denomination in the USA has 16.3 million members. A couple of SB gentlemen, totally pro-home education, are also totally convinced that for Christian parents simply to be consistent in their profession of the Christian religion, they must ensure their children receive a thoroughly Christian education. They say this against a backdrop not too different from the rest of the Western World: the public schools are now so openly and totally anti-Christian in official attitudes, pedagogical practise, educational philosophy and hidden curriculum, that they are positively dangerous and certainly no place for Christian children. These two gentlemen have drafted a resolution for the SB national convention 15-16 June 2004, calling on all these 16.3 million members to pull their children out of these godless public schools and either home educate them or find a decent Christian school.

The resolution measure is sponsored by T.C. Pinckney, a retired US Air Force Brigadier General whose three adult children all educate their children at home, and Bruce N. Shortt, a homeschooling dad and attorney who holds advanced degrees from both Harvard and Stanford Universities.

These men understand that a person's worldview is important and that it is developed as part of one's education. The resolution itself says, "Many Christian children in government schools are converted to an anti-Christian worldview rather than evangelizing their schoolmates." This at once answers a major objection Christians raise as to why their children *should be in* the state schools....to evangelise. It would appear it is the nonChristians who are evangelising the Christians. What else would one expect? Throw a young and immature Christian into a sea of secularism and he or she is bound to wash up on the beach secularised. If you throw a glove into the mud, you never expect to see the mud become glovey. Instead you know the glove will become muddy...every time.

Mr Shortt uses harsh words – more than justifiable given that it is the very eternal lives of children at stake here. He says Christian parents who do not see the problem are in denial; that since government schools are killing our children morally, spiritually and academically, we need to ask how dead do we want our children to be; that the fondly remembered little red schoolhouse of "the good old days" has really become

the little white sepulchre, a seething cauldron of spiritual, moral and academic pathologies; that it is nothing less than "spiritual blindness" that causes Christian parents to balk at the perceived "inconvenience" or "financial challenge" of kicking the public-school habit; that sending Christian children to these temples of secular humanist philosophy is "the grossest kind of sin." Preach it, brother!

Shortt also predicts that if 10-15% of children are pulled from government schools, the "US\$500 billion behemoth" which is the US public school system will be de-legitimized and will collapse financially. He welcomes both results! Here indeed is a man who understands that the state has no Biblical authority for running compulsory schools and is not afraid to spell out how Christians should respond and to embrace the inevitable fallout: many of his friends, and probably some relations, would lose their teaching jobs and could henceforward bad-mouth and cold-shoulder Mr Shortt. To live consistently with the Scriptures has always and will always exact a price: under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle Paul wrote, "Indeed all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (II Timothy 3:12).

Here following are listed the points made in the resolution. These points simply spell out where the SBs are coming from, that is, their worldview. Take careful note, dear brothers and sisters:

1. The Bible commands that fathers (and by implication all parents) are to bring up their children in the training and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4).
2. Having all authority in heaven and on earth, Jesus has commanded us to make disciples of our children and teach them to observe everything He has commanded (Matthew 28:19-20).
3. This means our children must learn to think Biblically about all the spheres of human thought, activity and life (Deuteronomy. 6:4-9) so as to take every thought captive to obey Christ (II Corinthians 10:5).
4. Our thinking is not to be conformed to this world's way of thinking but is to be renewed and sanctified by the truth of God's word (Romans 12:2; John 17:17).
5. The fear of the Lord is the *beginning* of knowledge (Proverbs 1:7). In Christ are hidden *all* the treasures of *wisdom and knowledge* (Colossians 2:3). Therefore, any instruction that does not begin with the fear of the Lord, teaching the centrality of Jesus Christ for understanding all of life – such as that offered in state schools – cannot properly be said to impart wisdom or knowledge.
6. Since Jesus said, "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters" (Luke 11:23), then it logically follows that any state school system that claims to be "neutral" with regard to Christ is actually anti-Christian. Consequently, children taught in state schools are receiving an anti-Christian education.

done well, now having a reading age of 9-10, but much lower spelling and comprehension levels and a huge struggle to grasp maths concepts, plus short-term memory loss. Kadi enjoys dancing and reading and is very interested in horses.

Sorie (9) completed MMM-K & 1 but is not ready to move on, so I have substituted some Curriculum Concepts pre-maths and maths recovery booklets plus a variety of hands-on activities. He uses ACE Science and Social Studies as early readers and writers and Rod & Staff's *Developing Reading Comprehension*. Sorie has Dyspraxia, which affects how he perceives everything and limits his use of what he does perceive. His obvious weaknesses are in retaining a visual image in his mind and transferring it elsewhere, especially to the hand for copying. Thus jigsaws, etc., are very hard work and learning to write the alphabet took four years. He now writes beautifully, but don't ask him to draw an unfamiliar shape because he just doesn't know which way to move the pencil to end up with that shape even if you ask him to copy it below yours. He is very pleased with being able to read short stories and is now at about a 6-7 year level and making steady progress. We don't know when he will be able to tie laces or make a bed that looks like it's been made, for fine motor skills are another issue – but he can sure run, play sport and jump his bike!

Lucy (8) studies MMM-2, Italic Handwriting, Spectrum Spelling, Developing Reading Comprehension and ACE Science and Animal Science. Lucy appears to have been far less affected by her traumatic early life than our other adopted children with the only noticeable factor being lower comprehension. She enjoys dancing, dramatic play and setting up farms and family scenes on the lounge floor.

As well as family, home, garden and farm commitments, Swaff enjoys playing clarinet at orchestra, guitar at church, dancing and hockey. I take time out at a women's coffee group and a 'funky' women's dance group and enjoy playing drums in church. As a family we occasionally do barndance / rock'n'roll / old time dance gigs.

It's taken a long time to share our story with you because home educating is not a segment of family life we can easily extract from the rest of our life together. As parents we enjoy the flexibility of our lifestyle, having whole-family involvement in many activities, having major input regarding our children's moral values and character and going through life's ups and downs together. We are convinced that our children who have struggled academically would be at the bottom of the remedial and behavioural heap if in a public school and are proud of the learning levels they have attained thus far. In hindsight the only regret that I have is not discovering the difference between 'bringing school into our home' and 'life educating our family' sooner!

A home educating quote to leave you with: Psalm 25:4-5:

"Show me your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths; guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Saviour, and my hope is in you all day long."

The Faith of Us Fathers



What Is Your Stand with the State?

by Craig S. Smith

Gentlemen, the Lord is constantly and consistently calling us to higher ground. It means we need to claw our way "uphill" in a spiritual and behavioural and attitudinal sense, fighting the world, the flesh and the devil to make any progress along the road of sanctification. A part of me dislikes the implications of passages such as Philippians 3:13-14 where it says, "...forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on...toward the upward call of God in Christ Jesus," for I see there a whole entire life of hard work, pressing on, always moving to higher ground. And that is not just struggling with my personal self, it includes husbanding my wife properly and fathering my children as I should. Here is a challenge that will try even the most worthy of Christian men!

In addition, there are other areas of vast importance with which we must struggle in order to shepherd our families aright. Not only do we need to struggle to work out what we must do, we must also comprehend the issues so that we can then instruct our children in the way they should go in regards to these areas.

One such area that seems to be almost a no-brainer is how we as home educators deal with the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Education Review Office (ERO). I know many of us see no problem: tell them what we're up to, show the ERO around, answer their questions, hide nothing for we have nothing to hide.

The people with whom we deal within both the MoE and ERO are generally not only very reasonable people but also quite friendly, decent and nice to get to know. In itself this is great! The problem is that these lovely folks are the face, but not the heart, of these huge, powerful state institutions of civil government. We may read from their personableness and friendliness messages that are not shared by the MoE or ERO official policy positions in regard to us home educators or home education in general. We must, therefore, be alert and on guard lest our personal freedoms and those of generations to follow be compromised by our relaxed attitude and quick compliance to any request.

Ministry of Education

The first thing to note about schooling in New Zealand is that it is compulsory. We are talking naked force here in the face of mountains of evidence that compulsory, taxpayer-funded and secular schooling is a very poor baby sitting service, let alone educational institution. The schools cannot guarantee either the physical safety

of their inmates nor their educational enhancement, even though students are compelled by law to attend. It is worth noting that in many other countries, their Education Acts state that students must be “educated” or receive “education”, whereas in NZ, students must both be enrolled at and attend registered schools. That is, in NZ *schooling* is compulsory while in other countries *education* is compulsory. The two things are not synonymous.

The next thing to note is that classroom instruction is a rather mediocre method of teaching either academics or social graces. But it is the only logistical solution to the division of labour philosophy or the efficiency of production philosophy which both levered the task of educating one’s children out of the hands of NZ parents via the first Education Act back in 1877. (One could argue that the real mistake was in viewing the educational task of one’s children as a task that was totally transferable, one that could be just as efficiently accomplished using a production-line, conveyor-belt concept as it would be in leaving every parent to do the job himself. But that is an issue for a future article!) Classrooms are ideal environments for fostering group-think and peer-dependency wherein most aspects of education are *socialised*. That is, one must learn maths in a *peer group*, rather than on his own or from a tutor; one can only learn social interaction in a group of peers and not from interacting with parents and siblings; history becomes a function of what the *peer group* decides happened back then, ably guided by the politically-correct agenda expressed in the state’s textbooks, rather than what your parents and your church tell you about it.

This socialised form of learning (as opposed to the family-oriented form we enjoy as home educators) is specifically designed to break the natural stranglehold which the Lord God designed parents and households *to have* over their children’s developing attitudes, values, knowledge and understanding. Consequently among state educationalists there is constant pressure to lower the age of compulsory school attendance: at present the age of six is what they feel they can get away with. Convention has since ensured that most five-year-olds attend anyway. And we do have MPs clamouring for compulsory pre-school. Call me a sceptic, but the vision of state educational bureaucrats being more concerned about my child’s personal development than they are about the pressure from teachers’ unions, special interest lobby groups and other social engineers is not a vision that readily comes into my mind when I contemplate our state school system!

There is something – no, actually there are a lot of things – about a schooling situation which should give us all cause for concern. There is a tendency, one I will identify as coming from our sinful natures, to use the school as a convenient dumping ground, a place to put children when they just seem to be too much hassle. But in our more rational moments, we must surely wonder why we’d off-load our precious children onto people far less interested in their welfare, far less compassionate toward them, far less able to properly focus on them, far less committed to their success than we are. The typical teacher (in virtually every case) is to-

tally oblivious and even uncaring toward our children’s family backgrounds, cultures, beliefs, standards, values, customs, etc. Why would we ever dream of doing such things to our children?

In the case of around 90% of parents it would appear that they have been trained to trust the schools and have never given any other alternative a moment’s thought.....not to mention that the law compels parents to send them away from home, that is, removes from them meaningful choices; that is, intervenes into every resident NZ family without exception and dictates to parents what they will do with the bulk of their children’s lives on a day-to-day basis; that is, pulls the rug of parental responsibility toward their children clean out from under them, upsetting and damaging families to one degree or another, again without exception. The biggest bully in the classroom may well be the one standing at the blackboard. But there are bigger ones in the MoE and Paliament standing solidly behind and totally in favour of the compulsory attendance laws. Let me quote from the MoE’s Home Schooling Desk File of 1996:

“Some parents will see it as their right to homeschool their children.¹ It is important to understand, however, that there is no unfettered right to homeschooling, though all parents have the right to apply for a certificate of exemption to enable them to educate their children at home. Put another way, parents have a right to educate their children at home, but the exercise of that right is subject to the Secretary being satisfied that the children ‘will be taught at least as regularly and well as in a registered school’”.

It must be recognised that there are people in both the MoE and ERO who would shut down home education in a flash if they had the chance. More than one official I have dealt with in the Ministry has told me that about 50% of the staff do not like home education and feel it needs to be far more regulated and controlled. I sat across the table from one MP who thumped the table as she told me, “You home schoolers should be subject to every single regulation in the Act because you are de facto schools!” I not only declined to agree with her, I said if any such nightmare should ever eventuate, the government would have a massive amount of civil disobedience on its hands.

So who’s in charge here? Whose are the children and who will ultimately control their education? It seems pretty clear what the state thinks about these issues. Woe to me and my family on the day the state should ever try to definitively settle the issue in their favour: I will fight it with vehemence. May the Lord grant me the courage to fight it until my last breath.

The Education Review Office

Now, there is another government department known as the ERO: Education Review Office. They are separate from the Ministry of Education so as to be more “objective” when they review the performance of schools and report back to the Ministry. Their reports then go on-line and are available to anyone, anywhere! (See www.ero.govt.nz under “Reports”). Schools fear and almost loathe the ERO! There has certainly been

Tough Questions People Ask



Why Would You Home Educate Back in 1972?

by Virginia Birt Baker

Texas home-schooling mother of four, 1972-1987

You ask me why I teach my children at home with Christian textbooks and Christian values?

Well, now, that’s a good question. I know what you’re thinking. The public schools have better facilities and trained teachers, and there may be some private school nearby. So why all this fuss and bother of setting up a separate school in my home? Why not teach the children religion at home and in church?

But, you see, you’ve asked me something that gets right to the core of the meaning of life. *If* a home-located alternative learning arrangement meant simply tacking on a prayer each day, or an extra course in Bible study, it *wouldn’t* be worth all the time and expense.

I teach my children at home because I believe that all of life is religious. God is at the center of everything. He made all things. He guides and controls them, and He demands that we, His creatures, honor Him as Lord and Savior in everything we do.

Of course, that includes our studying as well as our everyday work. It includes every part of life without exception. It means that I can’t be satisfied with submitting my children to Christian training at home and church only. As a parent, I’m responsible for those thirty or more important hours that they spend each week in school. Some of the most significant training of my children takes place in the school atmosphere. How can I leave God out of the picture here?

“But,” you say, “what’s the difference if my child studies arithmetic, history, literature or English in a public school or in a home school?” Much. I want my child to learn — from his parents — that all of life belongs to God and was made for Him.

In science, I want him to know that he is studying God’s laws for the universe and God’s concept of origins. Honest scientific research does not teach theory for fact but supports God’s word and a young earth.

In history, I want him to see the unfolding of God’s plan for the ages and the redemption of His people in a world which is totally meaningful and in which every event moves in terms of God’s purpose. “Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set,” the Proverb states (22:28).

In arithmetic and mathematics, I want him to learn that

there are absolute truths, and that mathematics is a cumulative development beginning with a strong foundation of arithmetic that is a part of the whole of knowledge. By developing his capacity to do critical thinking and logical reasoning through concrete mathematical problems, he will acquire confidence in his own powers of understanding this physical world.

In literature, I want him to test other writers by Christian standards, so that he will appreciate what is good and true and beautiful and discern what is false or dishonoring to God.

In reading, I want him to learn the phonetic principles of our language in a systematic, sequential manner. Our English language is made up of letters that represent sounds, and it is absolutely imperative that beginning reading starts with phonics.

In English, I want him to know the history behind our mother tongue, the precise grammatical structuring of our language and its effective and graceful expression.

In civics, I want him to know that true government is ordained of God and that great political movements have powerful religious inceptions.

In economics, I want him to learn Christian moral standards in the marketplace, placing emphasis upon the individual. I want him to learn the principles of honesty, integrity, politeness, respect, co-operation and fair play, because these are rules that God has set up for the ordering of our lives together.

All this is a big order. It can’t be accomplished in fifteen or thirty minutes a day. It takes everything we’ve got to instill in the hearts of our children the true fear of the Lord which is “the beginning of all wisdom.”

Moses said it thousands of years ago. He told the people of Israel then how to bring up their children: “Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be a frontlet between your eyes. And ye shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up” (Deuteronomy 11:18-19).

“Learn not the way of the heathen” (Jeremiah 10:2).

And Paul told the Ephesians: “Grow up into Him in all things . . . Walk not as other Gentiles walk . . . being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them . . . Neither give place (opportunity) to the devil . . . and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness . . . Understand what the will of the Lord is” (Ephesians 3:15-5:17).

This means Christian education — in all of life. This means training for eternity.

Expensive? Yes, of course, in both time and money. We pay our full share of taxes for the public schools, and we support our own school in addition to this. But we count it a privilege to have this wonderful opportunity, in a land of freedom, to dedicate ourselves and our children entirely to God.

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be aspiring to build on that high standard. Our parents did a wonderful and noble thing for us, and did the best they could; but the fruit of their investment depends on us and on our willingness to take the next step. We have a responsibility before God and our parents to make the most of our time, our opportunities and our lives.

Homeschooling has created a new kind of student: a person who is set apart from the world, who can live in the world but does not seek to be conformed to it, who is not dependant on peers and does not fear man, who does not feel compelled to dress and act and live like the pagans that now control our culture, who has been taught to discern right from wrong, truth from falsehood, who has been protected from a bad worldview, and has been given the opportunity to study and be excellent. In short, we have been trained to be the salt of the earth.

So let's throw our hats in the air and shout, "Hooray for our parents!" But if we, now that we are on our the thresholds of our adult lives, disregard this training and try to be conformed to this world, then we have undone what our parents did for us and are "good for nothing anymore, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men" (Matthew 5:13).

So how do we go about making the most of our opportunity?

Developing Vision

Gratitude to our parents is the best place to start. This can teach us gratitude to God, which will give us the humility we need to develop vision. We need to continue developing a vision to be as different as necessary to "let our lights shine before men in such a way that they may see our good works, and glorify our father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

Young men need to stand above their worldly, weak, consumed-by-fear-of-man counterparts by being strong, brave leaders. Young women need to refute the lies of their independent, self-fulfillment-seeking, careerist women peers by being submissive and supportive and strong in faith, mind and character. Our children need to be better educated, better equipped than we were by our pioneering parents, so that they can, in their turn, carry on even further than we have done.

Developing Self-discipline

We need to continue to study. Our goal is not to be above average. Our goal is not to be superior to other students. Our goal is to be adequate for God's service, which is a high and noble calling.

These two subjects are very useful in developing understanding and making the most of our study time:

A) The study of history. This can inspire us by our seeing the heroic efforts of others who were properly trained and motivated to do their duty, and who did it. A knowledge of history can help shape our vision. It can acquaint us with all the other academic disciplines we must have and put all those in their proper perspectives. Theology, once known as "the queen of the sciences", will rise in importance to us.

B) The study of writing. This will help us communicate the important things we learn from our other studies by making us better communicators and giving us the tools we need to pass on what we know. Unfortunately, we haven't found any good shortcuts to learning to write well. Painful, diligent practice is the road that must be traveled, and it's a long one. One way of starting is to write summaries of things you read.

Developing Messages

We must not be so absorbed in lofty pursuits that we fail in our duty. We should identify the immediate needs of our generation, develop messages that help others and master those messages in such a way that we can adequately refute every argument raised up against the truth of God's Word.

Every person who has been given life and abilities, whether small or great, needs to have something to impart to someone else. This is an elementary duty of Christians – to make disciples by having a message to teach them.

We must identify a message, study it and teach it authoritatively, excellently and humbly, with the character that goes with the steward of God's messages. Our father often tells us, "If a person doesn't develop and master convictions to impart to others, he is absorbing and being disciplined by the messages of the world."

Our messages can be relevant to our times or relevant to personal sanctification. Some examples of messages you might consider mastering:

How to Recover Godly Masculinity and Femininity
How to Disciple Younger Brothers and Sisters
The Differences Between Today's Worldview and a Biblical Worldview
What It Means to Stand in the Gates
How to Honour Our Parents in Public

Because of what our parents have done for us, we have a lot to teach. Because we have been given so many advantages, more is expected and required of us. We need to be the leaders in society. This is how we give glory and honour to God and our parents. It's the least we can do to thank them.

Psalm 127 says, "Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them; they shall not be ashamed when they speak with their enemies in the gates." We social misfits may be civil society's last human hope of survival. Let's honour our fathers and mothers by ennobling their sacrifice.

(Anna and Elizabeth Botkin are helpmeets-in-training to their father Geoffrey Botkin in his work and are training to be homemakers under the instruction of their mother Victoria. They live under their father's roof with their five brothers in Christchurch. They are currently studying theology, history, politics, literature and writing, all things domestic, music, art, sewing and harp-playing. They are in the process of writing a book for young ladies about how daughters should and can turn their hearts to their fathers and their homes. The book traces the paths in which militant feminism has compromised the hearts and minds of young Christian women.)

some animosity between these two in the past, though not so much today it seems.

They also have a unit that deals with home educators. It is presently run by a gentleman who is incredibly positive toward home education. In fact, he tells people that he would like to see his grandchildren home educated! ERO visits are not regular: only about 12% of Home Educators get visited in any one year. They are almost all very positive experiences. Some home educators say it is nice to have others affirm what they're doing and that it is especially comforting to have a state official confirm, in a written report, their programme, credibility and performance.

While we always want to be polite, respectful and law-abiding, I get very worried about having too chummy a friendship with ERO and MoE people. The bottom line is, when ERO folks visit our homes, they represent the state. So here is the state sitting in judgement on my chosen lifestyle. They are evaluating the way I relate to my own children. The whole concept is highly repugnant to me. I do not need, nor do I want, confirmation or affirmation or approval from a secular state upon my Christian lifestyle.

Our Prime Minister, Helen Clark, my local MP Steve Maharey, our "transsexual" MP Georgina Beyer, our homosexual MP Tim Barnett who just got prostitution in this country legalised so it is as valid as the corner grocery: these high-profile MPs openly say Christianity has *no* credibility or any place in public life. Consequently they are moving to ban spanking by parents in the home, saying out loud ridiculous things such as, "Why is it only fundamentalist Christians feel they have to beat their children into submission?" When children are killed in this country by senseless beatings, there is a renewed cry by these folks for a ban on spanking. Yet who beats the children to death? Live-in boyfriends! And the media refers to these scum-bags as the dead child's "step-father"! Neither the media nor the politicians of this country are the least bit qualified to judge a Christian or a Christian lifestyle, nor do they have any Biblical mandate for authority in this area. Especially when they do not lift a finger to defend the 17,000 most innocent of us all who are mercilessly slaughtered every year in this country, year after year, at the rate of one abortion every half an hour.

In the early days of Home Education here (before the ERO), the Psychological Services officer came quite regularly with new staff to do "practice" reviews on our family as training for his staff. At the time we thought it was great. He was a nice guy. So were most of the other staff we met. We enjoyed the friendly relations we had with officialdom. No more. The present ERO gentleman, as I've said, is very positive, and we actually like him a lot too. He's come to our home for a cuppa, but when he wanted to do a review², I said we'd never let it happen in our home on principle.

What is the principle? It is one that developed over the years after meeting some of these state agents who do not like home education. The fact is, they have the power, they sit in places of influence, to make life tough for us. When the current ERO gentleman retires,

just think what could happen to us if he is replaced by some dragon?

Sadly I have found that these bureaucrats will overstep their legal powers quite regularly in order to make their job easier. It is not a vindictive thing: they just want their days to be as straight-forward and as uncomplicated as possible. We all desire the same thing. And that can mean they'll do something as minor as fail to produce their ID when doing a review in the home, as the law requires, or as major as telling home educators that they must have a Social Studies and a Technology component to their programme, which the law does not require.

When these powerful state agents sit in our homes, these people who can write reports that could bring down on us the wrath of the Education authorities or even worse, the unreasoning interventions of Child Protection Agencies (CYFS in NZ), we do not know if they will suddenly take umbrage at a plaque they see hanging on the wall, a smell they encounter, what they perceive to be a smirk on your face or an attitude in your tone of voice, or a comment by one of the children that "Daddy spansks really hard!" American home educators have declared their horror and unbelief upon learning of the standard practise here of letting ERO people into our homes for a Review. They have further told me that state agents in the USA are *always* assumed to be on "fishing" expeditions, looking for evidence of one thing or another as an excuse to send along a colleague from another state agency. I no longer see any reason why I should expose my family to such dangers, as remote as they might be, when I know for a fact that there are people, lots of people, within these agencies who are totally opposed to Christianity and to home education.

Matthew 10:16 says, "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be as wise as serpents and innocent as doves." It's a harsh place out there and we need to have our wits about us. One of my applications of this is not to expose my family to unnecessary danger, such as an ERO visit in our home. Or asking the MoE for more money, which is just inviting them to demand access to our personal accounts to find out how we spend it. Or wanting the MoE to hire home educators to assess exemptions or the ERO to hire home educators to do reviews, thus creating harpies, satyrs or Echidna-like hybrids who would be torn between two masters.

Research the issues for yourselves, men, and be confident of your stand.

Notes:

1. I don't. I see it as my responsibility before God. Woe to the state bureaucrat who tries to prevent me from fulfilling my responsibility.
2. This fellow did review us just recently, in our church's lounge: we had a great time together and we got a glowing report...and we were not caught in that cleft stick of trying to be gracious hosts to a visitor in our home while at the same time trying to keep a state agent at arm's length and the entire proceedings on a professional, objective level.

Bits of Books

Christ and Civilization, Part 3 (Final)

by John W. Robbins



Law and Government

Rome is commonly supposed to have given us our system of justice, but the law of Rome at the time of Christ was quite unjust: "In a society as unequal and inegalitarian as the Roman, it is obvious that formal rights, however clear, had no reality, and that a weak man had little to gain by going to court."¹

Veyne gives this example of Roman law:

"Suppose that all I own in the world is a small farm.... A powerful neighbor covets my property. Leading an army of slaves, he invades my land, kills those of my slaves who try to defend me, beats me with clubs, drives me from my land, and seizes my farm. What can I do? A modern citizen might say, go to court...to obtain justice and persuade the authorities to restore my property...."

"For one thing, the aggression against me by my powerful neighbor would have been considered a strictly civil offense; it would not have been covered by the penal code. It would have been up to me, as plaintiff, to see to it that the defendant appeared in court. In other words, I would have had to snatch the defendant from the midst of his private army, arrest him, and hold him in chains in my private prison until the day of judgment. Had this been beyond my power, the case would never have been heard...."

If, however, the victim somehow were to succeed in raising an army, capturing his enemy, bringing him to trial, and winning, "it then would have been up to me to enforce that judgment, if I could.... [A] judge could not sentence a defendant simply to restore what he had taken. Leaving my farm to its fate, the judge would authorize me to seize my adversary's chattels real

and personal and sell them at auction, keeping a sum equal to the value placed on my farm by the court...and returning the surplus to my enemy. Who would have considered recourse to a system of justice so little interested in punishing social transgressions?"

But the systemic injustice of the Roman legal system was compounded by its systematic corruption:

"A Roman noble (or even a mere notable) [had] more in common with [a] 'godfather' than with a modern technocrat. Getting rich through public service...never stood in the way of taking public service for one's ideal...."

"The honest functionary is a peculiarity of modern Western nations. In Rome every superior stole from his subordinates. The same was true in the Turkish and Chinese empires, where *baksheesh* was the general rule.... Every public function was a racket, those in charge 'put the squeeze' on their subordinates, and all together exploited the populace. This was true during the period of Rome's greatness as well as during the period of its decline.... Even the least important public positions..., such as apparitor or clerk of the courts, were sold by their incumbents to aspiring candidates, because every position carried with it guaranteed income in the form of bribes.... Ancient bureaucracy was nothing like our bureaucracy. For millennia sovereigns relied on racketeers to extort taxes and control their subjects" (Veyne, 167, 97-98, 100).

Even the renowned Roman legions operated this way. The Roman historian Tacitus tells us that "Soldiers traditionally bribed their officers for exemption from service, and nearly a quarter of the personnel of every regiment could be found idling about the countryside or even lounging around the barracks, provided their officer had received his kickback.... Soldiers got the money they needed from theft and banditry or by doing

Graduates Speak

Homeschooled Teenagers: Passive Children or Cultural Leaders?

by Anna & Elizabeth Botkin



Anna & Elizabeth Botkin of Christchurch

We have been home educated all our 18 and 16 years respectively and have known homeschooled young people from several countries. We write here about one of our observations as an admonition to our homeschooled peers.

When your parents made the decision to protect you from a fraudulent schooling environment, they were making a decision which they would pay dearly for, financially and in other ways. Some went to jail; others incurred the disapproval and contempt of other adults.

Many homeschooled children take this sacrifice for granted. Others also take for granted the special opportunity afforded by this sacrifice – an opportunity to excel academically, socially and intellectually. Retired public school teacher John Taylor Gatto admits, "...the education press report[s] the amazing news that children schooled at home seem to be five or even ten years ahead of their formally trained peers in their ability to think."

Our parents should be commended for this. But should we privileged "finished products" throw our hats in the air and shout, "Hooray for us!" because we are over the bar, even though the bar is only two inches high? Should we be commended for merely being better than mediocre?

The point of this essay is stewardship. For those of us who have been given so much, much is required (Luke 12:48) – much more than we are presently performing, given the rare advantages handed to us by our farsighted parents. And in view of our advantages, it seems natural to assume that we should be the best-educated people in the world, in the right ways and for the right reasons.

Perhaps we are superior to our disadvantaged peers, but why should we compare ourselves with poorly educated people, forcibly institutionalized and compromised in literacy? What would we learn if we compared ourselves with youths who went before us? Benjamin Franklin is just one challenging example.

Asks John Taylor Gatto, "How do you suppose this son of a workingman with thirteen kids became such an effective public speaker that for more than half a century his voice was heard nationally and internationally on the great questions?" He goes on to describe how 15-year-old Franklin took responsibility for his own educa-

tion even when working a 60-hour week. Through his self-discipline and diligence in studying he was able to achieve mastery of subjects which possibly surpasses that of today's most "educated" graduates.

Gatto notes that Franklin began reading the most

elegant periodical of the day. "I thought the [*Spectator*] writing excellent," wrote Franklin, "and wished, if possible, to imitate it. With that in view I took some of the papers, and making short hints of the sentiment in each sentence, laid them by a few days, and then, without looking at the book, tried to complete the papers again, by expressing each hinted sentiment at length, and as fully as it had been expressed before, in any suitable words that should come to hand. Then I compared my *Spectator* with the original, discovered some of my faults, and corrected them."

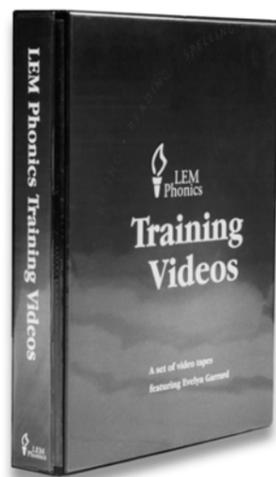
Gatto explains, "By the time he was sixteen, Franklin was ready to take up his deficiencies in earnest with full confidence he could by his own efforts overcome them. Here's how he handled that problem with arithmetic: 'Being on some occasion made ashamed of my ignorance in figures, which I had twice failed in learning when at school, I took Crocker's book of *Arithmetick*, and went through the whole by myself with great ease. I also read Seller's and Shermey's book of Navigation and became acquainted with the geometry they contain...'"

Gatto goes on to describe other young adults who could put us to shame: "...I learned with a shock that the men who won our Revolution were barely out of high school by the standards of my time: Hamilton was 20 in the retreat from New York; Burr, 21; Light Horse Harry Lee, 21; Lafayette, 19. What amounted to a college class rose up and struck down the British Empire, afterwards helping to write the most sophisticated governing documents in modern history."

More important than all their academic achievements, those people who built the United States of America knew how to think. Due to Biblical literacy and a commitment to honour God, they understood right from wrong, could discern truth from falsehood, could determine their actions by foreseeing the consequences that would occur centuries down the track, could rise up and win a war, and then build a nation from scratch. They started with clearing land and building log cabins and went on to setting up a government and laying down a foundation for its laws and policies.

It is certainly helpful to have such inspiring forefathers. But we should not aspire to just equal them and go back to the standards of two hundred years ago – we should

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The most important thing I think is to keep a young child with autism constantly engaged in meaningful activity, and not let them just sit in a corner and “self-stim,” (rock, hum, flap hands, etc.). You really must make them “come out and join us.” Again, every child is very different, but even the renowned Temple Grandin, Ph.D., who has autism, will tell you that her mother keeping her constantly engaged with the world is probably why she is so successful today. I really believe that’s important when the child with autism is very young. It is very hard because there will be a lot of tears and tantrums, but I am a firm believer in first, prayer, and then faith and action.

Resources

Behavioural therapists: Since I have two busy little autie boys, I have three friends help me. I am so grateful to the Lord for them! As an independent, self-reliant, home schooling Mom, I had to learn that it was okay to ask for help. That was extremely hard for me at first, but by the time the boys were age three, I knew God was teaching me some new things. Through these fires of testing I learned:

1. I don’t have all the answers and that’s okay;
2. it’s okay to ask for help and does not mean I am a bad mother or weak;
3. it’s not the end of the world when my day spins out of control;
4. I don’t have to sweat the small stuff.

I know of families who have hired a behavioral therapist for thousands (upwards of \$25,000+ for six months) to do what my friends are doing: keeping the boys meaningfully engaged. The therapist’s techniques are probably vastly different than my friends’, but my friends are doing this with the leading of the Holy Spirit, because God has asked them to. And what better teacher than the Holy Spirit?

For math: I have picked up games like math bingo (you can make it yourself, but time is of the essence for me since my boys require 24/7 supervision), and I use a lot of things from Discovery Toys, and I have an ancient *Mortenson Math* set that we use.

Sensory Integration: Sensory Integration for the Child With Autism <http://www.pediatricservices.com/prof/prof-35.htm>

Understanding autism: Other resources I highly recommend are two books: *Behavioral Intervention for the Young Child with Autism* by Catherine Maurice and *The Out of Sync Child* by Carol Stock Kranowitz. These two books have helped me immensely in designing a program for the boys. They helped me learn how to reach into their world and pull them out.

NATTHAN: the NATIONAL cHallenged Homeschoolers Associated Network, <http://www.nathhan.org> is a ministry that has been a wonderful “virtual” mentor for me. The family that founded the NATTHAN ministry has a child with autism, and they have a house full of kids with special needs. They inspire me because they are not only surviving, they are thriving! And that reminds me, sometimes families are large enough to do

Letter



Missing out?!!!!

I want to encourage all the homeschooling families. I have been homeschooled all my life. This year I got a job teacher aiding in a primary school. The school I work at has about 300 pupils. They have two teacher aides that work, including me. I work every morning Monday to Thursday while the other lady works every morning each day. The school has about 25 to 35 children per class except in the new entrants class, which has about 12 to 25 children. The school also has about 10 support staff helping run various programs for intensive needs children, i.e. kids that can’t read or write or have emotional problems or don’t get lunch at all, etc. I have been become more and more appalled as the terms have gone on. And I’m so grateful to my parents for caring enough to teach me at home. Many of the children don’t get the help they need until it becomes urgent, the older succeeding kids are pulled out of class to help “tutor” the needing kids, the average time spent on these types of programs, 20 minutes to 45 minutes per kid. Sometimes my mum has asked me if I think that our kids are missing out. Missing out on what?? On being yelled at by someone who doesn’t care for and love them! On being placed in a program only once they cannot do anything else! **No**, I don’t think

(Continued on page 30: **Letter**)

the helping. My extended family is far away, so all our “family” comes from our church family. But your resources could be different. Never overlook the resources God has given you! Create a network of support for you and your family. God does not expect you to do this all alone. If you ask for help, He will surely give it to you. He did that for me!

Conclusion

There are certainly days when we only survive. It can also be hard on the “typical” children in the home. But with God’s help, this journey has been worth it. When I see the boys “pretending” to read their bibles in church, and helping the man in charge of the overhead projector during the service, and actually greeting people (which they didn’t do four years ago), I know it’s been worth it all! One of the boys accepted Jesus as his Savior last summer, and his Daddy baptized him publicly. We believe he really knew what he was deciding to do. My other son with autism is still not sure about all this. That’s okay. I know that one day God will be faithful to answer this mother’s prayers. Just as He will be faithful to answer yours, too.

(Mrs Akins is married to Rev Eddie Atkins a minister of a non-denominational Church in N Manchester, Indiana. They were blessed with one girl and two boys before adopting identical twin boys with autism. Today her youngest natural child is 13 and the twins are nine. Mrs Akins is well known through her article, ‘How Churches Can Support Families Living with Autism’ and a program she developed which trains congregation members to assist with the integration of autistic folks into the Church family.)

the chores of slaves. If a soldier happened to be a little richer than the rest, his officer beat him and heaped duties upon him until he paid up and received dispensation.”

Cicero wrote that the “senatorial way to get rich” was to plunder the provinces under one’s jurisdiction. Cicero prided himself on his honesty: after governing a province for a year, he was making the equivalent of a million dollars per year, a sum considered quite small by his peers.

The World After Christ

Christ was born within this pagan culture. But His kingdom, as He explained, while it was in this world, was not of it (John 18:36). It found its source, its authority, and its principles elsewhere. Instead of the prevailing polytheism of Greece and Rome, He taught monotheism: “I and my Father are one” (John 10:30). Instead of the sinful and limited gods of paganism, Christ revealed the holy and transcendent God, creator of Heaven and Earth, ruler of all things. Instead of the pagan gods whose primary pastimes were violence, sexual immorality and indolence, He taught a rational God who plans and works: “My Father works even until now, and I work” (John 5:17). He reiterated and explained the Ten Commandments with their condemnations of idolatry, of the use of images and statuary in worship, of profanity, of disrespect for parents and the Lord’s Day, of idleness, of murder, of sexual immorality, of theft, of lying and of covetousness (Matthew 5-7). Even more important than the law, which He explained anew to correct all the misinterpretations of the Jewish lawyers, Christ revealed the Gospel of justification by faith in the righteousness of God alone, which alone could divinely transform men and societies. Instead of the pagan notion that if men are to have truth, they must discover it on their own power, He taught that God graciously reveals truth to men, and that the revealed truth is written so that all, not just the aristocratic few, might know.

Against the totalitarianism of the pagan world empires, Christ taught the limitation of state power and the separation of church and state: “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (Matthew 22:21). Neither Caesar nor any other mere man was *pontifex maximus*. Christ Himself was the way, the truth and the life, the only mediator between God and man (John 14:6; 1 Timothy 2:5). He explicitly denied the political theory and practice of the pagans: “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise dominion over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant” (Matthew 20:25-26). Christ demanded that rulers — both civil and ecclesiastical — serve, not control, the people. He outlined a limited role for civil government, not as the shaper of souls, as in pagan philosophies, but simply as the punisher of criminals. He founded a church whose government was representative and republican, whose officers were elected by the people and whose constitution — the Bible — was written. Inspired by His words, the American Founders made their plans for a new Republic, a government of the people, by the people and for the people.²

The early Christians, condemned by pagans such as Celsus and Porphyry³ as stupid, foolish and superstitious, were not killed for their stupidity but because they rejected the highest value of pagan society: worship of the totalitarian state in the person of the Emperor. The Christians rejected Aristotle (“The state is the highest of all... Citizens belong to the state...”) and believed Christ. Christ, in dying for the salvation of individual men, exalted both the individual and God. God is eternal and men are immortal; nations and rulers come and go with surprising rapidity, but individual souls live forever. Rome is not an eternal city; only individual men enjoy everlasting life.

Christ taught that man was a creature of God and the lord of creation.

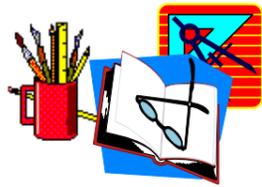
Man’s ancestry was not animal, but divine, and the Earth was made for man. Individual men were immortal; what they believed and did on Earth would have eternal consequences. After death, they did not descend into some shadowland, but each was required to give an account of his life to his maker and judge. All men were equal before God and His law, and each man would be judged individually. The classes of ancient society — the nobles, the proletariat, the slaves, the citizens, the men, the women, the Jews, the barbarians — meant nothing to God. In the new Christian faith, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:8).

Christ’s kingdom grows only by persuasion, never by coercion⁴ — it is a republic of knowledge, truth and doctrine, not an empire of dominion, compulsion or violence — and it has taken centuries for some Christian ideas to be understood and believed. Nevertheless, as the anguished wailing of Friedrich Nietzsche in the nineteenth century so clearly indicates, the absorption of Christian ideas has been widespread, though far from complete.

Notes:

1. Paul Veyne, “The Roman Empire,” *A History of Private Life*. Cambridge, 1987, 166.
2. The words, of course, are Lincoln’s, but he got them from John Wyclif, who wrote of his English translation of the Bible in the 14th century: “This Bible is for the government of the people, by the people, and for the people,” a daring rebuke of both civil and ecclesiastical autocrats.
3. It is an odd fact that there are few references to Christianity among the extant writings of pagan scholars and philosophers. Perhaps those writings were lost or destroyed during the Middle Ages by a totalitarian church, or perhaps the learned pagans did not see the coming of Christianity, just as they seemed unaware of the coming of Christ. Since Christ was a Jew and the son of a carpenter, and Christianity was not a movement of the aristocratic classes but of the scorned business, worker and slave classes, it may not have received the notice and early opposition a movement of the upper classes might have. “He catches the wise in their own craftiness...” (Job 5:13).
4. “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19-20).

Home Education Research



Social Behaviors: Public vs. Home Educated Children

(From: www.ontariohomeschool.org)

Currently the trend in home schooling is gaining popularity. It has been estimated that the current number of children being taught at home in the United States is in excess of a million. The increasingly popular trend has become a concern to local and national school officials, teachers, legislators, and parents. The concerns generally stemmed from the idea that home based education does not offer children the opportunity to develop socially.

Social Development

Research has shown us that Home Educated Children are in fact exposed to nearly the same number of social contacts as public educated children. The important factor, however, is not the number of contacts but the quality of social interaction (Carpenter, 1992).

There are two types of socialization, positive and negative. Positive socialization is developed from a positive warm environment of love and acceptance. Negative socialization separates children from their family and is based on peer influence (Ballmann, 1987).

Social behaviors are developed while children interact with others. The children observe behaviors of others, looking at what they can do or become, learning tolerance, cooperation and compassion (Bronfenbrenner, 1975). Whitehead (1985) explains that mass education has forced children into a horizontal peer relationship. As a result, there has been a shift away from parental relationships to peer relationships.

Additionally, a negative factor of socialization in public education is conformity. Conforming to the values and behavior of other students is usually destructive to the relationships between child and parent. Parents should be considered the best social mentors for their children. Children who are involved with the family in their daily lives on a loving basis continually until the child is eight to ten years will feel a stronger tie into the family. This feeling of belonging gives them a sense of self-worth, which is an important factor in positive sociability.

These children are friendlier as well as less dependent on peer values as they reach adolescence. They experience the highest quality of play with a warm and responsive parent who also enjoys holding and nurturing them as well as allowing them freedom to explore their fantasies. As a result, these children become more content with themselves. They are friendlier as well as more independent of peer values as they grow older. In general they are happier, better adjusted, more thoughtful, competent and sociable children. (Moore 1986).

The argument of some is that children need to be exposed to the reality of life. In other words they need to learn at a young age to deal with foul language, rebelliousness and peer acceptance and the like. However, this is the type of socialization that home schoolers are in fact attempting to avoid.

Ballmann (1987) believes that parents should not expose their children to the cruelties of the world all for the sake of socialization. He explains that nurseries grow strong healthy plants from small seedlings. The seedlings start out in the sheltered environment of a greenhouse to protect the plants from the elements of extreme weather. Soon the plants are strong and able to withstand the elements on their own, but it was the protection of the greenhouse that gave the plants the chance to survive, to become strong healthy plants.

Ballmann continues to say that it is the same process for children. If they are given the chance to be trained in a protected environment, they will become strong and better prepared to face the realities of the world. As a result of a controlled environment, they can become productive citizens.

Lefton (1994) explains that, when a child spends more time away from family, he becomes subject to increasing pressure to conform with his peer group. The types of conformity may include standards for behavior and dress, social interaction and rebellious acts such as shoplifting or taking drugs (Farrell and Danish 1993).

(Paikoff, Brooks-Gunn 1988) explains that adolescents in the stages of puberty often experience an increased number of conflicts with parents. Yet only a small number (5%-10%) actually experience a deterioration in relationships. Researchers suggest that the conflicts may in fact contribute positively to adolescent development through a warm relationship with parents.

Henderson (1989) shows us a study that shows what happens to children's self esteem in an environment of public schools. Of 224 home schooled children, John Wesley Taylor V found that home-schooled children scored at or above the 91st percentile mark on the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale, (a measure of self esteem). In another study, public school children lose their sense of self-worth dramatically as they progress through the grades from 80% with a strong sense of self-worth at school entrance dropping to 20% by fifth grade and to 5% at twelfth grade.

Conclusion

Maybe the simplest phrase to explain social development would be: We tend to become like those with whom we associate. Home schooled or public schooled children, the important factor in positive social development needs to come from the hearts of the family.

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(Continued on page 30:Behaviors)

Learning Disabilities



Autism

by Dr Karla Akins

We adopted twins, Isaiah and Isaac (now aged 9), at the age of four weeks. They were diagnosed with autism. Besides being premie babies, one of the boys' biggest hurdles has been their severe Sensory Integration Dysfunction. Unfortunately for them and other children with autism, symptoms of SI Dysfunction are often misinterpreted as psychological problems or just plain bad behavior. According to the "experts," if SI Dysfunction is neither recognized or addressed, it is possible that these may well develop into such problems. Higher cognitive functions — such as learning — depend upon having normal sensory integration. If a child cannot make sense of the sensory input he receives, then he is always stuck at the level of trying to make sense of his world and cannot learn or behave appropriately. Sensory experiences include touch, movement, body awareness, sight, sound, and the pull of gravity. The process of the brain organizing and interpreting all this information at the same time is called sensory integration.

For example, I can sit and type this paper while music is playing, while I can hear my husband rattle his car keys, and the children are giggling and wrestling in the next room and the dog is warming my bare toes. I can do this because my senses are integrated properly and I am able to filter out what is not important and focus on the sights and sounds that are most important: my typing this article. Some signs of Sensory Integrative Dysfunction are being overly sensitive to touch, movement, sights or sounds. When my twin sons were infants, they screamed each time I held them and fought all types of personal care. Every bath, every diaper change, every time I dressed them they howled in pain. When I walked them in the stroller they screamed nonstop. Actually, they screamed nonstop period. For three years, until we discovered the use of Sensory Integration Therapy, my boys were miserably overwhelmed by their world. They were easily distracted, manic in their "play," (although they really didn't play but just moved from one thing to another at lightening speed), were impulsive, lacked self-control and had no ability to calm themselves. Once they started crying, there was little one could do to stop them. In fact, they began screaming every morning before their eyes were open to the day and didn't stop until they fell asleep exhausted at night. Other signs of sensory integrative dysfunction are being under-reactive to touch, movement, sights or sounds. Social and emotional problems, physical clumsiness or apparent carelessness and difficulty making transitions from one situation to another are also signs of SI Dysfunction. My sons screamed and had tantrums at every single transition. They screamed going into the van, they screamed coming out of the van. They screamed going into their high chairs, they screamed coming out of their high chairs.

Homeschooling and Its Victories!

It is very stressful having autism — both for the child and the parent — but what a blessing these little boys are. They used to be extremely tactile defensive, but now kiss me and tell me they love me. I waited about seven years for that! The same happened for potty training and everything else, but the wait, however long, was worth it!

According to the "experts" my boys are moderately retarded, too, but they are learning to read, they are writing much better, even though their fine motor skills are way below grade level, and they are speaking in very good sentences now. I believe speaking in good sentences has come from listening to me read good books.

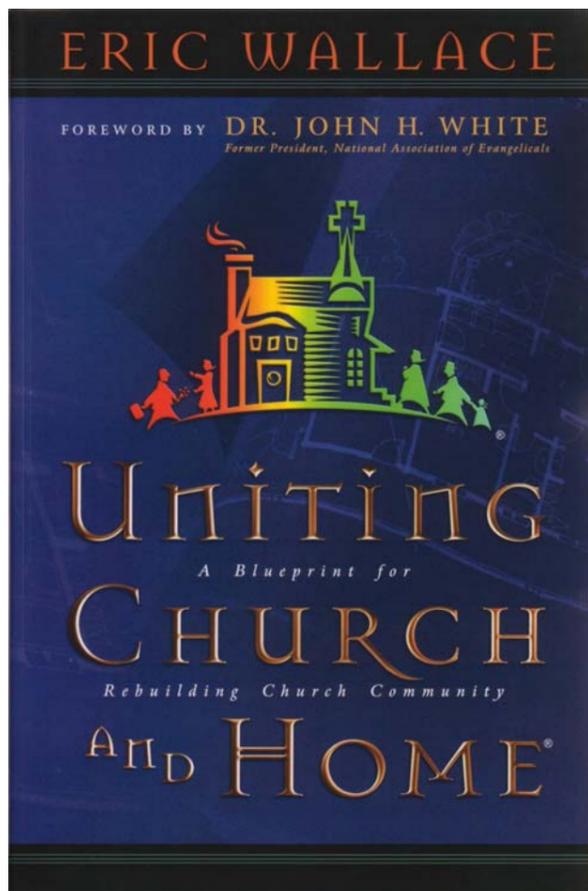
Teaching them now is different from teaching them when they were smaller and had no imitation skills. We do a lot of drilling, and fortunately, because they are now imitating me, it is easier than it used to be. We use *a lot* of reinforcements. The boys love to "earn" little plastic bugs or Velcro stars for doing something well. Things have to be broken *way* down, and they are taught in little baby steps. However, sometimes they shock me by already knowing something from listening to me teach the older boys.

Reinforcement is so key to teaching children with autism. I turn any toy into a reinforcement. For instance, a flip flop bean bag game I use this way: "When you finish three math problems, you can throw the bean bag." It has to be broken down *that* much. It can be tedious.

One thing to keep in mind is that children with autism are very visual. They are also, as a general rule, keen listeners. So I keep little signs about the room to remind them of things. One sign I made was a picture of a man's face with his finger to his mouth. Putting this sign up would indicate to the children visually that they needed to be quiet and not interrupt. While my children were non-verbal, I helped them out with other visual aids. I gave them signs which said "break" and a little plastic hand to hold up when they needed "help."

Obedience is very hard for the child with autism because every transition brings fear. Right now I'm working with one of my sons who shouts, "No!" when it is time to put his trucks away. Shouting "No!" is an impulse and is *exactly* what he is feeling, and it is very hard for him to overcome the impulse. However, I still believe that he must learn right from wrong in order to function effectively in society, therefore, it does not go unpunished. I have learned to pick my issues, and sometimes I have to think to myself, "We'll get to that issue when this issue over here is mastered."

Mathematics is very hard for them, so we have to make it extremely concrete with a lot of games. One game they love is a math game where they use different colored bugs. They learn to match patterns with these bugs and add them, subtract them, etc. It's great! However, autism is as unique as every child is unique. My boys couldn't have used games several years ago because they were too abstract. It has taken *a lot* of practice for years for them to learn the concept.

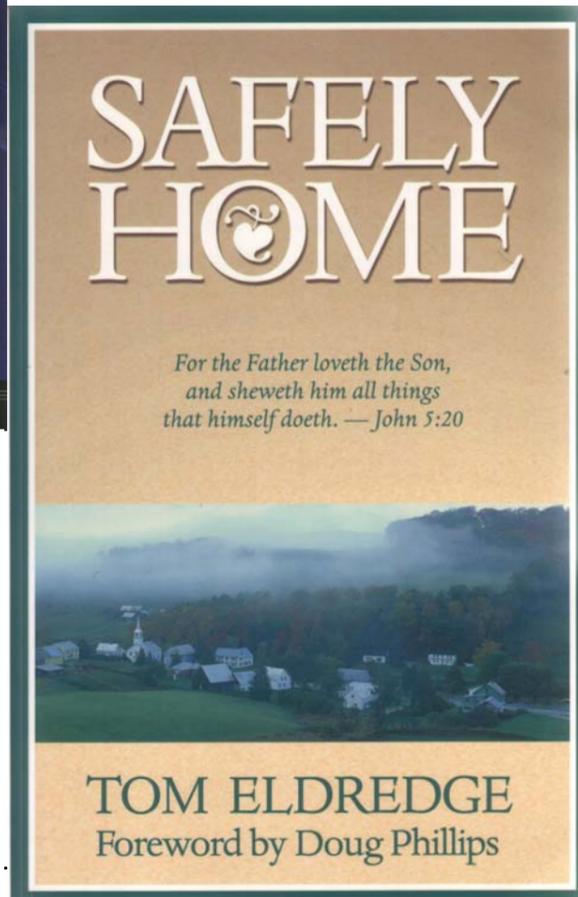


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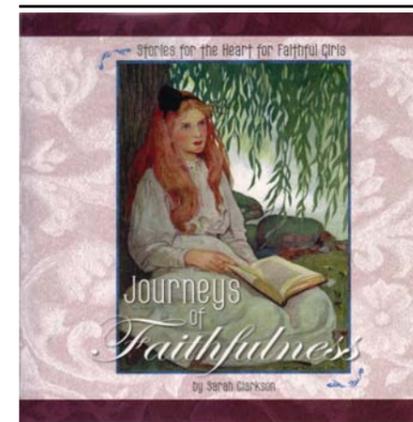


Is *Emotional Purity* for guys? Check out what these guys are saying:

I have finished *Emotional Purity* and "WOW" what a book. And the good thing is, everyone wants to read it! All my copies are out. Thanks, EG

Of the smattering of books I've perused on the subject, I venture to say that *Emotional Purity* is the most balanced of them all, in that it *does* make distinctions between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, and it makes those distinctions *clear* (rather than leaving nebulous undefined admonitions like "take care that you don't steal a girl's heart" and not going on to describe how one might avoid doing so!), and, significantly, it doesn't try to go overboard by prescribing guy/girl interaction patterns that are not clearly supported by Scripture. I think highly of it, and join you in highly recommending it. A brother in Christ, JF

Paperback, 175 pages. \$26.00



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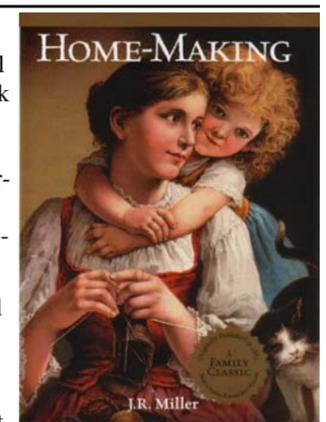
There is a lot to love about Sarah Clarkson's first book, *Journeys of Faithfulness*. From the unusual

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