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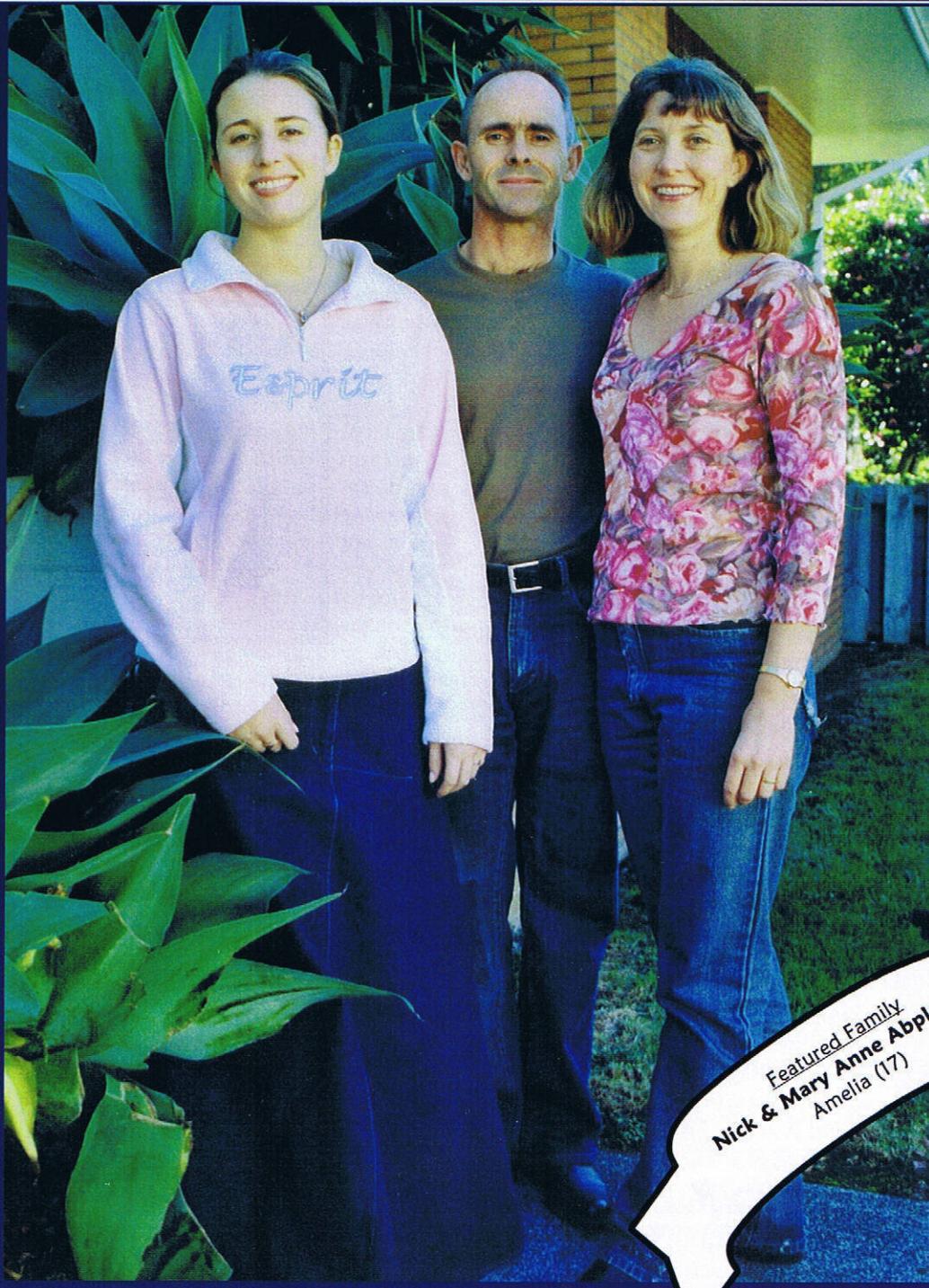
A Bi-Monthly Journal for Christian

Home Educators

Vol. X No. 4

July 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
Nick & Mary Anne Abplanalp
Amelia (17)

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Nick & Mary Anne Abplanalp

Amelia 17.

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- *A sense of appreciation between family members!*

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- Pointing attention to role models who are consistent examples of good character.

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Brian Ellis is the Australian Director of *Character First!* He was a Project Management & Production Control Trainer, formerly working in Government enterprises. His vision is to see families equipped with powerful yet practical insights on how to build strong family relationships, and encourage positive communication and cooperation. The “**Character for Life**” Family Seminar continues to fulfil this vision. This New Zealand Seminar is held in conjunction with Character First! Australia, ATI New Zealand, and the Arahina Training Centre.

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(Continued from page 8: *Accordings*)

world makes himself an enemy of God" (James 4:4). Spiritual unfaithfulness by any of God's people will result in their experiencing hostility from God and making him or herself His enemy.

The purpose of the New Zealand State Primary School and its educational curriculum is to teach and instruct children in a secular, unbiblical world view and have its ungodly sinful values. The Education Act 1989 specifically states that the teaching shall be "entirely of a secular character".⁴ As we have seen, this violates many principles and precepts of Scripture. It is to their shame that those who call themselves "Christians" would deem this to be quite acceptable and continue to subject their children to this wicked system.

For those who have children in State schools, turn from your sin of disobedience in true repentance. Avoid with horror the ungodly system of sinful instruction falsely called "Education" and teach your children as God has so clearly commanded. God's glory and your eternal future are at stake.

Thus says the LORD: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man And makes flesh his strength, Whose heart departs from the LORD, Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, And whose hope is the LORD"
— Jeremiah 17:5, 7.

Notes:

1. All Scripture quotations are from the *New King James Version*, Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.
2. For example: Melville High School in Hamilton has the Te Manaakitanga Marae on campus. Te Awamutu College in Te Awamutu has the Otawahao Marae on campus.
3. In July 2000 Hon Trevor Mallard, Minister of Education, launched the UNESCO and Living Values Trust "Values Education" seminars, saying: "Whether we like it or not schools and teachers have a strong influence on the developing values of young people and they have that influence whether they plan to or not. We have to acknowledge that all people live by a set of values and that *there is certainly no such thing as value neutrality in education*. It is not an easy thing to meet the obligation to include attitudes and values as an integral part of the New Zealand curriculum. The implicit values education that comes from the way a teacher behaves, the way they speak to children, the kind of control they operate in their own classroom, what is sometimes referred to as the hidden curriculum, cannot be overestimated." He even listed the attitudes and values desired: "collective responsibility, respect for others, respect for the law, tolerance, caring or compassion, non-sexism, non-racism, honesty, reliability." *TEACH Bulletin* No. 41, Aug 2000, p. 4.
4. Secular being defined as, "without any form of religious instruction or observance." From a private letter by David Lange, minister of education, to Craig Smith dated 23 February 1988.

(Continued from page 14: *Testing*)

you can be about your precious child. You will have the courage to advocate for this child who has been given to you but for a while, and if you can do it with faith, grace, dignity and respect, you will impact the hearts of many people. They will be strengthened and challenged by your zeal and knowledge. You will become a blessing to others as well as your child by your dedication, diligence and desire to serve your child in a sacrificial way by seeking answers to your questions. God's word does not return to Him void, but accomplishes the purpose for which He sent it. Imagine yourself with God's purpose in mind, and you will have strength to face any test on earth.

(From www.christianadhd.com/testing123 © Copyright 1999 by Nancy L. Grubbs, a freelance writer from California.)

(Continued from page 29: *Cuppa*)

But bravely, silently bore her part —
So, there is that battle field!
No marshalling troops, no bivouac song,
No banner to gleam and wave;
But oh, these battles — they last so long,
From babyhood to the grave.
— J.R. Miller

Flirting with Sin

As two men walked across an eastern university campus, a crowd of people surrounding a large maple tree attracted them. As they approached, they noticed that the crowd was being amused by the antics of a fox-tailed squirrel circling the tree, climbing it and running back down again. A red Irish Setter dog crouched nearby, intently watching the squirrel. Each time the squirrel ran up the tree out of sight, the dog would slowly creep toward the tree. The squirrel paid little attention as the dog crept closer and closer, patiently biding its time. People watching this entertaining drama unfold knew what could happen, but they did nothing until, in a flash, the dog, catching the squirrel unaware, had it in the grip of his sharp teeth.

The people then rushed forward in horror, forcing the dog's mouth open to rescue the squirrel. It was too late. The squirrel was dead. Anyone could have warned the squirrel or held back the dog. But they had been momentarily *amused* and had watched silently while evil slowly crept up on good. When they rushed to the defense, it was too late.

We see around us daily that which is portrayed in this parable. We sit idly by, watching as an insidious stream of profanity, vulgarity and demeaning behavior, a mocking of righteous ideals and principles, invades our homes and lives through most types of media, teaching our children negative values and moral corruption. We then become upset when our children perform differently than we would wish and social behavior continues to deteriorate. Like the dog, the devil is just doing what the devil always does. But why do we, though redeemed by the blood of Christ, yet for the sake of *amusement*, so foolishly flirt with sin ourselves and allow our children to do the same?

Editorial



These are fascinating days! Full of trial and burdens and deadlines that literally bury you with little opportunity to come up for air. And then there are these family once-in-a-lifetime moments and significant milestone events that come up in the middle of it all, and you feel powerless to give them your full attention or the time they deserve.

Our eldest son Zach, 22, has been working in the USA for 3 1/2 years and now has such great opportunities lying in front of him, it looks as though he'll be settling there permanently. All those talks we were going to have "when he comes home" we've been trying to do on the phone since January. It hasn't always been such a good vehicle for the type of communication we've needed. By the end of April Barbara and I had spoken at 10 home education seminars, from Kaitia to Christchurch. The 10 x 6 meter building the Lord provided in April as offices for the Home Education Foundation has been all-consuming in its need for re-fitting and our need to move in ASAP. Our daughter Genevieve, 24, has blessed us abundantly by focussing her time and talents on serving our whole family...and it has incidentally challenged me to be a lot more focussed on what I'm asking my family to do and where I'm leading them. I mean, suddenly there are so many more responsibilities I'd only been marginally aware of before now pressing in on me. Our son Alanson, 20, was accepted into the RNZAF...and suddenly he's leaving home for good. Just at that time, in mid-June, when I want to get extra time with Alanson, anti-family forces put on a two-day conference in Wellington to gather momentum to make many parents criminals by banning spanking in the home. Genevieve and I attend, after four hectic days of writing and publishing six colour brochures/booklets explaining the traditional and Biblical position of corporal correction. The two of us faced 150 very articulate, committed, well-funded Marxist-socialist-feminists who have no qualms about by-passing the democratic process or infiltrating, taking over and re-directing children-focussed organisations such as Barnardos and Plunket to serve their political agendas. I became aware that our 12-year-old Jeremiah is growing up and really does need a lot of man-to-man time, when the MoE quietly introduces some significant changes to the exemption application. In my zeal, I reacted rather strongly, and now I'm off the MoE's Christmas card list for causing hundreds of emails to flood its offices. Just when our 17-year-old daughter Charmagne's significant painting and paper-hanging skills are needed most urgently on this office building, she is committed to working an extra three days a week at her two-day-a-week job for a month! We'd been babysitting 3-year-old Kaitlyn, full sibling to Jeremiah and Jedediah (6), since February; now her birth mum tells us we should keep her permanently.

So we now count ourselves blessed with seven children. It really keeps us young and at the coal-face, so we should be able to identify with most struggles. But we've also got the eye-sight, grey hairs and arthritis of oldies: in 2 years we qualify to join a retirement home!

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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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Law is good, proper and essential in its place, but law can save no man, nor can law remake man and society. The basic function of law is to *restrain* (Romans 13:1-4), not to regenerate, and when the function of law is changed from the restraint of evil to the regeneration and reformation of man and society, then law itself begins to break down because an impossible burden is being placed upon it. Today, because too much is expected from law, we get fewer and fewer results from law because law is put to improper uses. Only as we return to a Biblical foundation for law shall we again have a return to justice and order under law. "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it" (Psalms 127:1).

(Extracted from *Law and Liberty*, Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1984, pp. 1-5. <http://www.chalcedon.edu/featured/6-04rushdoonyr.shtml>)

To Overcome Shortsightedness

by Mark Rushdoony



In viewing a documentary on the Roman Colosseum recently, I was pleasantly surprised to find they not only acknowledged that Christians were killed there (some years ago a visitor related that a tour guide told them that was a myth) but gave Christians credit for ending the gladiatorial games. I have since been struck by how shortsighted we are today when faced by such a massive social reform.

We tend to think of reform and cultural change as coming in two or four years increments, following Congressional or presidential election cycles or perhaps in terms of presidential terms of office. That which is a generation or more old is treated as institutionalized and beyond reform.

Imagine the reform necessitated by the Colosseum. It was finished before the end of the first century. Saint Ignatius of Antioch was the first martyr in A.D. 110. It was nearly three centuries before Honorius abolished the gladiatorial contests, after growing Christian opposition, which culminated in a monk being beaten to death by the Colosseum mobs when he objected to their barbarity.

In an age when political success is measured in two or four-year increments, could we be patient enough to work toward a victory three hundred years distant? Do we have faith that such longterm victories are possible?

We cannot expect great victories if we are shortsighted. God is not bound by election cycles. Our duty is to serve God and His righteousness and teach others to do likewise. In God's time, great victories will follow.

(From newsletter June 2001, Mark R. Rushdoony, President, Chalcedon Foundation, Box 158, Vallecito, CA 95251, U.S.A. ph. (209) 736-4365 www.chalcedon.edu ; chaloffi@goldrush.com)

Over A Cuppa



The Challenge of Motherhood

The modern challenge to motherhood is the eternal challenge — that of being a godly woman. The very phrase sounds strange in our ears. We never hear it now. We hear about every other type of women:

- beautiful women,
- smart women,
- sophisticated women,
- career women,
- talented women,
- divorced women.

But so seldom do we hear of a godly woman — or of a godly man either, for that matter. I believe women come nearer to fulfilling their God-given function in the home than anywhere else. It is a much nobler thing to be a good wife than to be Miss America. It is a greater achievement to establish a Christian home than it is to produce a second rate novel filled with filth. It is a far, far better thing in the realms of morals to be old fashioned than to be ultra-modern. The world has enough women who know how to be smart. It needs women who are willing to be simple. The world has enough women who know how to be brilliant. It needs some who will be brave. The world has enough women who are popular. It needs more who are pure. We need women, and men too, who would rather be morally right than socially correct.

— Peter Marshall, former Chaplain to the United States Senate.

Oh, mothers of young children, I bow before you in reverence. Your work is most holy. You are fashioning the destinies of immortal souls. The powers folded up in the little ones that you hushed to sleep in your bosoms last night are powers that shall exist forever. You are preparing them for their immortal destiny and influence. Be faithful. Take up your sacred burden reverently. Be sure that your heart is pure and that your life is sweet and clean.

— J.R. Miller, *Home-Making*, 1882.

The bravest battle that was ever fought!
 Shall I tell you where and when?
 On the maps of the world you will find it not.
 'Twas fought by the **Mothers of Men**.
 Nay, not with cannon or battle shot,
 With a sword or noble pen;
 Nay, not with eloquent words or thought
 From mouths of wonderful men!

But deep in a walled-up woman's heart —
 Of a woman that would not yield,

(Continued on page 30: *Cuppa*)

Some moral laws forbid the eating of meats as sinful, as for example, Hinduism, and others declare that the killing of unbelievers can be a virtue, as in Moslem morality. For Plato's morality, some acts of perversion were noble forms of love, whereas for the Bible the same acts are deserving of capital punishment.

Law Is Enacted Morality

The point is this: all law is enacted morality and presupposes a moral system, a moral law, and all morality presupposes a religion as its foundation. Law rests on morality and morality on religion. Whenever and wherever you weaken the religious foundations of a country or people, you then weaken the morality also, and you take away the foundations of its law. The result is the progressive collapse of law and order and the breakdown of society.

This is what we are experiencing today. Law and order are deteriorating because the religious foundations, the Biblical foundations, are being denied by the courts and by the people. Our American system of laws has rested on a Biblical foundation of law, on Biblical morality, and we are now denying that Biblical foundation for a humanistic one. From colonial days to the present, American law has represented Biblical faith and morality. Because it has been Biblical, our laws have not tried to save men by law, but they have sought to establish and maintain that system of law and order which is most conducive to godly service.

Salvation by Law

Now, our increasingly humanistic laws, courts and legislators are giving us a new morality. They tell us, as they strike down laws resting upon Biblical foundations, that morality cannot be legislated, but what they offer is not only legislated morality but *salvation by law*, and no Christian can accept this. Wherever we look now, whether with respect to poverty, education, civil rights, human rights, peace and all things else, we see laws passed designed to *save* man. Supposedly, these laws are going to give us a society free of prejudice, ignorance, disease, poverty, crime, war and all other things considered to be evil. These legislative programs add up to one thing: *salvation* by law.

This brings us to the crucial difference between Biblical law and humanistic law. Laws grounded on the Bible do not attempt to save man or to usher in a brave new world, a great society, world peace, a poverty-free world or any other such ideal. The purpose of Biblical law, and all laws grounded on a Biblical faith, is to punish and restrain evil and to protect life and property and to provide justice for all people. It is *not* the purpose of the state and its law to change or reform men: this is a spiritual matter and a task for religion. Man can be changed only by the grace of God through the ministry of His Word. Man cannot be changed by statist legislation; he cannot be legislated into a new character. The evil will or heart of man can be restrained by law, in that a man can be afraid of the consequences of disobedience.

We all slow down a bit on the freeway when we see a patrol car, and we are always mindful of speed regula-

tions. The fact of law and the strict enforcement of law are restraints upon man's sinful inclinations. But, while a man can be *restrained* by strict law and order, he cannot be *changed* by law; he cannot be saved by law. Man can only be saved by the grace of God through Jesus Christ.

Now humanistic law has a different purpose. Humanistic law aims at saving man and remaking society. For humanism, salvation is an act of state. It is civil government which regenerates man and society and brings man into a paradise on earth. As a result, for the humanist, social action is everything. Man must work to pass the right set of laws, because his salvation depends upon it. Any who oppose the humanist in his plan of salvation by law, salvation by acts of civil government, is by definition an evil man conspiring against the good of society. The majority of men in office today are intensely moral and religious men, deeply concerned with saving men by law. From the Biblical perspective, from the Christian perspective, their program is immoral and ungodly, but these men are, from their humanistic perspective, not only men of great dedication but men of earnestly humanistic faith and morality.

As a result, our basic problem today is that we have two religions in conflict, humanism and Christianity, each with its own morality and the laws of that morality. When the humanist tells us therefore that "You can't legislate morality," what he actually means is that we must not legislate Biblical morality, because he means to have humanistic morality legislated. The Bible is religiously barred from the schools, because the schools have another established religion, humanism. The courts will not recognize Christianity as the common law foundation of American life and civil government because the courts have already established humanism as the religious foundation of American life. For humanism is a religion, even though it does not believe in God. It is not necessary for a religion to believe in God to be a religion; as a matter of fact, most of the world's religions are essentially humanistic and anti-theistic.

Our New America

The new America taking shape around us is a very religious America, but its religion is humanism, not Christianity. It is a very morally minded America, but its ethics is the new morality, which, for Christianity, is simply the old sin. This new, revolutionary, humanistic America is also very missionary-minded. Humanism believes in salvation by works of law, and, as a result, we are trying, as a nation, to save the world by law. By vast appropriations of money and dedicated labor, we are trying to save all nations and races, all men from all problems, in the hopes of creating a paradise on earth. We are trying to bring peace on earth and good will among men by acts of state and works of law, not by Jesus Christ. But St. Paul wrote, in Galatians 2:16, "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by works of the law: for by the works of law shall no flesh be justified."

Nick & Mary Anne Abplanalp

of North Shore City

Despite having grown up within a couple of kilometres of each other, and even attending the same school at the same time, Nick and I (Mary Anne) didn't meet until our late teens when we met in church, after both having become Christians. Married two years later, we headed off to Europe for a six month 'OE'.....



Nick, Amelia & Mary Anne Abplanalp

We ended up living and working in Switzerland and England for six years, Nick as a project manager and Mary Anne as a money-market dealer, before returning to settle in New Zealand, as we wanted our nearly-five year old daughter, Amelia to be able to spend time with her grandparents and to have a 'good New Zealand education'.

When considering the school options at that time we had looked at home education. It seemed like such a waste to spend the 'best learning years of one's life' inside four walls for six hours a day with 30 other children and one teacher for 12 years. However, when we mentioned it to other people we were cautioned, "But she's an only child what about her socialisation?"

So at five years old, Amelia was sent to the local school to be educated and 'socialised' whilst also being expected to be 'salt and light' (seems an incomprehensible decision now!) The year Amelia started her second year at school, I began a Diploma in Teaching and unashamedly used the school as 'free child-care', as it had not taken us long to realise that we were going to educate Amelia at home. I had come across a book by Raymond and Dorothy Moore called *Home School Burnout* (now published as *The Successful Homeschool Family Book*) which was a great introduction to home education and influenced the approach we intended to take, reminding us that homeschooling isn't just 'school at home'. So, the day I graduated, Amelia came home.

As two of our goals for home educating have been 'to encourage a love of learning' and for Amelia 'to take responsibility for her own learning', she has always been involved in the planning for each year, from subject choice, curriculum and resource selection through to time management, goal setting, evaluating and recording her work. Being very organised by nature and a visual learner, Amelia has preferred to use some texts as frameworks for study and then have the flexibility to develop units further where she is interested. Through Amelia's high school years, we have used a wide vari-

ety of resources including Apologia Science, Abeka History and Literature, Jensen's Format Writing and New Zealand Maths text books.

Fairly early on we had recognised that 'the world is our classroom' and so hadn't limited ourselves to the New Zealand curriculum or to one method of home educating. If we were to describe

our style of home education, it would be 'eclectic'. Having established our reasons why and objectives for home educating, we have been able to choose from the wide range of resources available that have complemented our objectives, interests, learning styles, teaching approaches and beliefs.

With respect to those well-meaning concerns about Amelia 'being an only', socialisation really has been a non-issue. Involved in a wide range of activities, sports, community and church involvement, volunteer and part-time work, as well as being part of an active home education community, Amelia has always had more than ample opportunity to socialise in natural, balanced and purposeful ways.

At 14 she mentioned that she would like to consider going to school for the senior high school years. For an instant my heart dropped to my feet, but then I felt an absolute peace for I believed it was God's plan for her to be at home. At this time I was teacher-aiding part-time at the local high school in maths, and so had an idea of what Amelia was going to experience. However, we allowed her the chance to make that decision for herself, believing what the outcome would be. The school was most happy to have her attend for a week (even providing a uniform) and placed Amelia in classes alongside friends she had at school. Amelia really enjoyed her week at school, hanging out with friends and experiencing school life. However she was very frustrated with the behaviour of the students in class (continually talking while the teacher was teaching) and the resulting amount of time wasted. Also, knowing our convictions, she decided she would prefer to remain being home educated ("Phew"!).

Later that same year, Amelia was able to visit her 'home-stay sisters' in Korea. The two girls, who had come to live with us when Amelia was 11 and had been part of our family for 4 years while they attended a local high school, were now studying at University.

(Continued on page 22: *Abplanalp*)

KEYSTONE

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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

The Faith of Us Fathers

Educating Children According to God's Word

by Steve Bearsley

One of the most tragic statements I ever heard from a man of God about the education of children was that, "There is nothing in the Bible about the education of children". Such a statement shows, at the very least, a woefully limited knowledge of God's Word but, more seriously, a careless disregard for its authority.

Consider just a few of the passages from Scripture that speak specifically about this subject of teaching and instructing children. In the Old Testament God instructed the Israelites through His servant Moses saying, "Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren" (Deuteronomy 4:9)¹. Also He said, "Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up" (Deuteronomy 11:18-19).

Solomon wrote of the instruction of children saying, "My son, hear the instruction of your father, And do not forsake the law of your mother" (Proverbs 1:8); and, "Hear, my children, the instruction of a father, And give attention to know understanding; For I give you good doctrine: Do not forsake my law" (Proverbs 4:1-2).

In the New Testament, after Paul had set out the spiritual blessings the believers have in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:3), he wrote of the daily conduct that is to result. This he described as "a walk worthy of the calling with which you were called" (Ephesians 4:1), and included parental responsibility in the education of children; "And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).



God saved Steve in 1982 and blessed him with his wife Lynda in 1987. Steve previously worked in the Security and Investigations field but now serves as Shepherd and Teacher for Family Bible Assembly in Hamilton, New Zealand. Steve and Lynda are committed Home Educators and actively encourage all parents to teach and train their own children in accord with God's Word.

(4) The Special Symbol Method uses specially designed symbols to represent the different sounds of letters and letter combinations. For example, the three sounds that "a" might make would be represented by three different symbols all looking similar to that letter but slightly modified, or else by placing a symbol above the letter. Vowels which say their own name would have the long sound symbol above them, which is a straight line: (¯). Consonants which have the sound the same as that with which their name starts would also have the long sound symbol above them (the "c" as in city or the "g" as in gem). The short sound symbol is a wee smile above the letter: (^). Consonants taking on different sounds than in their names use these, as do short vowels: the "c" as in cake or the "g" as in go.

Tip 5: Teach the printing of letters! This is not crucial; postpone it if it can't be made enjoyable. Purchase or make up a chart showing how you expect your child to form his manuscript letters. Start with the capitals. The chart should show which strokes are made first and how, proportions, how they fit between the guidelines, etc. Starting with the capitals ensures they are riveted in the child's mind, since these are likely the first letters he is ever learning. Capitals aren't used as much so are more easily forgotten, unless fixed in the memory. Lower case letters are used far more frequently so will naturally be reviewed a lot more anyway. Learn them after the child has mastered doing the capitals. It often helps to have the student trace letters with his index finger. Aim for quality, not quantity.

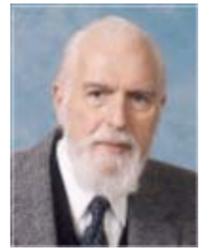
Tip 6: Teach phonics to every child! Phonics should be taught to the very smartest child and to the very slowest if either is to reach his maximum reading and spelling potential. Research has shown that children who are good at phonics are better spellers. And the first words a child should learn to spell, so that he can start writing, are the most often occurring words of our language — the same ones that he should have learned first to read!

Tip 7: Teach the word-attack skill of sounding out unfamiliar words, moving systematically from left to right. Look-say or whole-word methods never drill the student in the systematic eye movements of one letter at a time from left to right. This is absolutely essential in phonics and is the key to cracking the code of every new word. Look-say, however, teaches the student to scan the shape of the word and the page and the facing page for familiar shapes or pictures before then guessing at the word in question.

Don't worry so much about checking for "meaning" and "comprehension" during this time: these should be a well-developed part of every six-year-old child's general language abilities already, assuming parents and child have been engaging in conversations, discussions, debates, story-telling, etc., for the last six years.

Tip 8: Dad and Mum: become readers yourselves! Here is a very profound principle in teaching your child to read: "monkey see, monkey do". Set the example and let him see that you enjoy reading. Better yet, read together regularly.

World Views in Focus



Can We Legislate Morality?

By Rev R.J. Rushdoony

An oft-quoted statement has it that we can't legislate morality. We are told that it is useless and even wrong to enact certain kinds of legislation because they involve trying to make people moral by law, and this, it is insisted, is an impossibility. Whenever various groups try to effect reforms, they are met with the words, "You can't legislate morality."

Now it must be granted that there is a measure of truth to this statement. If people could be made moral by law, it would be a simple matter for the board of supervisors or for Congress to pass laws making all Americans moral. This would be salvation by law. Men and nations have often resorted to salvation by law, but the only consequence has been greater problems and social chaos.

All Laws Are Moral

We can agree, therefore, that people cannot be *saved* by law, but it is one thing to try to *save* people by law, another to have moral legislation, that is, laws concerned with morality. The statement, "You can't legislate morality," is a dangerous half-truth and even a lie, because all legislation is concerned with morality.

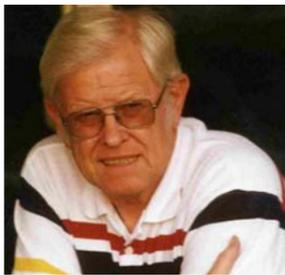
Every law on the statute books of every civil government is either an example of enacted morality or it is procedural thereto. Our laws are all moral laws, representing a system of morality. Laws against manslaughter and murder are moral laws; they echo the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." Laws against theft are commandments against stealing. Slander and libel laws, perjury laws, enact the moral requirement, "Thou shalt not bear false witness." Traffic laws are moral laws also: their purpose is to protect life and property; again, they reflect the Ten Commandments.

Laws concerning police and court procedures have a moral purpose also, to further justice and to protect law and order. Every law on the statute books is concerned with morality or with the procedures for the enforcement of law, and all law is concerned with morality. We may disagree with the morality of a law, but we cannot deny the moral concern of law. Law is concerned with right and wrong; it punishes and restrains evil and protects the good, and this is exactly what morality is about. It is impossible to have law without having morality behind that law, because all law is simply enacted morality.

There are, however, different kinds of morality. Biblical morality is one thing, and Buddhist, Hindu and Moslem morality are radically different moral systems.

Eight Tips for Teaching to Read

Adapted from an article by Frank C. Rogers of TATRAS (Teach America to Read And Spell)



A child who can read easily, quickly and for pleasure in the first grade (at age six) has one of the greatest lifetime academic advantages that can be given to him. And it is his parents who can make that happen.

Concerned and active parents, regardless of their own reading or language abilities, can provide the key to a child's learning to read effectively and for pleasure. Here are some tips that will help you to help your child succeed to his maximum potential.

Tip 1: Teach the alphabet! Start with the names of the letters (a, b, c, etc.) using alphabet flash cards with capitals on one side and lower case on the other. Start when your child is three or four. Allow a couple of years to complete this very important task. Allow yourself to develop the patience not to rush the learning process. Will you be able to stick with the same few cards for weeks, adding new cards only when the others have been mastered? Will you keep instruction short, usually taking only a minute or two? Will you point out letters as they appear before the student on signs, labels and in books?

Tip 2: Teach Phonics! Regardless of the age, when the child finally knows the names of all of the letters and shows signs of wanting to read, he is probably ready to begin phonics. Phonics is the relationship between letters and the sounds they represent. The "sounds" of letters should be directly taught. That is, using flash cards again, show a letter and get the child to repeat after you the sound the letter represents.

Some educators feel there is a problem with phonics. Phonics is confusing, they say, because letters represent different sounds in different words. For a well-designed phonics program this turns out to be no problem at all.

First, note that parents teaching phonics teach not only the sounds of individual letters, but also of letter combinations: ch, igh, eigh, oy, th, sh, for example, and each of these combinations would be on its own flash-card. Ph, ow, ou oi, wh are other examples. A child being taught the sounds of ch and c will never confuse the c in chapel for the c in cookie.

Second, because some letters or letter combinations make several sounds, it is possible to teach a student to always try, first, the most frequent sound. In the child's first phonics lesson he might be taught that "a" has three sounds, as in "hat", "way" and "all". Then he is told to always try the "hat" sound for "a" first when sounding out a word. That will enable him to decode most of the words he encounters. But if that first sound doesn't work, he is trained to quickly try the second

sound. In addition, there are spelling rules which determine which sound the letter makes. These can be learned at the same time.

Does that sound very complicated and drawn out? While it may seem so initially, it later yields vast benefits. If the letters and letter sounds are taught in the order of their frequency of occurrence in the English language, just learning the first 20 phonograms will allow students to decode most of the most-often-occurring words in English.

As a student decodes or recognizes these words repeatedly, and does so for about 40 times, these words become ones that are instantly recognized. These words are no longer sounded out letter-by-letter thus expanding the student's instantly-known reading vocabulary. A vocabulary of just 300 to 400 words accounts for half of the words in any adult text material.

Be wise and cautious with word lists. Long lists of non-prioritized words, read in isolation, are boring to many students. Knowing key words instantly and being able to fearlessly sound out each strange word from left to right are abilities that will, with certainty, make every child an independent reader at the earliest possible time. And it will tend to make them good spellers!

Tip 3: Read to your child. Reading to a child will expand his vocabulary. It will help him to understand our language in its different forms and styles. And it will widen his knowledge of how the world works and improve his language comprehension ability. While reading to a child does many wonderful things, you should not assume that it will teach him to read on its own.

Tip 4: Choose an effective phonics system. Phonics programs can be placed into four different categories based on the manner in which they teach phonics and word recognition. (1) One method is Vertical Phonics. In this method the different sounds for each letter or letter combination are all taught at one time. When the instructor points to a letter or letter combination, the student says all the sounds of that letter, the most often occurring sound of that letter or letter combination being said first. This method was described in Tip 2 above.

(2) Horizontal Phonics programs start by teaching only the short vowel sounds (along with some consonant sounds) and then teaching only words that use the short-vowel sounds. When he has mastered words like "cap", "men", "lick", "lot" and "run" it is explained to the student that vowels also make "long" sounds, that is, they say their own names. Then he is taught words like "cape", "mean", "like", "low" and "ruin". Though inefficient, the horizontal method has been the traditional way of teaching phonics.

(3) The Word Family Method uses lists of words that contain minimal changes between words. For example, ram, am cram, wham or wing, fling, sing, thing, etc. Like horizontal phonics, the word family method initially exposes students to one sound for each letter. As mentioned earlier, word family lists can be awkward and boring.

God does indeed have a lot to say about the teaching and instruction of children in His Word. Each Christian parent must ascertain what his duty is in response to all that God has said and obediently carry out that duty. Something that must be kept in mind at all times is that each of us will give an account to God for what we have done (1 Corinthians 3:13; Hebrews 4:13). Also, this world system in which we live day by day is opposed to God, His Word and His people. Paul reminded Timothy that, "*all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution*" (2 Timothy 3:12). John even says that true Christians shouldn't be amazed if the world hates them (1 John 3:13). We must therefore expect to be in conflict with the world especially in areas like the teaching and instruction of the children God has given us.

One of the challenges Christian parents struggle with is that there is nothing in the Bible that "directly" commands against putting Christian children into the State education system. If, however, we understand what the State system of education is, we find an abundance of Biblical material regarding this subject upon which to base our decisions.

For instance, in the first of the Ten Commandments, God declared, "*You shall have no other gods before Me*" (Exodus 20:3). The State system of education denies the existence of the One living and true God and instead teaches children about the false gods of the Maori religion and culture (amongst others). This is nothing less than spiritual adultery which is condemned by God (Jeremiah 3:8, 9).

Some New Zealand schools now adorn entranceways and walls with carvings of Maori spiritual figures. This is pagan idolatry and a blatant violation of the second of the Ten Commandments: "*You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them*" (Exodus 20:4-5). John concluded his first epistle with the command for his readers to keep themselves from idols: "*Little children, keep yourselves from idols*" (1 John 5:21). This construction in 1 John 5:21, using the reflexive pronoun, emphasises the duty of personal effort. Each person is responsible to actively obey God's command. Some State schools have a Maori Marae on their campuses,² and children are taught Maori religious and spiritual beliefs in these places. The children are taught these religious and spiritual beliefs as fact, but the real Truth is actively taught against. Schools and teachers are not neutral in their values but have a strong influence on their students.³

The origins of the universe and life itself are attributed to the gods of Time and Chance, also known as "Evolution", and the absolutes of God's Word are rejected in favour of the ever-changing ideas of sinful, depraved humanity.

Some people might argue that there are Christian teachers in a particular State school and this allows these schools to be given consideration as places for educating their children. However, even where there

are teachers who claim to be Christians in a State school, they are forbidden to teach children from a Biblical foundation. For example, they cannot teach that wrong behaviour is "sin". If a child does something that is wrong, he or she would be corrected using an ungodly standard since it cannot be dealt with as a sin issue. Heaven and Hell cannot be spoken of, much less taught as realities for the future, and moral and social issues are dealt with as personal choices. Where children are in conflict with one another in the classroom or playground, reconciliation according to God's Word cannot be taught nor required. Thus, children are taught that there are two standards for dealing with sin, each equally valid but dependent on the situation for their use. In the Christian home, the standard is God's Word, but out in the world every other standard is considered as valid. There is no blessing from God for those who follow ungodly counsel (Psalm 1:1), so why subject your children to it?

In the school playground parents have very little or no control at all over who or what their children become involved with. Most parents recognise their God-given responsibility to protect their children from such wickedness as pornography, drugs, violence, smoking, etc. Yet in many schools these things are not uncommon, and a large number of students are being suspended for offences in relation to these sorts of things; 4,887 suspensions or 43 per 1,000 students in 2003. If you consider for a moment the Biblical record of the history of the Israelites, it was the influence of the ungodly nations around that contributed to the spiritual and moral corruption of God's chosen people. In the New Testament God warns Christians about the dangers of keeping company with ungodly people. "*Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good habits*" (1 Corinthians 15:33). The book of Proverbs contains similar warnings; "*Do not enter the path of the wicked, And do not walk in the way of evil. Avoid it, do not travel on it; Turn away from it and pass on*" (Proverbs 4:14-15). Young children especially need to be protected from making the wrong sort of friends and allowing themselves to be influenced into sinful behaviour. "*Make no friendship with an angry man, And with a furious man do not go, Lest you learn his ways And set a snare for your soul*" (Proverbs 22:24-25).

God also tells us what the last days will be like. Paul wanted Timothy to be aware of the problems he (and we) would face in these last days and to know how to respond. In his Second Letter to Timothy Paul wrote, "*But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come*" (2 Timothy 3:1). These last days would be dangerous, difficult, hard to bear, troublesome days. But it is very interesting to note the aspects of these last days to which Paul directs our attention. They will be days when "*men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power*" (2 Timothy 3:2-5). The curriculum in schools is focused on the child, not God, and teaches children to be self-centred and have a love for self. Schools teach children to pursue financial secu-

rity, be proud of themselves, stand up for their rights, etc. But what does God say is to be the Christian's response to this? He commands, "from such people turn away" (2 Timothy 3:5). That is, we are to actively avoid such people with a sense of horror for the sin they commit. The words "turn away" are a present imperative indicating that this command is something that is to be a continual habit of life.

How can Christian parents obey this command and actively avoid with a sense of horror these things which are being taught in our country's schools? Can they obey God's command by putting their children into these same schools to be taught these very things? Definitely not! Putting children into this environment five days a week for six hours at a time cannot constitute obeying God's command to turn away from such people! Nor does it obey the commandment to "Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength" (Mark 12:30).

As we read through Holy Scripture we are frequently confronted with instruction to the parents to teach their children. It is God, through His servant Moses that said, "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up" (Deuteronomy 6:6-7). And, "Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up" (Deuteronomy 11:18-19). The Psalmist declares, "For He established a testimony in Jacob, And appointed a law in Israel, Which He commanded our fathers, That they should make them known to their children; That the generation to come might know them, The children who would be born, That they may arise and declare them to their children, That they may set their hope in God, And not forget the works of God, But keep His commandments; And may not be like their fathers, A stubborn and rebellious generation, A generation that did not set its heart aright, And whose spirit was not faithful to God" (Psalm 78:5-8).

It is Solomon, the wisest man to ever live (apart from Jesus Christ) who exhorted, "My son, hear the instruction of your father, And do not forsake the law of your mother" (Proverbs 1:8); and, "Hear, my children, the instruction of a father, And give attention to know understanding; For I give you good doctrine: Do not forsake my law." (Proverbs 4:1-2). God commanded the believers at Ephesus, "And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

Nowhere do we find God telling parents to put their children into situations where spiritual adultery and

pagan idolatry are taught and encouraged. God says that wisdom begins with the fear of the Lord (Proverbs 9:10), yet the secular education system denies the very existence of the God of the Bible and teaches children so. The Psalmist wrote, "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.'" (Psalm 14:1). Every teacher that says there is no God is a fool according to God, yet parents are encouraged to put their children's lives into the hands of those God calls fools.

God has never divided life into segments where it is acceptable to contradict His

Word in one situation but not acceptable in another. There is the temptation to say that teaching life skills, etc., can be given to the ungodly, but spiritual things should be taught in the Christian home and Church. The problem with this idea is that it is completely contrary to what God says about the time and place for training children. God commanded that the teaching of children be by parents, "when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up" (Deuteronomy 11:18-19). There isn't the slightest indication that God considered it right for children to be placed in an ungodly environment to be taught at any time.

Another point that Christian parents must keep in mind is what can be expected from placing children into an ungodly environment such as the State School system. God tells us what happened to the Israelites when they came under the influences of the nations around them. The Psalmist wrote that "they mingled with the Gentiles And learned their works" (Psalm 106:35). What were the works the Israelites learned? Was it good for their personal growth and development, and did it benefit them in their relationship with Almighty God? Definitely not. God tells us plainly what resulted; "They served their idols, Which became a snare to them. They even sacrificed their sons And their daughters to demons, And shed innocent blood, The blood of their sons and daughters, Whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan; And the land was polluted with blood. Thus they were defiled by their own works, And played the harlot by their own deeds" (Psalm 106:36-39). Was God pleased with this result in the lives of His people? No way. "Therefore the wrath of the LORD was kindled against His people" (Psalm 106:40). God was just in His anger toward His people because they had sinned. He has instructed Christians to learn from the past failures of the Israelites and not do those same things (1 Corinthians 10:11).

Through His prophet Jeremiah God commanded the Israelites, "Thus says the LORD: Do not learn the way of the Gentiles" (Jeremiah 10:2); and John wrote, "Do not love the world or the things in the world" (1 John 2:15). God has strong words for those who would be unfaithful to Him and engage in a spiritual affair with the world. "Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the

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

rested upon reading, the consensus was that reading was at the heart of either the problem or the solution.

As the most important discipline in education, reading generates more than 1,200 research projects annually. It took the Commission two years of pouring through more than 10,000 research projects done in the last quarter century in order to separate the wheat from the chaff, to boil it down to what works, what might work and what doesn't work.

In 1985 the Commission issued its report, *Becoming a Nation of Readers*. It is, in my subjective opinion, the most important and "commonsense" education document in 25 years. Among its primary findings, two simple declarations rang loud and clear:

The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children.⁴

The Commission found conclusive evidence to support its use not only in the home but also in the classroom: "It is a practice that should continue throughout the grades."⁵

In its wording — "the single most important activity" — the experts were saying reading aloud was more important than worksheets, homework, assessments, book reports and flashcards. One of the cheapest, simplest and oldest tools of teaching was being promoted as a better teaching tool than anything else in the home or classroom. What exactly is so powerful about something so simple you don't even need a high school diploma in order to do it?

How can something as simple as reading to a child be so effective?

It boils down to a simple, two-part formula:

1. The more you read, the better you get at it; the better you get at it, the more you like it; and the more you like it, the more you do it.
2. And the more you read, the more you know; and the more you know, the smarter you grow.

The scores tell us that many of our students know *how* to read, but their behaviour as children and adults tells us they don't like it enough to do it very often. We've taught children *how* to read but forgotten to teach them to *want* to read. In so doing, we've created schooltime readers instead of lifetime readers.

We read to children for all the same reasons you talk with children: to reassure, to entertain, to bond; to inform or explain, to arouse curiosity, to inspire. But in reading aloud, you also:

Condition the child's brain to associate reading with pleasure;
Create background knowledge;
Build vocabulary;
Provide a reading role model.

Let's look at how we create lifetime readers. There are two basic reading "facts of life" that are ignored in many education circles, yet without these two principles working in tandem, little else will work in education

reform:

Reading Fact No. 1: People tend to do what they enjoy doing and avoid what they don't enjoy doing;

Reading Fact No. 2: Reading is an accrued skill.

Let's examine Reading Fact No. 1: Almost every child enjoys being read to, especially if the one reading also enjoys it and tries to make it enjoyable. You could even call it a commercial, conditioning the child to associate books and print with pleasure. There are, however, "dislikes" associated with reading and school. The class routine can be tedious or boring, threatening and without meaning — endless hours of worksheets and unconnected test questions. If a child seldom experiences the pleasures of reading and meets only the boring or tedious aspects, the natural reaction will be withdrawal.

Which brings us to Reading Fact No. 2: Reading is like riding a bicycle, driving a car, or sewing: in order to get better at it you must do it. And the more you read, the better you get at it.

The last 25 years of reading research⁶ confirms this simple formula — regardless of sex, race, nationality or socio-economic background. Students who read the most, read the best, achieve the most and stay in school the longest. Conversely, those who don't read much cannot get better at it. And most Americans (children and adults) don't read much and therefore aren't very good at it.⁷

Why don't they read much? Because the largely unenjoyable reading experiences throughout their school years, coupled with a lack of reading for pleasure in the home, nullify any attraction to reading.

So read aloud to your children. And enjoy it!

Notes:

1. Author of *The Read-Aloud Handbook*. This article was edited and adapted from the Introduction and Chapter 1.
2. Jay R. Campbell, Catherine M. Hombo, and John Mazzeo, *NAEP 1999 Trends in Academic Progress: Three Decades of Student Performance*, U.S. Department of Education, (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, 2000). Also available at: <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard>.
3. Kenneth Gray, "The Baccalaureate Game: Is it Right for all Teens?" *Phi Delta Kappan*, April, 1996, pp. 528-534.
4. Richard C. Anderson, Elfrieda H. Hiebert, Judith A. Scott, Ian A.G. Wilkinson, *Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report of the Commission on Reading*, (Champaign-Urbana, IL: Center for the Study of Reading, 1985), p. 23.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
6. Keith E. Stanovich, "Matthew Effects in Reading: Some consequences of individual differences in the acquisition of literacy," *Reading Research Quarterly*, Fall 1986, pp. 360-407; Richard L. Allington, "Oral Reading," in *Handbook of Reading Research*, P. David Pearson, editor, (New York: Longman, 1984), pp. 829-864; Warwick B. Elley, and Francis Mangubhai, "The impact of reading on second language learning," *Reading Research Quarterly*, Fall 1983, pp. 53-67; Mary A. Foertsch, *Reading In and Out of School*.
7. Mary A. Foertsch, *Reading In and Out of School*.

Teaching Tips

Reading Aloud

by Jim Trelease¹



I once received a letter from a stranger named Kelly Kline, mother of Derek, aged three: “Dear Mr. Trelease — I heard you speak last month. When I finished reading *Charlotte’s Web*, Derek’s next four words were, ‘Mom — read it again!’ Guess what we’re doing? You got it — we’re on Chapter 17.”

Upon investigation, I learned that Derek’s mother did not start reading to him at age three. She began with nursery rhymes while he was still *in utero*. Beginning with the day he was born, seldom did a day go by without a story — often more than one. What started as a handful of books from the library grew into bags-full of books, so by three he was ready for his very first novel.

By the age of four, he had taught himself to read. Not with a commercial phonics program, however. One thing can be said in favour of such products, however: they’re right when they say, “There are only 44 sounds in the English language.” And all 44 — every ending, blending and diphthong — can be found in *Good Night Moon* and *Make Way for Ducklings* and *Charlotte’s Web* — just the way Mrs. Kline gave them to Derek. Although she was trained as a teacher, she did no formal teaching of Derek other than to answer his questions and read to him.

Now I want you to jump ahead to the day Derek sat down at the kindergarten learning table for the first time. Think about the dozen novels he’d heard by that day; the thousand picture books he’d heard, as well as the ones he’d read himself; and the tens of thousands of words he knew from all those readings. And then I want you to think about the child on his left and the one on his right — who, if they’re typical kindergarten children, have heard no novels and only a handful of dried-out picture books over the last five years.

Which child had the larger vocabulary with which to understand the teacher? Which one had the longer attention span? Mrs. Kline brought a child to the classroom door ready and willing to learn. Did she have to invest \$230 in a 17-pound box of flashcards and phonics tapes? Did she have to enrol him in an elite and expensive preschool? Did she have to bring him down to the computer store and plug him into expensive software? All Kelly Kline needed — all anyone needs — is a free public library card and the determination to invest her mind and time in her child’s future. Nothing on Wall Street pays dividends as rich as that.

Extensive research has proven that reading aloud to a child is the single most important factor in raising a reader. These inexpensive 15 minutes a day are the best-kept secret in education.

If reading to children were common instead of a rarity, we’d be facing fewer academic and social problems in this nation. Student achievement has not kept pace with the increasing complexity of the world around us. Consider these findings that even the optimists can’t deny:

In spite of numerous reform efforts, higher standards and various political parties in power, there has been no significant change in students’ reading scores between 1971 and 2000;²

Only 37 percent of high school students score high enough on reading achievement tests to handle adequately college level material — yet almost 70 percent attempt college;³

Moreover, 80 percent of college faculty members report that entering freshmen cannot read well enough to do college work;³

An examination of college remedial classes showed a marked increase in the enrolment numbers for reading classes, with the greatest deficiency being reading speed and comprehension.³

Rather than just teach a child *how* to read, let’s teach a child to *want* to read. “What we teach children to love and desire,” goes an education adage, “will always outweigh what we teach them to do.” The fact is that some children learn to read sooner than others, and some better than others. There is a difference. For the parent who thinks sooner is better, who has the 18-month-old child barking at flashcards, my response is: Sooner is not better. Are the dinner guests who arrive an hour early better guests than those who arrive on time? Of course not.

However, I am concerned about the child who needlessly arrives late, who then struggles through years of pain with a book. Not only will he miss out on large portions of what he needs to know, he may be enduring a pain-connection with print that will stay with him for a lifetime.

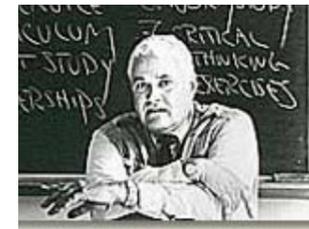
Why Read Aloud?

Why is it so important for us to read to children at this particular point in history?

As noted above, the nation’s reading scores haven’t changed in 30 years despite school reforms. While schools should have been creating *lifetime* readers — graduates who continue to read and educate themselves throughout their adult lives — in reality they were creating *schooltime* readers — graduates who know how to read well enough to graduate. And at that point the majority take a silent vow: If I never read another book, it’ll be too soon.

In the dawning hours of our awareness, 1983, a national committee was created to discover its causes and its solution. It was called the Commission on Reading, organized by the National Academy of Education and the National Institute of Education and funded under the U.S. Department of Education. It consisted of nationally recognized experts in how children develop, how they learn language and how they learn to read. Since nearly everything in the curriculum of school

Bits of Books



The Underground History of American Education, Part 1

by John Taylor Gatto

Government schooling is the most radical adventure in history. It kills the family by monopolizing the best times of childhood and by teaching disrespect for home and parents. It grows from the theological idea that human value is a scarce thing.

It’s a religious notion, School is its church. Socrates foresaw if teaching became a formal profession, something like this would happen. Professional interest is served by making what is easy to do seem hard; by subordinating the laity to the priesthood. School is too vital a jobs-project, contract giver and protector of the social order to allow itself to be “re-formed.” It has political allies to guard its marches, that’s why reforms come and go without changing much. Even reformers can’t imagine school much different.

David learns to read at age four; Rachel, at age nine: In normal development, when both are 13, you can’t tell which one learned first — the five-year spread means nothing at all. But in school I label Rachel “learning disabled” and slow David down a bit, too. For a paycheck, I adjust David to depend on me to tell him when to go and stop. He won’t outgrow that dependency. I identify Rachel as discount merchandise, “special education” fodder. She’ll be locked in her place forever.

In 30 years of teaching kids rich and poor I almost never met a learning disabled child; hardly ever met a gifted and talented one either. Like all school categories, these are sacred myths, created by human imagination. They derive from questionable values we never examine because they preserve the temple of schooling. That’s the secret behind short-answer tests, bells, uniform time blocks, age grading, standardization and all the rest of the school religion punishing our nation. There isn’t a right way to become educated; there are as many ways as fingerprints. We don’t need state-certified teachers to make education happen — that probably guarantees it won’t.

How much more evidence is necessary? Good schools don’t need more money or a longer year; they need real free-market choices, variety that speaks to every need and runs risks. We don’t need a national curriculum or national testing either. Both initiatives arise from ignorance of how people learn or deliberate indifference to it. I can’t teach this way any longer. If you hear of a job where I don’t have to hurt kids to make a living, let me know. Come fall I’ll be looking for work.

School As Religion

Nothing about school is what it seems, not even boredom. This is a personal investigation of why school is a dangerous place. It’s not so much that anyone there sets out to hurt children; more that all of us associated with the institution are stuck like flies in the same great web your kids are. We buzz frantically to cover our own panic but have little power to help smaller flies.

Looking backward on a thirty-year teaching career full of rewards and prizes, somehow I can’t completely believe that I spent my time on earth institutionalized; I can’t believe that centralized schooling is allowed to exist at all as a gigantic indoctrination and sorting machine, robbing people of their children. Did it really happen? Was this my life?

School is a religion. Without understanding the holy mission aspect you’re certain to misperceive what takes place as a result of human stupidity or venality or even class warfare. Dewey’s *Pedagogic Creed* statement of 1897 gives you a clue to the zeitgeist:

Every teacher should realize he is a social servant set apart for the maintenance of the proper social order and the securing of the right social growth. In this way the teacher is always the prophet of the true God and the usherer in of the true kingdom of heaven.

What is “proper” social order? What does “right” social growth look like? If you don’t know you’re like me, not like John Dewey who did, or the Rockefellers, his patrons, who did, too.

Certain utopian schemes to retard maturity in the interests of a greater good were put into play, following roughly the blueprint Rousseau laid down in the book *Emile*. At least rhetorically. The first goal, to be reached in stages, was an orderly, scientifically managed society, one in which the best people would make the decisions, unhampered by democratic tradition. After that, human breeding, the evolutionary destiny of the species, would be in reach. Universal institutionalized formal forced schooling was the prescription, extending the dependency of the young well into what had traditionally been early adult life. Individuals would be prevented from taking up important work until a relatively advanced age. Maturity was to be retarded.

During the post-Civil War period (later 1800s), childhood was extended about four years. Later, a special label was created to describe very old children. It was called *adolescence*, a phenomenon hitherto unknown to the human race. The infantilization of young people didn’t stop at the beginning of the twentieth century; child labor laws were extended to cover more and more kinds of work, the age of school leaving set higher and higher. The greatest victory for this utopian project was making school the only avenue to certain occupations. The intention was ultimately to draw all work into the school net. By the 1950s it wasn’t unusual to find graduate students well into their thirties, running errands, waiting to start their lives.

Once, after I spoke in Nashville, a mother named Debbie pressed a handwritten note on me which I read on the airplane to Binghamton, New York:

We started to see Brandon flounder in the first grade: hives, depression, he cried every night after he asked his father, "Is tomorrow school, too?" In second grade the physical stress became apparent. The teacher pronounced his problem Attention Deficit Syndrome. My happy, bouncy child was now looked at as a medical problem, by us as well as the school. A doctor, a psychiatrist and a school authority all determined he did have this affliction. Medication was stressed along with behavior modification. If it was suspected that Brandon had not been medicated he was sent home. My square peg needed a bit of whittling to fit their round hole, it seemed.

I cried as I watched my parenting choices stripped away. My ignorance of options allowed Brandon to be medicated through second grade. The tears and hives continued another full year until I couldn't stand it. I began to homeschool Brandon. It was his salvation. No more pills, tears, or hives. He is thriving. He never cries now and does his work eagerly.

The New Dumbness

Ordinary people send their children to school to get smart, but what modern schooling teaches is dumbness. It's a religious idea gone out of control. You don't have to accept that, though, to realize this kind of economy would be jeopardized by too many smart people who understand too much.

Old-fashioned dumbness used to be simple ignorance; now it is transformed from ignorance into permanent mathematical categories of relative stupidity like "gifted and talented," "mainstream," "special ed." Categories in which learning is rationed for the good of a system of order. Dumb people are no longer merely ignorant. Now they are indoctrinated, their minds conditioned with substantial doses of commercially prepared disinformation dispensed for tranquilizing purposes.

Alan Bullock, the English historian, said Evil was a state of incompetence. If true, our school adventure has filled the twentieth century with evil.

Once the best children are broken to such a system, they disintegrate morally, becoming dependent on group approval. A National Merit Scholar in my own family once wrote that her dream was to be "a small part in a great machine." It broke my heart. What kids dumbed down by schooling can't do is to think for themselves or ever be at rest for very long without feeling crazy; stupefied boys and girls reveal dependence in many ways easily exploitable by their knowledgeable elders.

According to all official analysis, dumbness isn't taught (as I claim), but is innate in a great percentage of what has come to be called "the workforce." *Workforce* itself is a term that should tell you much about the mind that governs modern society. According to

official reports, only a small fraction of the population is capable of what you and I call mental life: creative thought, analytical thought, judgmental thought, a trio occupying the three highest positions on Bloom's *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*. Just how small a fraction would shock you. According to experts, the bulk of the mob is hopelessly dumb, even dangerously so. Perhaps you're a willing accomplice to this social coup which revived the English class system. Certainly you are if your own child has been rewarded with a "gifted and talented" label by your local school. This is what Dewey means by "proper" social order.

If you believe nothing can be done for the dumb except kindness, because it's biology (the bell-curve model); if you believe capitalist oppressors have ruined the dumb because they are bad people (the neo-Marxist model); or that it's nature's way of disqualifying boobies from the reproduction sweepstakes (the Darwinian model); or nature's way of providing someone to clean your toilet (the pragmatic elitist model); or that it's evidence of bad karma (the Buddhist model); if you believe any of the various explanations given for the position of the dumb in the social order we have, then you will be forced to concur that a vast bureaucracy is indeed necessary to address the dumb. Otherwise they would murder us in our beds.

The shocking possibility that dumb people don't exist in sufficient numbers to warrant the careers devoted to tending to them will seem incredible to you. Yet that is my proposition: Mass dumbness first had to be imagined; it isn't real.

Once the dumb are wished into existence, they serve valuable functions: as a danger to themselves and others they have to be watched, classified, disciplined, trained, medicated, sterilized, ghettoized, cajoled, coerced, jailed. To idealists they represent a challenge, reprobates to be made socially useful. Either way you want it, hundreds of millions of perpetual children require paid attention from millions of adult custodians. An ignorant horde to be schooled one way or another.

For those of you who believe in testing, school superintendents *as a class* are virtually the stupidest people to pass through a graduate college program, ranking fifty-one points below the elementary school teachers they normally "supervise," (on the Graduate Record Examination), and about eighty points below secondary-school teachers, while teachers themselves as an aggregate finish seventeenth of twenty occupational groups surveyed. The reader is of course at liberty to believe this happened accidentally, or that the moon is composed of blue, not green, cheese as is popularly believed. It's also possible to take this anomaly as conclusive evidence of the irrelevance of standardized testing. Your choice.

A Nation from the Bottom Up

Fifty children of different ages are teaching each other while the schoolmaster hears lessons at his desk from older students. An air of quiet activity fills the room. A wood stove crackles in the corner. What drove the nineteenth-century school world celebrated in Edward

Exploring God's Creation



Is It Worth Letting Others Know?

by Dr. Michael Atchison
Associate Professor of
Biochemistry
University of Pennsylvania

Is it important for us to share our faith and to identify ourselves as Christians? Does it really make a difference? I sometimes questioned the usefulness of identifying myself as a Christian to the first year veterinary students that I teach at the University of Pennsylvania. Each year during a lecture on the ethics of genetic testing for diseases, I identify myself as a Christian. I don't really say much. All I say is, "I approach the ethical issues from a Judeo-Christian perspective because I am a Christian. In fact, being a Christian is the most important thing in my life." That's it. Nothing more. At most two to three students each year will say something to me about it.

Each Fall when I prepare to do this again, I go through a real spiritual battle. Does it really matter? Does it really make much difference? On a parallel topic, the speaking of God's Word, I know that the Lord promises:

My Word that goes out from My mouth, it will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. — Isaiah 55:11

It was a little hard to be certain that this was really a high impact ministry. It was gratifying that some students were appreciative of my statements, but it was unclear how useful were my efforts. I know that with faith as small as a "mustard seed," I should be able to move mountains. But I didn't really see how this was moving mountains. That was, until the Lord gave me a peek at His power to move mountains.

While I was identifying myself as a Christian in Philadelphia, a Biochemist named Michael Behe at Lehigh University was writing a book on evolution. As a Biochemist, Behe found the evidence for Darwinian evolution to be very thin. In fact, when he looked at the cell from a biochemical perspective, he believed there was evidence of intelligent design. Behe sent his completed manuscript to The Free Press publishers for consideration. The editor was not certain that this manuscript was a good risk for publication. There were clearly theological issues at hand, and he was under the impression that these issues would be poorly received by the scientific community. If the tenets of Darwinian

evolution were completely accepted by science, who would be interested in buying the book?

The editor shared his concerns with his wife. His wife was a student in my class. She advised her husband to give me a call. So, unaware of all this, I received a phone call from the publisher in New York. We spent approximately 10 minutes on the phone. After hearing a description of the work, I suggested that the editor should seriously consider publishing the manuscript. I told him that the origin of life issue was still up in the air. It sounded like this Behe fellow might have some good ideas, although I could not be certain since I had never seen the manuscript. We hung up and I never thought about it again. At least until two years later.

A Blessing Years Later

After some time Behe's book *Darwin's Black Box* (The Free Press, 1996) was published. It became an instant best-seller and was widely acclaimed in the news media. It is currently in its 15th printing and over 40,000 copies have been sold. I heard about it, but could not remember if this was the same book that I received the call about from the publisher. Could it be? In November 1998, I finally met Michael Behe when he visited Penn for a Faculty Outreach talk. He told me that yes, indeed, it was his book that the publisher called me about. In fact, he said my comments were the deciding factor in convincing the publisher to go ahead with the book. Interesting, I thought.

Then it struck me. This was all the result of my identifying myself as a Christian in class. By identifying myself as a Christian, I played a small, but crucial part in influencing 40,000 people. The plot unfolds. Behe's book needs to be published. The Lord places the manuscript in the hands of an editor. The editor's wife "just happens" to be in my class. The editor needs advice on issues concerning science and faith. Meanwhile, in class I identify myself as a Christian. The editor's wife tells him, "I know someone you can call." Suddenly, I can see how mustard seeds move mountains.

The Lord works through a process by using his followers. Michael Behe worked very hard on his manuscript. But his efforts would have been wasted if it was not published. To accomplish His will, the Lord uses His saints at strategic points. If we respond to the challenge, the Lord blesses the effort, because it really is His will, after all. If we fail to respond, that opportunity is lost. The Lord will accomplish His will in another way, but that particular opportunity is gone. If we continually fail to respond, the Lord will eventually send His opportunities elsewhere. But if we do respond, we will see those opportunities continually in our daily lives. We will be richly blessed. Sometimes, to play a role in God's plan, it only takes a seemingly insignificant effort like identifying yourself as a Christian.

(Dr. Michael Atchison is the head of biochemistry in the department of animal biology at the University of Pennsylvania, where he has been a faculty member since 1989. From: Christian Leadership Ministries, <http://www.clm.org/real/ri9902/atchison.html>)

consuming, mess-producing job. So, guess how I began to feel about the catalog? I dreaded the thought of starting each new one, and the whole time I worked on one I was a witch. It was like trying to build a modern house with stone tools. Then one day I heard Mary Pride say she always tried to invest in things that increased her productivity. I began to look around at all of the equipment I relied on. Everything from my vacuum cleaner to my typewriter was out-dated and difficult to use. So I began systematically replacing my “tools,” starting with the equipment I used most and that caused me the most aggravation. I also began investing in skills that made me more productive. I learned how to use word processing programs and scanners and Adobe Photoshop. I read every household and time management book I could get my hands on. I tried to increase my knowledge and skill in every area that drained energy.

Another stressful area for home schooling parents is the “schooling” itself. In our desire to make sure we don’t leave any educational gaps, we tend to overdo. We need to evaluate our homeschools by the 80/20 Principle. What are the key areas we need to be concentrating on? How can we eliminate the unnecessary and ineffectual? What simple changes can we make to decrease stress and enhance enthusiasm?

Lifestyle as an Energy Vampire.

A recent article in *U.S. News and World Report* focused on sleep-deprivation in America. Because of our fast-paced lifestyles, very few Americans ever know the clarity of thought and level of energy that comes with being fully rested. Not only do adults suffer from lack of sleep, but now children are at risk of sleep deprivation because their lives have become as demanding as their parents’.

Although this seems elementary, the amount of rest you get and the kind of food you eat can have a dramatic effect on your ability to cope with life’s demands.

Some questions you might ask yourself are: What makes me happy? What energizes me? What makes me feel productive? What comforts and renews me when I feel worn out and used up? What am I passionate about?

You can make major lifestyle changes that refresh you, or you can make minor changes by building “happiness islands” into your day. For example, I am a person who needs solitude in order to recharge and reconnect with what is important to me. Yet for years I lived in a four room house with three active boys and five or six employees coming in and out of an upstairs office all day. It was a radical invasion of my privacy, and some days I thought I would lose my mind. I had to force myself to find reflective time, to create “happiness islands” for myself. Sometimes these “happiness islands” were as simple as taking a walk by myself or shutting myself in my bedroom with a good book. Sometimes they had to be more extreme, like flying to Dallas to participate in a horse-judging seminar or taking the boys to the beach for a few days by ourselves. In the process, I found out which colors, smells, sights and activities renew me.

(To be continued.)

(Continued from page 5: *Abplanalp*)

Then last year as a 16 year old, Amelia spent eight weeks in Switzerland attending a language school (we have maintained the best way to learn a language was when you needed to!) and then travelling through Switzerland to visit extended family and L’Abri, the home of Edith and the late-Francis Schaeffer. Had she been at school, she would never have been able to do this or to undertake the many other adventures, opportunities and experiences she’s had over the years.

At the end of last year, Nick & I became ‘kin-carers’ (foster parents to extended family members) to four young children aged 3, 4, 6 & 8 years. We also had another teenager living with us at that time who had needed a home, and she was able to assist with childcare in exchange for board. So becoming a family of eight, from being a family of three, was something of a culture shock. Our lives changed to revolve around meeting the needs of the children ~ giving them the attention they each needed, settling them and then establishing routines and expectations. We have been really encouraged to see them respond so quickly and well to the consistency, encouragement and positive reinforcement they received whilst living in our extended family. Happily, six months later the children were able to return to their own family.

If we hadn’t been home educating, I don’t know how or even if we would have been able to take the four children. I would probably have been caught up in my own career and I certainly wouldn’t have been exposed to wonderful large families that I have quietly been watching and gleaning from over the years ~ you’ve been an inspiration and great role-models ~ thank you!

So, 2004 has been our eighth year of home educating and Amelia is now in a ‘transition’ year. She began the year by continuing her studies in Literature, History, Maths, Sciences, Political Studies, Worldview Studies and piano, whilst working part-time as a sales support administrator with an IT company. She has now focused on Legal Studies, working through the Open Polytechnic, with a view to studying further and eventually entering a law-related profession.

The opportunities Amelia has had to travel, to be able to do volunteer and part-time work and for us to source resources world-wide, have really been examples of how ‘the world is our classroom’. When we hear comments about the ‘real world’ we find it hard to refrain from arguing, that it is home educators who are in the ‘real world’, interacting with a variety of people in a wide range of environments and situations rather than sitting in those four walls of a classroom.

While Nick & I may wish we had begun home educating Amelia earlier, we are thankful that we actually did start. While our initial reasons for home educating were primarily academic, they are now out of our conviction that it is our God-given responsibility to educate our children. I can’t imagine we’ll ever wish we’d sent Amelia to high school and at least we won’t ever have to say, “Oh, we wish we’d home educated her”. Home educating is a great education for the whole family, a wonderful journey & lifestyle, and it certainly has never been a problem ‘home educating an only’.

Eggleston’s classic, *The Hoosier Schoolmaster*, was a society rich with concepts like duty, hard work, responsibility and self-reliance; a society overwhelmingly local in orientation. The society was more central than the national political state. Words can’t adequately convey the stupendous radicalism hidden in our quiet villages, a belief that ordinary people have a right to govern themselves. A confidence that they can. Most revolutionary of all was the conviction that personal rights can only be honored when the political state is kept weak.

Something in the structure of schooling calls forth violence. While latter-day schools don’t allow energetic physical discipline, certainly they are state-of-the-art laboratories in humiliation, as your own experience should remind you. In my first years of teaching I was told over and over that humiliation was my best friend, more effective than whipping. I witnessed this theory in practice through my time as a teacher. If you were to ask me now whether physical or psychological violence does more damage, I would reply that slurs, aspersion, formal ranking, insult and inference are far and away the more deadly. Nor does law protect the tongue-lashed.

I’ve yet to meet a parent in public school who ever stopped to calculate the heavy, sometimes lifelong price their children pay for the privilege of being rude and ill-mannered at school. I haven’t met a public school parent yet who was properly suspicious of the state’s endless forgiveness of bad behavior for which the future will be merciless.

The Schools of Hellas

When we ask what kind of schooling was behind this brilliant society which has enchanted the centuries ever since, any honest reply can be carried in one word: None. After writing a book searching for the hidden genius of Greece (Hellas) in its schools, Kenneth Freeman concluded his unique study *The Schools of Hellas* in 1907 with this summary, “There were no schools in Hellas.” There was no place boys and girls spent their youth attending continuous instruction under command of strangers. Indeed, nobody did homework in the modern sense; none could be located on standardized tests. The tests that mattered came in living, striving to meet ideals that local tradition imposed. The word *sköle* itself means leisure, leisure in a formal garden to think and reflect. Plato in *The Laws* is the first to refer to school as learned discussion.

The most famous school in Athens was Plato’s Academy, but in its physical manifestation it had no classes or bells, was a well-mannered hangout for thinkers and seekers, a generator of good conversation and good friendship, things Plato thought lay at the core of education. Today we might call such a phenomenon a *salon*. Aristotle’s Lyceum was pretty much the same, although Aristotle delivered two lectures a day — a tough one in the morning for intense thinkers, a kinder, gentler version of the same in the afternoon for less ambitious minds. Attendance was optional. And the famous Gymnasium so memorable as a forge for German leadership later on was in reality only an open

training ground where men sixteen to fifty were free to participate in high-quality, state-subsidized instruction in boxing, wrestling and javelin.

The idea of schooling free men in anything would have revolted Athenians. Forced training was for slaves. Among free men, learning was self-discipline, not the gift of experts. From such notions Americans derived their own academies, the French their *lycees* and the Germans their *gymnasium*. Think of it: In Athens, instruction was unorganized even though the city-state was surrounded by enemies and its own society engaged in the difficult social experiment of sustaining a participatory democracy, extending privileges without precedent to citizens and maintaining literary, artistic and legislative standards which remain to this day benchmarks of human genius. For its five-hundred-year history from Homer to Aristotle, Athenian civilization was a miracle in a rude world; teachers flourished there but none was grounded in fixed buildings with regular curricula under the thumb of an intricately layered bureaucracy.

There were no schools in Hellas. For the Greeks, study was its own reward. Beyond that few cared to go.

With the relative opulence of today, it would be simple to fill teaching slots with accomplished men and women if that were a goal. A little adjustment in what are rationally indefensible licensing requirements would make talented people, many performance-tested adults in their fifties and sixties, available to teach. That there is not such fluid access is a good sign the purpose of schooling is more than it appears. The year-in, year-out *consistency* of mediocre teacher candidates demonstrates clearly that the school institution actively seeks, nurtures, hires and promotes the caliber of personnel it needs.

Lancaster Schools

Andrew Bell, military chaplain to India, was fascinated by the *purposeful* nature of Hindu schooling: to preserve the caste system. In 1797, Bell published an account praising Hindu drill as an effective *impediment* to learning writing and ciphering, an efficient *control* on reading development. A twenty-year-old Quaker, Joseph Lancaster, read Bell’s pamphlet, thought deeply on the method, and concluded, ironically, it would be a cheap way to *awaken* intellect in the lower classes, ignoring Bell’s observation (and Hindu experience) that it did just the opposite.

The first Lancaster school was opened in New York City in 1806. It accustomed an influential public to expect streets to be clear of the offspring of the poor and to expenditures of tax money to accomplish this end. Its essential features involved one large room stuffed with anywhere from three hundred to a thousand children under the direction of a single teacher. The children were seated in rows. The teacher was not there to teach but to be “a bystander and inspector”; students, ranked in a paramilitary hierarchy, did the actual teaching. (To be continued.)

(Excerpted from the book as it appears on:
<http://www.johntaylorgatto.com/chapters/index.htm>)

Home Education Research



Why Do Our Youth Depart?

by Dan Smithwick
Nehemiah Institute, Inc.

It is of little surprise to pastors, Christian educators and parents that a high percentage of young people stop attending church after leaving home. Whether it's off to college or off to work, the church doesn't seem to fit the schedule of most young adults from Christian homes.

One study of over 3,500 incoming freshman at various state and private universities who identified themselves as 'born again' Christians found that by their senior year, between one-third and one-half said they no longer considered themselves as such. If a person is willing to change his or her position on being a born-again Christian, how much more are they willing to give up regarding their views and practices relating to church attendance?

Throughout scripture we find numerous warnings not to depart from the faith. Consider the following:

This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. (Joshua 1:8)

Now then, my sons, listen to me, And do not depart from the words of my mouth. (Proverbs 5:7)

Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it. (Proverbs 22:6)

Undoubtedly, these words of scripture have been spoken frequently by pastors, teachers and parents and have been heard by our young people. Yet many depart. Why?

I believe the answer to this is largely due to the lack of relevance of the church and the Chris-

tian faith, as seen by young people. While the church was the dominant force in building our nation (founding universities and hospitals, producing scholarly statesmen who drafted state constitutions and later the federal constitution, creating charitable organizations to care for the poor and widows, etc.), today the church has been pushed (or voluntarily retreated) into a non-defining role for how society should live. The agenda for today's public square is clearly shaped by secular and anti-Christian forces, not the church.

In essence, the church has left the world. Contrary to the first century church and the Reformation-era church, the 20th century church has abandoned a Biblical world and life view. The church offers only a personalized and pietistic religion. The message received by young people is one of how to get to heaven when they die (something which none of them are thinking about!) but not how to live while on earth. With no comprehensive philosophy of life being offered by church leaders (at least in the majority of our churches), it's little wonder that young people find the church irrelevant.

The results of PEERS¹ testing from 1988-2002 show a consistent and alarming decline in Biblical worldview thinking among students. Over 75% of students graduating from Christian schools score in the Secular Humanism category on the PEERS Test. Only in a small number of Christian schools (less than 5%), where a distinct program exists focusing on teaching subjects from a Biblical worldview were there found good scores. These schools also showed a slight increase over the twelve-year period.

What kind of views causes low scores among students? Listed below are some of the more troubling views (all of which are anti-biblical) found by PEERS testing among students in Christian schools:

expensive doodads. So what does this mean? This means that becoming financially stable doesn't necessarily require keeping track of every expenditure to the penny, becoming a Scrooge, and denying yourself your dreams. The average person can become financially stable by following a few, key principles of money management.

Now, back to the 80/20 Principle. The book, *80/20 Principle* says,

"There are always a few key inputs to what happens, and they are often not the obvious ones. If the key causes can be identified and isolated we can very often exert more influence on them than we think possible."

What this means is that there are a few key things that cause us to feel overwhelmed and under-supported, that contribute to that feeling of always being on edge and the tenseness in our bodies, and that make us want to throw up our hands and quit.

Simple Measures

OK, what are some simple measures we can take? First of all, we can identify our "energy vampires." These are the people, activities and beliefs that literally suck the energy and enthusiasm out of us.

People as Energy Vampires

Not only can groups be draining, but certain individuals can cost us a lot of energy. In our former church there was a woman who was like a huge emotional vacuum. Her neediness and negativity would suck all of the optimism and energy out of me. I had to learn to let someone else try to help her.

When I first started homeschooling three boys, I tried to keep up with women's Bible studies, homeschooling field trips and other get-togethers, but it didn't take long to realize these social outings didn't provide me with enthusiasm: they only wore me down.

I also had to learn to say "No." It's amazing that people will assume, since you're home all day, you're available. They wouldn't dream of calling a career woman at her office and asking her to take the afternoon off to listen to their problems, but they will call you and assume you're free to help them. I learned to think of myself as a "career woman," only my career was managing a home and educating my children. I didn't just work a 40 hour week, I was on the job 24/7, so didn't have to apologize or lie when I said, "I'm committed this afternoon."

Before you know it, you can spend 80% of your time on social activities that have a pay-back of less than 20% in terms of what is really important to you. There are two key solutions to the "People as Energy Vampires" problem. (1) Pare down your involvement to only those 20% of social activities that have real meaning to you, and (2) Get an answer-phone and let it take all calls for certain hours each day. If your household is like mine, just leaving an answer-phone on most of the day saves me about 45 minutes in answering telemarketing calls.

Activities as Energy Vampires

One of the best pieces of stress-reducing advice I ever got was from a time management book. It said to mentally visualize myself going through a typical day. This meant visualizing getting out of bed, getting dressed, fixing breakfast, brushing my teeth and so on...every little activity I typically did in a day. As I screened through my day, the book said to notice any time I felt irritation, tension or resistance and jot down that activity.

What an eye-opener! The first thing I realized is that it irritates me to be interrupted while I am in the bathroom. Sounds pretty stupid, right? But what this meant was that I was starting every day irritated because there was hardly ever a time I wouldn't be interrupted while I was in the bathroom. Stupid problem. Simple solution to eliminating that source of irritation: Always close the door when I go into the bathroom and tell everyone that when the bathroom door is closed, I am not to be disturbed.

By the time I finished visually screening a typical day, I realized that there were dozens of annoyances like the bathroom scenario. None of them was significant enough by itself to ruin my day, but a day filled with 40 or 50 unconsciously irritating moments might have something to do with my being frazzled by supertime.

Certain routine activities are always accompanied by some amount of emotional or physical pressure. What are your stressful activities? The laundry? Cooking? Shopping? I've never particularly liked to cook. Plus, taking a car-load of small boys to the grocery store has got to be on my list of "Top 10 Ways to Torture a Tired Mother." So I had to experiment with getting the grocery shopping done without wearing me out (or freaking me out when I saw the receipt) and with developing some simple menu plans that didn't exhaust me after a long day. In addition, I had to be realistic about my limitations. As much as I might want to provide my family with three, lovingly created, nutritious, home-cooked meals a day, it would be psychotic of me to think I could pull it off and still do everything else I needed to get done. So in my household we have meals where everyone is on their own to fix something for themselves, meals that another family member prepares and meals that I prepare, depending on everyone's schedule and what will give us the most family time around the table.

Another thing that can be done is to go through each room of the house and note anything that is irritating. Rooms have a powerful effect on our sense of well-being. They can make us feel like prisoners in our own homes or make us feel gracious and relaxed. Are there certain colors that make you feel tense? That make you feel relaxed? Could the room be re-arranged so that the pattern of traffic flow is better? Could simple changes be made that contribute to a sense of peace and order?

Do the tools you have enhance your productivity? For example, I started out writing our catalogs on an old IBM electric typewriter (\$25, second-hand), made photocopied reductions of the book covers and had to cut and paste everything together. It was a massive, time-

Help for Home Schoolers

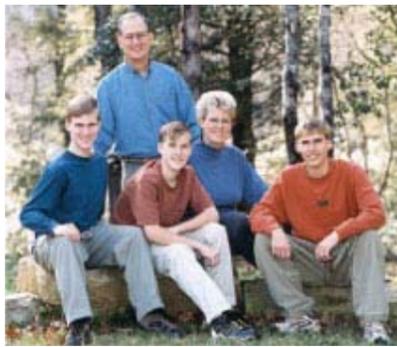
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Tough Questions People Ask

How Do You Conquer Burnout? (Part 1) by Ellyn Davis



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

cause of burnout is the feeling of being overwhelmed and under-supported. Here are some common ways this feeling is verbalized:

- ▶ This isn't fun anymore (in fact, it's a real drag).
- ▶ I feel like things are spinning out of control.
- ▶ There's not enough me to go around.
- ▶ My life is fragmented (pulled in too many directions, torn into too many pieces).
- ▶ I feel like I'm trying to keep too many balls up in the air.

- ▶ I'm drowning.
- ▶ There's too much to do and not enough time to do it.
- ▶ There's too much to do and I'm expected to do it all myself.
- ▶ I don't feel anything but anger (frustration, irritation) or sadness (grief, depression, sorrow).
- ▶ I resent having to be responsible for everything.
- ▶ I am the one who has to pick up everything that "falls through the cracks."
- ▶ I am constantly disappointed.

Here are some common ways this feeling expresses itself physically: (1) a tightness in the throat, chest or between the shoulder blades, (2) pain in the lower back, (3) headaches or dizziness, (4) chronic fatigue, (5) numbness of certain parts of the body, (6) anxiety and tenseness, (7) difficulty swallowing, (8) nausea, (9) upset stomach or irritable bowel, (10) ringing in the ears.

Any and all of the above verbalizations and physical symptoms are a good indication that we are bogged down in the 80% of our lives that is non-productive and that undermine our sense of well-being. The good news about the 80/20 Principle is that there are a very few, key activities that will dramatically improve our happiness and sense of productivity.

What do I mean by "key activities?" Well, do you know the simple, key activities that distinguish thin people from people who struggle with their weight? If you ever went to a "Weigh Down" workshop, you know that thin people don't munch, they eat only when they are hungry, they stop eating when they are full, and they eat smaller portions of food. In contrast, people who struggle with their weight tend to be "grazers" who eat large portions of food and don't stop eating even when they feel stuffed. This means that becoming thin doesn't necessarily require a massive amount of will power counting calories, weighing portions and developing meal plans. The average person can lose weight by sticking to the key activities of eating less and becoming aware of when they are hungry and when they are full.

What are the simple, key activities that distinguish financially stable people from people with chronic financial troubles? Financially stable people resist going into debt, they save, and they don't fill their lives with

The following percentages of students in Christian schools agreed that:

- The ideal government guarantees the citizens a minimum income, social security, unemployment compensation, health insurance and housing. 77.2%
- Moral values are subjective and personal. They are the right of each individual. Individuals should be allowed to conduct life as they choose as long as it does not interfere with the lives of others. 75.4%
- In social, economic, cultural and political affairs, people should have equal rights. Social reform should, therefore, be designed to correct existing inequalities and to equalize the conditions of nurture, schooling, residence, employment, recreation and income that produce them. 84.2%
- One of the most effective ways of curbing inflation, if not eliminating it all together, is imposing wage and price controls. 80.7%
- Day-care schools for infants and toddlers, under the supervision of professional educators, will enhance the educational process of children and will produce more well-developed and productive citizens. 73.7%

[Note: These results are based on responses of students with composite test scores of 25.0 or less (scale of -100 to +100; that is, from negative 100 to positive 100, a 200 point spread). Average scores of students from traditional Christian high schools from 1988-2002 was 28.2.]

I believe PEERS results gives evidence of why Christian youth are departing from the church. Rather than the church, the state is viewed as the official body for deciding 'how then shall we live.'

If the church and the Christian school continue with programs where the output is increasingly secular, our nation will soon be a very different nation from what it was for its first 200 years. The loss of the ability to think critically and biblically will lead to chaos and darkness, as history bears evidence.

For the sake of the Lord's name and for the sake of our children, we must return to a solid Biblical-worldview philosophy of instruction in the home, schools and churches. Please consider implementing our worldview training and assessment programs as shown on our web site, <http://www.nehemiahinstitute.com/>.

Note:
1. The PEERS test consists of a series of statements carefully structured to identify a person's worldview in five categories: Politics, Economics, Education, Religion, and Social Issues (PEERS). Each statement is framed to either agree or disagree with a biblical principle.

Learning Disabilities



Testing 1, 2, 3...46, 47, 48 Testing for Special Needs Children

by Nancy L. Grubbs

Having experienced firsthand multiple times over the process of *testing*, I feel I can say unequivocally that I am somewhat of an expert on this subject. Four years ago God saw fit to send us three children with special needs through adoption. Each has unique needs that require a lot of research, testing and observation to define the exact problem, discover potential solutions, and pinpoint the most effective treatments. Many times it has taken several rounds of "define, discover and pinpoint" to reach the effective treatment stage. Through it all, our trust in God's providence has never been betrayed.

Matthew arrived first, and at five weeks had already been through many tests. The initial one was at birth: that required four resuscitations, an Apgar test score of one, two weeks in NICU, Phenobarbital for drug exposure and possible seizures, hearing tests to determine loss, physical therapy and a very grim diagnosis. Six months later God brought the dynamic duo of Rebecca, two years, and Kaera, 11 months, to our family. They had passed the test of survival in a situation of extreme neglect. So, with that as the starting gate, we leaped into the world of testing, testing, testing.

Matthew is now four and a half. The labels that have matched his symptoms are autism, mental retardation and hearing impaired with a variety of sensory integration problems. We have added the labels "angelic in appearance" and "Mr. Comedian." At a rough estimate, he has been through at least 34 different testing procedures and counting.

Kaera, now almost five, just completed the process of being tested for central auditory processing disorders. She was also tested to determine her level of cognitive development so we can fine tune the areas she is having problems with and determining how many are true problems and how many are behavioral.

Rebecca, now six and our first homeschool guinea pig, was labeled as borderline Defiant Oppositional Disorder, potential ADHD and also incurred great sympathy from the Ph.D. evaluator for her amazingly strong will. She has been through quite a lot of medical intervention on the alternative side for her headaches and is undergoing continued testing to determine if her infantile skull fracture is ultimately the cause. She is most probably ADHD, but we don't need an official diagnosis: we know. She has begun Neurofeedback to try and *fix* the damage done to her brain and subsequent behavior due to the head trauma.

Of course, we are a very unusual family. Still, as I

write these words, I can see how the love of God has sustained us as we help our children cope with their difficulties. Without our trust in God, we could not have come this far. We willingly submit ourselves and our children to the process of testing to try and determine the best ways we can help them and to decide which course of action to take. Each child is special in God's eyes. Therefore, we know God will help us properly assess which path to take in finding compassionate therapists and beneficial treatment plans at every juncture.

At a recent meeting to determine Matthew's educational goals for the next year at a preschool for special needs children, we were in the room with 11 other people. These degreed professionals are well-qualified to meet the needs of our child. At this meeting we needed to inform them that the methods they were using were resulting in a regression in our child's development and were wholly inappropriate. The only way we could sit in that meeting on an even footing with all these *professionals* is because I spent over 100 hours doing research, phone work, networking and finding advocates to support us in our endeavor. Armed with binders full of previous *tests* that had been administered to our son and other data collected over the years, we were able to make the case that the *best practice* for our special needs child was not in effect. We then outlined an alternative program based upon the information I had gathered.

The process of gaining this information and knowledge was a painful, tedious, laborious process in which I was oftentimes near tears as I watched my child in tremendous pain, screaming and tantruming through each procedure. Whether it be medical or just therapy, it was all so that we could give him the help he needed. It was so painful that my husband could not even stand to participate as his pain on behalf of our son was too great. But, in searching for answers and striving for healing, this was all necessary.

Testing takes time. Sometimes it takes money. It is our obligation to help our children, and sometimes it is humbling to find that we do need that professional assistance. The mother is often the best observer of the child, for she knows the child with her heart. She instinctively will see what is working and what is not advisable. Each child has been a myriad of puzzle and contradiction who requires intense scrutiny and a listening ear to the voice of the Holy Spirit.

I have found that the Holy Spirit is my clearest guide as to when it is time to move to a new treatment, when to change a behavioral strategy and when to just wait and see. The Holy Spirit tells me when my child is in trouble and can't keep it together. Sometimes their insides are out of balance or their body and brain are in a developmental shift and I just need to wait. Other times I need to research and propose radical changes like the

meeting listed above.

This process of testing is intimidating. You must first determine that your child has a problem then you need to share it with others. You will sit across the desk from someone with a Ph.D who will ask you countless questions regarding things you may never have noticed about your child. They might be very clinical or they might be very warm. You may walk out relieved, or you may be devastated as your world is shattered by the results of your child's "test." Whatever the case and the scenario, this is your calling, your ministry and your opportunity to leave the world that you were a part of and go to a new place with new language, new associates, new opportunities and new emotions, many of which you are not comfortable with.

But Jesus never said we were to be comfortable and no one ever said it was supposed to be easy. Testing can and does complicate your life for a time. You will find that you are striving for understanding for yourself and your child, and you may not find it for a while. But one day you will meet another mom, another family, a good therapist, doctor or teacher who will be your lifeline and when you finish dogpaddling over to the edge of the oceanic abyss you fell into, you may find that God will gift you with the ability to be someone else's lifeline, a mentor.

It all starts with the courage to face the first test, and the next test and the next until you are as knowledgeable as

(Continued on page 30: Testing)

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Graduates Speak

Back to Patriarchy

by Nathaniel Bluedorn



In the spring of 1996, when I was twenty, my father told us he wanted to go to a conference in Washington D.C. I didn't know why he was interested. My mother said it was called a "Back to Patriarchy" conference and that Dad wanted to go because he thought it might help him be a better father. I anticipated a long drive there, some very boring speakers droning on about who-knows-what and driving tired all night home.

I sat riveted to every word those men said. I had never heard these things. It was like a window was opened, and I could see for a long distance out over what I hadn't understood before.

What Those Speakers Said

The men there were Phil Lancaster, Doug Phillips and John Thompson. They talked about:

- Fathers directing their household.
- Gathering together in daily family worship.
- Preparing sons and daughters for marriage and life purpose.
- Building multi-generational family vision.
- Steering sons away from college and the corporate mind-set and into apprenticeships and a family business.
- Courtship versus dating.
- Fathers bringing their hearts home from work.

I Was at War

At that time in my life, when I was in my later teens, I was going through conflicts in my life.

I had no clear goals for what I should do. My heart was a jumble of the values and truths I had been taught, but they didn't fit into a clear vision for my life. Should I go to college? Should I get a job with a corporation? Should I have a career? That's what everybody else does. What does God want me to do? Should I just leave everything here and go be a missionary somewhere far away? There are lots of good things I could do, but what can I really put my heart into? My parents didn't know what to tell me. I know they had intuitions in the back of their mind about children staying home 'till marriage, but I don't think they were confident enough to give that counsel. They thought vaguely I should do whatever I felt was best. But how was I to know what to do? I was a fool at the helm of my ship.

I was often angry with my father, but I didn't understand why. I did not realize all the destruction my anger was working in me or how desperately I needed a good relationship with my father.

I was selfish. I treated my siblings, especially my brother, badly. I got into bad moods when people didn't do what I thought they should. I couldn't see beyond the demands of my daily schedule and just enjoy where God had put me.

A root of my conflict was that I simply didn't understand what the family was, why God had created it, how He uses families as building blocks for the future, and what my place was in my family.

A Second Conference

This fall (1998) my family went to a follow-up conference where these speakers developed what they said further:

- Men who put women and children first — the Titanic and the Burkenhead Drill.
- Patriarchs are needed — men who stand for God, leading their family in righteous vision.
- Rebuilding our family culture — a quiet family evening is the best society.
- Activities have taken over relationships — we are too busy.
- The Biblical model for how young men and women are to prepare for marriage and be given a mate.
- How fathers need to break free from the time bind, entertainment slavery, the hectic lifestyle, tension between work and relationships, etc.
- Living out from under the curse of debt.
- God ought to bring judgment on our nation — we Christians should repent, turn to Him, and prepare for the future.

Now at Peace

Now I know what I want to be. I want to be a father. And I know who I am. I am the son of my parents and a servant of God.

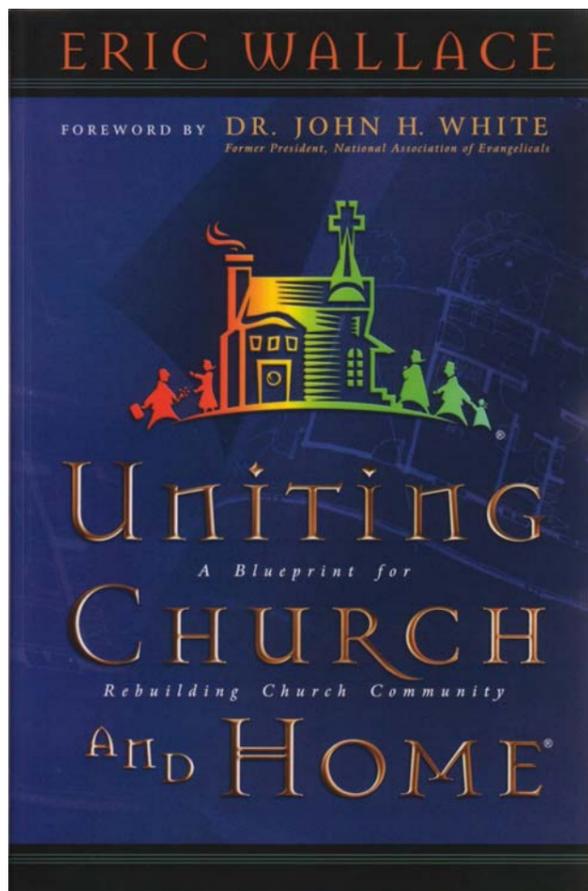
I saw that if I was to be a man I needed to take responsibility for my actions and stop pointing my finger at everybody else. I should deny myself, and I should work strenuously towards the goals these men were holding up. I saw hope and something righteous to aim for.

My understanding of these issues sprouted that day at this conference. From that date it began to grow. But don't get the idea that all of my conflict has been resolved in a moment. My family has gone to several of these conferences now, and I am still growing.

The Defining Issue

I agree with Doug Phillips. The family is the defining issue of our age. It is only by the hearts of fathers turning to their children, and children to their fathers, that we will understand the vision God has for His people in these times, and we will repair the ruins of our culture.

(Used with permission. Nathaniel is the son of Harvey and Laurie Bluedorn, authors of Teaching the Trivium. He has been homeschooled all of his life and lives near New Boston, Illinois. With his brother Hans he co-authored The Fallacy Detective, a book on logic. You can pester him with questions on logic at www.christianlogic.com.)

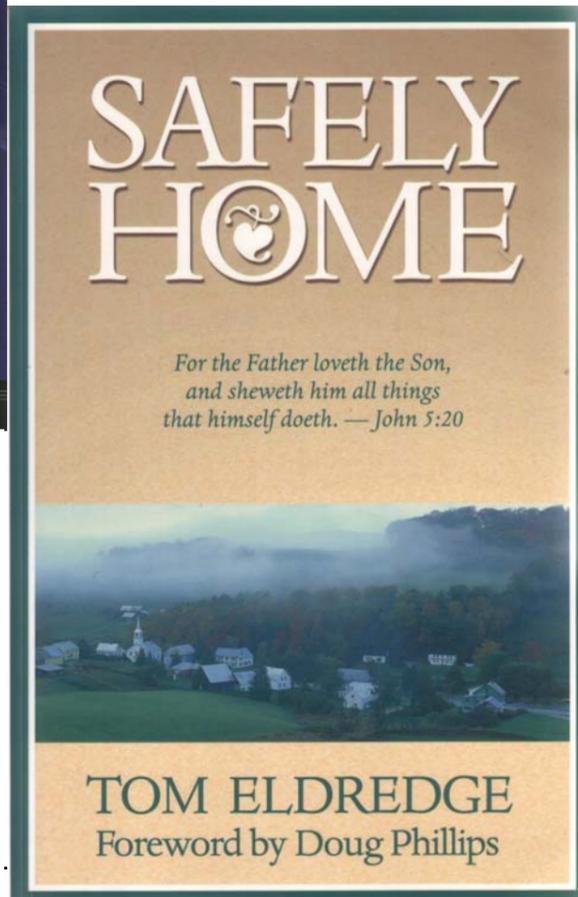


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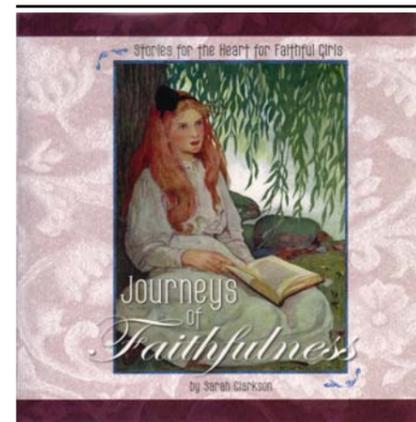


Is Emotional Purity for guys? Check out what these guys are saying:

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

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"Our 8 year old daughter loves it!"
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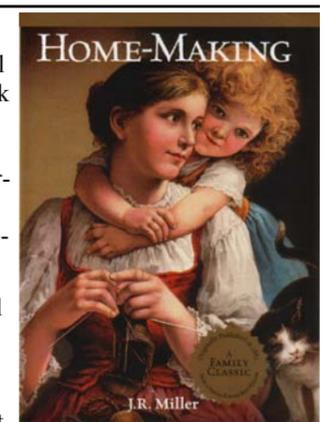
There is a lot to love about Sarah Clarkson's first book, *Journeys of Faithfulness*. From the unusual

format to the burgundy and cream shades throughout, to the marvellously crafted stories of four brave women of the Bible (Mary of Bethany, Esther, Mary the Mother of Jesus and Ruth) and the studies and questions designed to provoke thought about one's own journey of faithfulness to God, this book is one every girl is sure to love. I did at age 22! Paperback, 192 pages. \$32.00

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