

# Keystone

A Bi-Monthly Journal for Christian

Home Educators

Vol. X No. 5

September 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**  
**Peter & Glenys McGrath**  
Tristan (19), Erinna (7), Brenna (8),  
Celeste (17) & Eloise (15).



# Character for Life

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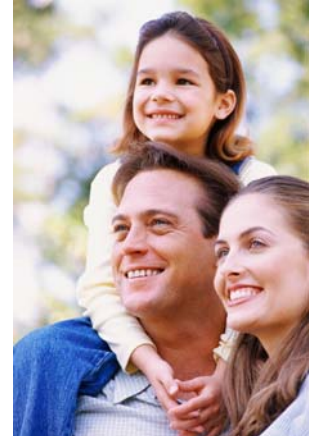
- Learning how to apply basic character qualities to family relationships.
- Recognising that the biggest influence on an individual's character is his or her family.

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- Addressing issues with children from a character perspective vs. authoritarian perspective.
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### Your Instructor ...



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.

# Editorial



The articles are a bit longer than normal in this issue. Consequently there are fewer of them. But they are good value!

I want to point out that my piece about having “The Discussion” is my opinion, which is a mixture of experience, idealism and my understanding of Scripture. In this as well as anything I write, I generally state my opinion fairly strongly. It can read like a non-negotiable statement. Some would say it reads like legalism, judgmentalism, bigotry. Well, I trust anyone who knows me will also know I am always open to a more informed opinion, greater knowledge, clearer insights, for I certainly have no corner on the truth or the final word in any area. I state things boldly to conserve words, to catch attention and hopefully to spark thinking and debate on the issue. Otherwise everything I’d say would be encrusted and encumbered with qualifiers and caveats such as, “Well, I think....,” “It is often but not always true that....,” “This is generally the case except when....” This kind of thing substantially weakens one’s point and causes the article to read more awkwardly as well as making it far less interesting for the reader.

The issue of idealism is interesting in itself. We may all have idealistic images of what we’d like our families to be and how we’d like to see our family interpersonal relationships operate. But so often they don’t. Usually they don’t even come close. Yes, human relationships are very complex, and our lives are made even more complex by the competition of family commitments with church commitments and with social commitments and with work commitments. So we let our idealistic images fade and die. We are just too busy to sit down, think things through and plan a strategy to implement these great ideals we’d come up with. And any such ideas, our friends tell us, are just too removed from reality to be workable.

Know what? My wife Barbara and I are asking, “Oh, yeah? Why is that?” If our idealistic images of what we’d like to see in our family are considered “unrealistic” *because they are too consistently Biblical*, then it is *our concept* of “unrealistic” which is at fault. (The alternative is to say being consistently Biblical is a faulty concept, which I trust we would all vehemently deny.) That is, the criticism of “unrealistic” is actually saying our ideals are not worldly enough to fit in! Surely none of us as Christians are trying to “fit in”! Are we not called to “come out”, to “be separate”, to “be in the world but not of the world”? Are we not called to be a city on the hill, both a beacon for the lost and a target for the enemy? Yes, we are called to be all these things.

I’ve said it before, and I’ll say it again: at age 53 I’m starting to see that time is short. I don’t have that many years left. My dad died at age 44; his dad died at age 46. Some would say I’m already living on borrowed time. Never mind....I want to resist the temptation to

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“take it easy” and just enjoy life. I wasted my first 23 years as a “free agent”, independent of thought, doing my own thing. If I am now a slave of Christ, I see I am mostly a hypocrite, for I am not about His business as much as I should be. Let us all chase the ideals set forth for us in the Scriptures: let us strive for the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Maybe we won’t get that far in this life, but by setting Biblical goals and aiming for them *now*, we will certainly get farther than if we just think about it while the busy-ness of life keeps us forever otherwise occupied.

**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 (in NZ) through Telecom's "School Connection" Programme wherein Telecom gives a percentage of your toll bill to the Foundation, *painlessly and without costing you an extra cent!* Just ring Telecom at 0800 724 665 and ask to support "Christian Home Schoolers of NZ, Inc", whose reference number is 10898651 and whose phone is (06) 357-4399. Please ring today!



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# Peter & Glenys McGrath

of County Waterford,  
Ireland

G'day.

Well, with an opening like the above...you don't get any points for guessing where we are from!

But, if I said, we, the McGrath family (very Irish surname for you there) live in County Waterford, *Ireland*, that might start to make you scratch your head and wonder if your assumption is correct...perhaps it might make you curious enough to read on.

Okay, so who are the McGraths? Your first guess was correct: we are Australians. Although I do have a piece of paper that says I am an Irish Citizen, and even though the Australian Government now looks upon me as 'ex' citizen McGrath, there is not an Irish man alive, (or dead for that matter) who will tell you I'm Irish! But perhaps I'm getting ahead of myself here. Let me start with the very first day we started on our home education adventure.

That first day was very early in February 1997. We, Glenys and I (Peter) commenced homeschooling our three older children, Tristan, Celeste and Eloise. We had been living for about four months in Berringa, Victoria. When they were mining for gold, Berringa had a population of about 11,000 souls. But when the gold ran out...so did the people. By the time we moved there in 1996, Berringa was no longer a town; it was a locality. It mostly consisted of scattered homes on five and ten acre blocks. If we saw as many as three passing vehicles on any particular day, then it was considered a very busy day indeed.

Berringa is in a shire called the Golden Plains, and if you were there in February or March of any year, you would know why it is called the Golden Plains: every blade of grass is dried to a very 'golden' colour. Actually I think it has the name Golden Plains because of its gold mining history and the wheat crops...but I think my reason is more accurate these days.

Our first day of home edding was a typical summer scorcher with temperatures pushing 40 Celsius and a red hot wind roaring out of the north. This doesn't really assist anyone in his studies, especially not on the first day 'back' after a lengthy break. But this was the day we said we would start, and we did. By 9:00am we had drawn all the blinds trying to block out the heat and the startlingly bright sunlight...something we just don't experience up here in the northern hemisphere. If I remember correctly, we used Alpha and Omega in those early months. Our first day meant that both parents and children were very much 'learning' together, not quite sure 'how much' we should get done in a day, etc., but we soldiered on in the semi-gloom of our darkened home at the commencement of our great adventure. At 1:00pm we called it quits for the day. A little while later one of the children ventured outside for some reason...and was back *inside* like a shot from a gun. Looking a little perplexed (I think it might

have been Celeste), she calmly remarked... "It's a bit smokey outside".

Well, when you know the temperature is nearly 40, and there is a roaring north wind going, and someone says "smoke", you check it out real quick. The view from our veranda was very un-nerving. It wasn't 'a little smokey'... it was very heavy smoke.

The home of our nearest neighbour was about 300 metres away, so I started jumping fences and headed across the paddocks to Mario's. (Mario is a character... born near Venice, joined the French Foreign Legion, married his wife in Algeria and speaks English with a French/Italian accent from a mouth that contains only three teeth...you really had to listen and watch closely when he spoke.) The smoke was coming from beyond his home, and I thought that was the direction to head in order to find out what was happening. The closer I got, the thicker the pall became...I couldn't see Mario...so I kept heading forward and came across a CFA (Country Fire Authority) vehicle and asked the driver what was up. In a typical laconic fashion he responded with "A fire"...extremely helpful chap...I asked how quick it was moving...again the laconic response, "Fast". With that the grass in front of us burst into flame...spot fires were breaking out. I turned to head back to the house and family, now about 500 metres away. When I turned, I was stunned by the transformation: there were at least half a dozen spot fires in front of me. I guess they came in handy to guide me through the smoke. As I neared Mario's on the return journey, I saw him down near his farm sheds beating the flames with a old wheat bag. He gave a roar and wave...and I'm sure there was a grin there as well, but at that distance I couldn't see his three teeth to be certain of the grin.

I got to the house and told Glenys we were going. We had virtually no water: the 8,500 gallon tank was that close to empty it was useless. Tristan had caught his horse and brought her up near the house. We grabbed the two dogs (not sure about the cat) and started to load ourselves in our van. Just then Mario's wife Jean appeared out of the smoke...she had driven through the paddocks to our boundary fence. She couldn't go 'forward' through the fire, so she came 'back' to our place. So she climbed in the van as well. Then we set off down the hill to our front gate, then out around to another neighbour's, an old man who was on his own during the day. We got to his place and said it was time to go. He simply said no! I couldn't believe it...then he took another look out the window and started running! He had two Boxer dogs, so they came too.

As we left his place the fire front reached us: it was rolling like waves through the paddock alongside our neighbour's home as we took off again. We got to the road and turned north heading toward where the fire

*(Continued on page 28: McGrath)*

## KEYSTONE

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### Keystone correspondence to:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# The Faith of Us Fathers



## Having “The Discussion” with Our Children

by Craig Smith

This presents a real problem. Our society is drenched in sexual overtones. Every form of media, entertainment, advertising, fashion, music and much else in daily social intercourse, such as the accepted sense of humour one can use even in mixed company, is sexualised to such an extent that there is simply no escape from the subject. I was going to say that much of these sexual overtones are perverted. But they are *all* perverted, without exception, not just the homosexual stuff. Why do I say that? Because sex outside of marriage is perverted – that is, it is morally wrong, which means it is perverted. Sex within marriage is a private not a public affair. Consequently, as soon as it hits the public arena, it too is perverted.

When we asked ourselves, “What exactly do our children need to learn about the sexual facts of life before they are married?”, we came up with the answer, “Very little.” Yes, they will need to know the biology of reproduction, but not just human conception, gestation and birth. There is an incredible variation of reproductive systems in the animal and plant worlds, the study of which can again raise exclamations of wonder and praise to our most wise and creative Father in heaven. Sadly, however, when we think of telling our sons and daughters about these things as they approach or are in puberty, the cues as to how to proceed and what to say that we have been getting from our secular society for the last 40 years or so have been separated from a Biblical understanding of sex as something holy and sacred. And so it becomes a subject requiring a cold, unemotional scientific approach on some occasions or the casual, non-judgmental approach at other times. It has become separated from marriage and from the intent to conceive children and from the intent to co-operate with God in filling and subduing the earth. Today it is simply viewed as another activity that one may pursue for both fun and profit, as long as one becomes aware of and takes steps to reduce the risk factors. The NZ government operates and funds at great expense a number of organisations and websites specifically designed to pour into our children’s minds graphic and perverted sexual information that would cause adults to gag. And they don’t even have to trouble us parents with the fact that it is taking place.

(The fact that I actually wrote these comments about “fun and profit” and “risk factors” shows how desensitised we are to hearing such things. We pretty much just accept it when we should all find such comments to be totally offensive and outrageous. And certainly

we would never present such ideas to our children until after their 21<sup>st</sup> or they get married, and we can discuss such things as one adult to another.)

So when we come to think of fulfilling this particular task in the education of our children, we tend to be reasonably explicit, using correct scientific terms for parts and processes. Or we may fall back on the old kiwi farmer approach of taking the kids to the paddock to watch the ram in among the ewes with the simple explanation, “That’s sex.”

But this will hardly do. We are people made in the image of God. That means we are not like sheep or cattle or dogs whose reproductive lives are indiscriminate, promiscuous and public. Neither do we want to be overly descriptive. Why put graphic images of human nakedness and sexual intercourse into the minds of our children? And then tell them it is sinful to think such thoughts. And then say that such actions are wrong and not to be done until they are married. While my parents were not so clear with their explanations and admonitions, the books, magazines and films they let me see were very clear, focussed and in colour visually.... with the appropriately crisp commentary, trimmed of any excessive adjectives or adverbs. Such things never helped us when we were kids. They in fact acted as stumbling blocks for us. These kinds of things made us unhealthily curious, as youngsters, about what might be seen under people’s clothing, especially as we picked up on all the clues on TV shows and advertising that something there was mysterious and alluring. And of course our little friends all had their own store of “forbidden knowledge”, images and experiences. Our sinful natures already gave us enough trouble in this area without parents and teachers and friends and porn merchants putting extra illustrations and images before us. So we do not trouble our children’s hearts and minds with such things either.

Let me repeat: when we think of telling our children about the “facts of life”, “the birds and the bees” or whatever other euphemism you may use, the tendency is to speak to the lowest human common denominator, which includes all the unbelievers, rather than look for a thoroughly Biblical approach; we tend to examine things as if we had low goals or no goals at all. Example: at a camp where we spoke on purity for four days, the camp mum asked Barbara if she could help out. Specifically she said she’d had lots of experience talking to girls about sex....we were going to talk about sex, weren’t we? As a matter of fact, no, we never did have such plans. When you talk about sex, out come all the facts surrounding biology, conception, contraception, temptation, how far is too far, what happens if you “get into trouble” and all the rest of it. So young people, who are always told about their raging hormones and how we older folks understand how difficult they’re finding it at the moment trying to rein themselves in....these young folks are left with these images in their minds and told to go forth and NOT do likewise. Instead of this we focussed on how the Lord would have young people live. The New Testament hammers this theme over and over once you start to look for it. Take this from 1 Timothy 6:11-14: “*But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue right-*



*eousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" Instead of looking at the area that is causing the problem – human sexuality in developing youngsters who we want to live as holy and pure disciples of Christ in the midst of a crooked and perverse and sex-soaked society – let us look instead at the uncharted virgin territory of godliness and holiness and love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; for as it says in Galatians 5:22-23, this is the fruit of the Spirit, we obviously should be aiming at this, and against these things there is no law! Here we do not say, "Now, don't do this," but instead we say, "Go for it 100%!!!" Instead of describing everything that is just over the line we don't want our young people to cross, let us describe and lead the way IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION, **away** from the line and **toward** this bundle of Christ-like characteristics.

The strategy in our family for dealing specifically with sex was perhaps tinged with idealism, thinking to say as little as possible and to train the children up to value modesty. Consequently both Barbara and I stopped swimming in public long ago, for it meant baring most of our bodies in front of others. We never bath or shower with our children, nor do we allow them to see us dressing or undressing. We instructed them in what constitutes modest dress for both males and females, and why it is desirable:

1) Baring yourself is one of the precious gifts you will save for your spouse once you are married. The Scriptures teach us that our bodies are precious and wonderfully made and to be treated holy for they are the temples of the Holy Spirit. Since the Scriptures tell us that the two become one, the young man and the young woman, anticipating marriage, should be striving to present their future spouse with a holy and pure body as well as a holy and pure mind and heart. And I will venture to say, all of us parents have, since our own weddings, found out that the newness, freshness, brightness, purity and expense of the rings, gowns, flowers, suits and presents are as **nothing** in comparison to the holy and pure hearts, minds and bodies we found – or wish we could have found – in each other.

2) As our children surely will have noticed, it is the unbelievers in our society who advertise their unbelief by dressing immodestly, showing what little respect they have for their future and even present spouses. We mention how nakedness has been one of the sure signs of rabid paganism all through history, and that the other mono-theistic religions (Islam and Judaism) understand this and always cover up well. It is only the post-Christian West among the mono-theists who have taken to public immodesty, clearly as a result of turning away from God and His laws.

3) We explain to our daughters that males in particular

have a problem with seeing too much of a female's body exposed, leading to the lust of the eyes and in the heart which the Lord specifically condemned. Here is one way the girls can be of great assistance to all males and their Christian brothers in particular: by dressing modestly. We did a whole weekend talk on purity a while back, and in the session Barbara took with just the girls, it was very sobering to them as she explained just a little of what exposed midriffs and cleavage and curve-accentuating clothing does to their Christian brother's mind, heart and physiology. Many had never considered this. It was scary as they considered this in relation to all the unbelieving men they passed on the street and what message their dress standards were sending to some of these onlookers....it didn't bear thinking about. The idea is to train our daughters to have a long-term vision on this, so that "She does [her husband] good, and not harm, **all** the days of her life" (Proverbs 31:12). Would her future husband want her dressed in such a way that other men perverted at her walking down the street? No. Then she will dress even now, at age 12, 13 or 16, with that future husband in mind, doing him good even today!

We tried to explain to our children how the marriage relationship is unique and special in many, many ways, one of which is how a husband and wife need little privacy between them as "the two become one". This is done by talks around the table, when the subject comes up in our Bible reading, by the way we have switched off the TV and fast forwarded videos and take all junk mail straight to Barbara for her to screen before anyone else sees it. We don't watch any TV now, as it is just too sensuous virtually any time of the day, whether it be the ads or the show. We've walked out of two G rated movies recently. We've also found that most videos are not to be trusted.

And we've said to the boys that we don't think they need to know anything about the husband-wife sexual relationship until just before they get married. You see, all knowledge carries a degree of responsibility as to how you handle that knowledge. In today's society, given the way it is running full speed toward immorality of all kinds, such sexual knowledge is too heavy and burdensome for their shoulders at present and has proved to be a source of much stumbling for many. Later on it will be part of the responsibility they will need to assume upon marriage. We've said simply that all sexual activity is to be within your marriage. It is wrong, immoral and harmful outside of marriage. Just like fire: it is great within the fireplace, but a total disaster running through the rest of the house.

We don't just leave it at that, of course. We help them come to grips with the applications of I Timothy 5:1-2 where it says to treat younger women like sisters, in all purity; or I Timothy 4:12, "Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity"; and other Scriptures. Our rule of thumb is: "Attention to all, intention toward none." We help the boys understand that girls are motivated by emotions, colours, textures, scents, sounds and especially the sound of words that are kind, complimentary and personal. So they must be careful

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



# Home Education Research

## A Literature Review

by Shirley Barclay  
of Wellington



Sitting in on a lecture presented to a group of homeschooling parents couldn't help but draw my curiosity to know more about this growing phenomenon. Philosophical debate relating to the purpose and heart of learning and practical issues being grappled with by these 'untrained' parents did not seem altogether dissimilar to those of a group of reflective 'professional' teachers. The confidence of the presenter that homeschooled children actually fared very well academically further intrigued me. On what basis are those claims made? What research has been done on the topic of homeschooling, and more particularly, in the New Zealand context?

Far from the notion that homeschooling is a somewhat new alternative to public and private school education, writers point out that for centuries children have learned outside of organised systems of education.<sup>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7</sup> Meighan<sup>4</sup> and Moore<sup>5</sup> contend that the Industrial Revolution of the mid-late nineteenth century made a significant impact on homeschooling when new information needed for the changing industrial worlds of Britain, America and Western Europe could no longer be provided within the family. Mass education began to take shape, which, according to some writers, presented a useful arena within which to transmit, perpetuate and develop societal ideologies and values.<sup>5, 7, 8, 9</sup>

In Western countries including America, Great Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, school attendance later became compulsory and provided for in institutions by professional educators.<sup>1, 3, 6, 10, 11, 12, 13</sup> Children may currently receive instruction in some other manner in these countries, but in America homeschooling only became legal again in all fifty states in 1993. Nonetheless, as Basham<sup>1</sup> points out, there remain widespread differences between countries and states as to how homeschooling will be regulated and to what extent.

In New Zealand, families who choose to homeschool must apply for an exemption from the Secretary of Education, specifying how they will meet their obligation to teach their children "*at least as regularly and well as in a registered school*" as set out in the Education Act of 1989 section 21 (1) (b). If an exemption is granted, programmes are periodically reviewed by the Education Review Office (ERO).<sup>14, 15, 16, 17</sup> According to Ralph Lane of National Operations, the Ministry of Education (MinEdu) is currently seeking to initiate a cycle of reviews for all homeschooled children similar to school reviews (personal communication, April 23, 2004).

Although this current "Re-emergence of an old practice"<sup>3</sup> cannot be credited to any one person or group, the contemporary widespread move back to home schooling in a now information-rich society<sup>4</sup> is recognised by writers studied to have begun most evidently in America in the 1960s and 70s with the emergence of two major schools of thought. John Holt, teacher and humanist, influenced by his own observations and writers such as Ivan Illich, led the liberal-left pedagogical strain. He advocated decentralisation and greater parental autonomy, believing the most civilised way to educate a child was through homeschooling.<sup>1, 2, 3, 12, 18</sup> His major following at that time was of New Agers, ex-hippies and homesteaders for whom schools were too rigidly conservative.

Raymond Moore, missionary and U.S. Department of Education analyst led the ideological strain, classified by Basham<sup>1</sup> and Nemer<sup>6</sup> as the 'Christian Right'. He researched the effects of institutionalisation on children and concluded that a child should really not begin school until at least eight to twelve years old. His major following of Christians, prompted either by religious duty or by a desire to integrate religion, learning and family life, became significant during the 1980s.<sup>1, 3, 6, 12</sup>

However, homeschooling now embraces a much wider community and continues to gather momentum.<sup>1, 3, 7, 19, 20, 21</sup> Bauman<sup>19</sup> considers that in America 30 million children could potentially become involved without exhausting its constituency. Yet, although the significant growth of this movement could have a great impact on the practices of existing schools and bring new institutional forms, the information on it is still inadequate and in some cases flawed.<sup>3, 19, 21, 22, 23</sup>

One reason for this could be the emotive nature of the homeschooling debate. Whilst having its advocates, it also draws suspicion and intolerance from its critics for apparently withdrawing children from common societal goals and standardised education and assessment.<sup>12, 19, 24</sup> Some homeschooling families and organisations respond by refusing to take part in research.<sup>3, 12, 22, 25, 26</sup> They are suspicious of the purposes and outcomes of research, convinced that government will use the information to organise and further regulate homeschooling.<sup>25, 26</sup> Even researchers themselves are prone to personal attack and to having their motives questioned by both supporters and opponents of homeschooling, regardless of their findings.<sup>23</sup>

Research and testing also tends to be geared to the scope, sequence, emphasis and values of public and private schools and not on issues of importance or relevance to homeschoolers.<sup>21, 23, 27</sup> Being assessed against the very standards and values they have rejected further discourages some homeschoolers from participating and thus being represented in research findings.<sup>3, 18, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26</sup>

Other reasons for the inadequacy of research are that many studies are reliant on highly selective samples or have analysed issues without considering the whole homeschooling population.<sup>3, 19, 21, 22, 23, 25, 27</sup> Further limiting is the fact that most of this research appears to

come from America, and whilst useful in a general sense, it cannot justifiably represent the situation in other countries.

In New Zealand, Craig Smith of the Home Education Foundation of New Zealand (HEDF) conducted four opinion polls amongst subscribers to their magazine *TEACH* in 1997. Questions related to specific topics such as accountability with ERO and the Ministry of Education and responsibility for children's education. Apart from this and other work by Smith and a study based on interviews with several key people in the homeschooling movement presently being completed by Karen Vaughn of the New Zealand Council of Educational Research (NZCER), research in New Zealand appears to be almost non-existent.<sup>28</sup>

Nonetheless, within its limitations, using information gathered mostly from surveys, standardised achievement tests, questionnaires and interviews, scanty attempts are being made to answer questions about homeschooling. To date, these have generally related to the nature and characteristics of homeschooling.<sup>1, 3, 7, 12, 19, 20, 24, 27, 29, 30</sup> The most prevalent seem to be the characteristics of those who choose homeschooling, the numbers of children being homeschooled and how they perform both academically and socially.

#### How Many Children Are Being Homeschooled?

Although American statistics are those most represented in the literature studied, evidence was found to indicate that homeschooling numbers continue to grow significantly world-wide.<sup>4, 13, 17, 31, 32, 37</sup> Ministry of Education<sup>17</sup> records the official number of homeschoolers in New Zealand at 6,437 homeschoolers in 2003. This represents 0.8% of total school enrolments and an increase of 105% since 1993.

#### Who Is Involved in Homeschooling?

Some of the key researchers collating and analysing information on demographic characteristics of homeschoolers are Brian Ray; Patricia Lines; Stacey Bielick, Stephen Broughman and Kathryn Chandler and Lawrence Rudner. Rudner's has been the largest study done to date, involving 20,790 homeschooling children of different ages and their families from across America. He collated information from surveys and tests administered through the Bob Jones University Press Testing and Evaluation Services (BJU) on behalf of the Home School Legal Defence Association (HSLDA). Critics argue that his results were only valid for the group he studied and paint a biased and unbalanced picture of homeschoolers in general. It also concerns critics that the findings have been widely adopted by both supporters and opponents of homeschooling without scrutiny nor acknowledgement of this fact.<sup>12, 21, 25</sup> However, as can be seen in the following analysis, other recognised studies have tended to agree with his findings in all but a few areas.

And whilst reports produced by ERO<sup>14, 15, 16</sup> do offer some demographic information, it appears the only

similar research conducted in New Zealand is that of Smith representing HEDF and Christian Homeschoolers of NZ (CHomeS) by means of a questionnaire completed by 119 families on their mailing list in 1995.

Results of research show that homeschooling children are more likely to have two parents and at least two siblings. Their parents are more likely to be white and have a better education than the general population. One parent is likely to be at home full-time and most often this is the mother.<sup>3, 19, 20, 21, 27</sup> Smith's<sup>33</sup> findings

**Research appears to indicate that when parents are concerned enough to get involved in their children's education through homeschooling, it works!**

concur with these except that the New Zealand homeschooling mother may be just as likely not to have completed secondary school. Statistics from the New Zealand Ministry of Education indicate that

homeschooling parents are 20% more likely to identify as European/Pakeha.<sup>17</sup> Welner and Welner<sup>21</sup> posit that with modern technology and changes in work structures, both parents may increasingly be able to participate in the task of homeschooling.

There is agreement that homeschooling families span a range of income levels, but research studied places the average in the middle except Rudner<sup>27</sup> whose statistics show a higher income average. Both he and Ray<sup>24</sup> also indicate that most parents are engaged in professional occupations, although a wide range of occupations is represented. Interestingly one in four American homeschooling parents will have been a certified teacher<sup>27</sup> and one in three British parents.<sup>4</sup>

As noted earlier, it is widely acknowledged and borne out in Rudner's<sup>27</sup> and Line's<sup>3</sup> studies that many homeschooling families are Christian or at least religious. However, this must be balanced with the growing number of homeschoolers who represent a much broader range of values, beliefs, ethnic groups and political mores.<sup>3, 20, 21, 23</sup> By nature of the group studied, Smith's<sup>33</sup> findings indicate a strong proportion of Christian parents.

#### Why Do People Homeschool?

Research appears to indicate that when parents are concerned enough to get involved in their children's education through homeschooling, it works!<sup>13, 4, 12, 24, 27</sup>

People homeschool for a wide variety of reasons. One of the most common is to have the freedom to impart religious, moral or philosophical values different to those espoused by the schooling system.<sup>1, 12, 14, 15, 19, 25, 33</sup> Many opt for a lifestyle which includes children as part of a family unit where relationships are nurtured.<sup>1, 14, 15, 19, 33</sup> Parents wish to take responsibility for their own children's education, tailoring individualised programmes to and for their children's specific needs and strengths. Dissatisfaction with the public school system is also a major reason why parents opt to homeschool children.<sup>1, 7, 12, 14, 15, 19, 33</sup> This involves concern for the emotional and physical safety of children including the negative influence of peers; discontent with curriculum and assessment systems<sup>1, 7, 12, 14, 33</sup> and shortcomings of regular schools in achieving adequate literacy and academic levels.<sup>1, 3, 4, 7, 12, 14, 15, 19, 24, 27, 34</sup>

### How Do the Homeschooled Perform Academically?

Line's comment<sup>(3, p.5)</sup> that "Virtually all reported data shows that homeschooled children score above average, sometimes well above" has been echoed in all of the research studied, even though the children are generally tested on content covered and methods used in public and private schools.<sup>3, 24, 27</sup>

Parents' education or income and whether they are trained professionals or not appear to make little, if any, difference to the superior academic performance of homeschooled children. Yet for children in public schools, higher income levels or education of parents makes a striking difference as to how well children will achieve academically.<sup>3, 24, 27</sup> Research also shows that homeschooled children, already ahead of their public and private-schooled peers academically, still tend to do even better as they grow older.<sup>24, 27, 34</sup> They are increasingly well received into higher education and into employment.<sup>3, 4, 7, 12, 24, 30</sup> Anecdotal evidence suggests that employers appreciate their character and work ethic, academic abilities, knowledge of how to access and use information and continued commitment to education.

Studies conducted by Oliveria and Duvall focussing on critical thinking skills and children with disabilities respectively, also concur with the conclusions regarding academic achievements of homeschooled children made above.<sup>4, 7, 21, 24</sup>

It is claimed that the academic success of homeschooled children has much to do with the individualised nature of their varied programmes which allow for the children to be taught what they need, when they need it, in a flexible, relaxed and supportive environment.<sup>3, 4, 7, 9, 18, 21, 35</sup>

One flaw in the testing is that we cannot know how well children tested would have fared if educated in the public or private school arena because that test cannot be done. Whereas Lines<sup>3</sup> would suggest that at least homeschooled students certainly do not seem to be *disadvantaged* in their achievement by homeschooling, Kaseman<sup>25, 26</sup> and Welner and Welner<sup>21</sup> may argue once more that such a suggestion is based on research limited to those willing to participate and is therefore not indicative of the whole homeschooling population.

### Are Homeschooled Children Socially Deprived?

Critics question the adequacy of the socialisation of homeschooled children.<sup>3, 4, 9, 18, 35, 36</sup> Lines<sup>3</sup> believes this is based on professional assumptions about what constitutes 'healthy' socialisation. Studies by Shyers and Smedley, both conducted in 1992, demonstrate that homeschoolers are well-adjusted and better able to resolve interpersonal problems with other children than their public-schooled peers.<sup>4, 7, 35</sup> They also score significantly higher on self-concept instruments which measure socialisation.<sup>9, 35, 36</sup> Building of strong family ties and relationships and the often self-directed and self-disciplined nature of learning programmes could somewhat account for this.<sup>4, 7, 12, 24, 36</sup> Writers also note the contrasting detrimental effects of institutionalisation on the socialisation of public-schooled children.<sup>7, 12, 24, 30, 35, 36</sup>

Furthermore, homeschooled children, far from being isolated, are reportedly engaged in a wide range of activities outside of the home with people of varying ages, backgrounds and in a range of social settings such as sports teams, clubs, support groups, community service and field trips. Moving into adulthood, they are typically well networked and actively involved in civic activities.<sup>7, 12, 24, 26, 30, 35</sup>

### Where to from Here?

Research, although still limited, does seem to verify the belief stated earlier that homeschooling works. Concerns about the inadequacy of homeschooled children's academic and social development have been met with studies that would appear to prove the opposite. However, no such research appears to have been done in New Zealand.

Attempts made to describe the demography of homeschoolers do seem to become more credible as wider studies are conducted revealing somewhat similar results. How to ensure the representation of all homeschoolers in all situations remains a challenge yet to be met by researchers.

As already indicated, the belief that participation in research draws homeschoolers back into being assessed by what they consider to be a flawed system of education and concerns that findings may be used against them cause homeschoolers to be wary of research and researchers. Archer<sup>23</sup> and Farenga<sup>2</sup> posit that a different *kind* of research is needed, one that examines processes of homeschooling education rather than outcomes, therefore avoiding the conflict of comparison between each. This could provide both a way forward and an opportunity for schools and homeschoolers to co-operate in order to learn from each other as Taylor<sup>36</sup> suggests.

Empowering homeschoolers to solicit research that best serves their own community, just as research regarding public schools serves that community, may also alleviate concerns about the lack of relevance and value of research to homeschoolers. In other words, an area for development is to conduct research *for* the homeschooling community rather than *about* it.

Based on the fact that statistics show a significant number of homeschoolers consider themselves to be 'Christian', an interesting question for research could revolve around exploring just what that term actually means to those who use it.

Within the literature reviewed, the most significant area noticed for its absence is specific research done in the New Zealand context. Whilst ERO has produced informative reports, contacts with the Ministry of Education, ERO and NZCER concur that no specific studies on homeschooling have been completed in New Zealand by the Ministry of Education for the purpose of research. The Home Education Foundation would also appear to be the only homeschooling association to have studied homeschooling from a local context. Most, if referring to research at all, tend to use American studies to support their claims about homeschool-

(Continued on page 19: **Review**)



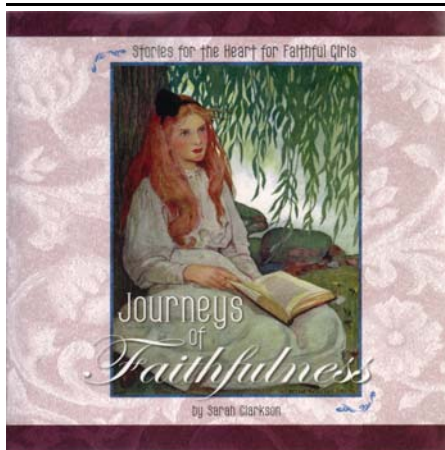


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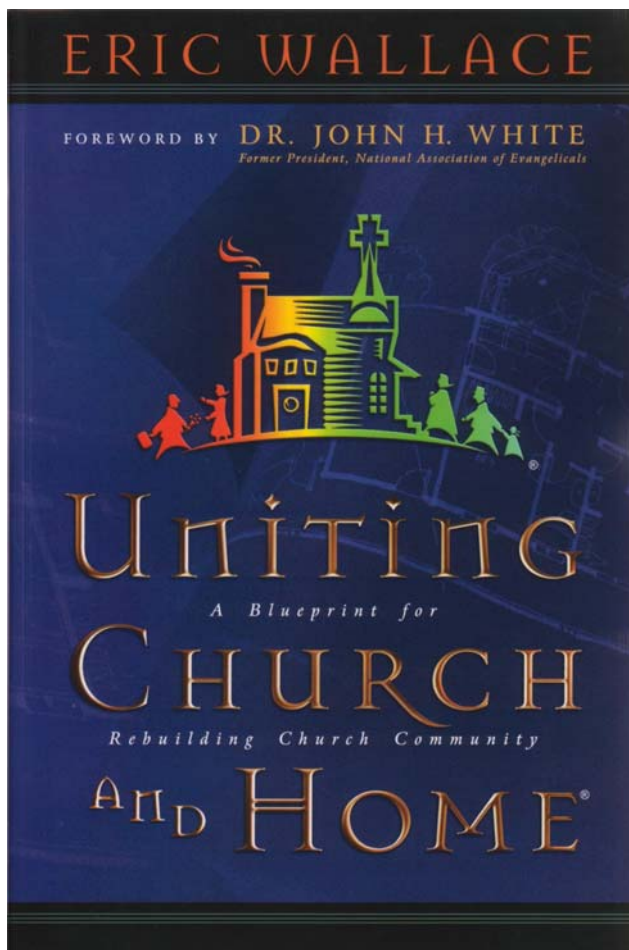
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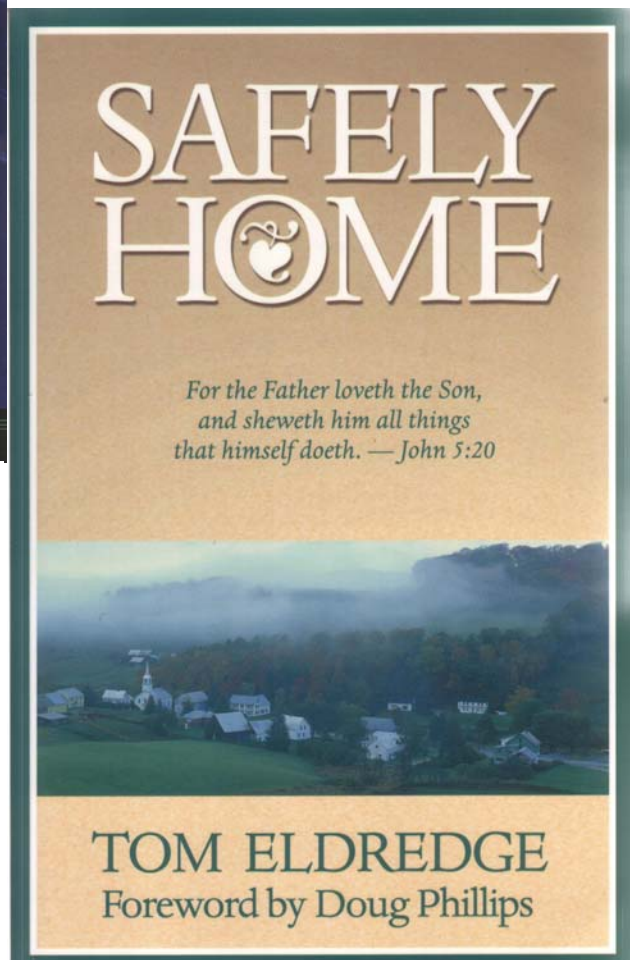
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(Continued from page 14: **Review**)  
ing.

Therefore, whilst scanty research continues internationally, a significant contribution could be made to both the homeschooling community of New Zealand and to education in general to research issues significant to the New Zealand context. Research that does not call for justification by any form of education chosen by the parents of New Zealand children but that seeks to learn from each other in order to improve education for all children would be valuable research indeed.

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(Shirley Barclay writes: Having taught in regular state primary schools for about fifteen years, I became the principal of Paeroa Christian School from 1992 until 1998 when I married and moved back to Wellington. Since that time I have taught in schools some of the time but have also taken time out to reflect on some of the key questions that have arisen for me about the way we educate our young and complete my Bachelor of Education along the way. More recently, this year, I have become involved with a group of homelearning families and have had the privilege of working with, and learning alongside their children on a regular basis.

I have also seen an opportunity to serve the homelearning community of New Zealand by endeavouring to discover areas that home-educators themselves would appreciate having studied on their behalf. In this light, I would love to hear from any home-educating families who would be willing to participate in a small questionnaire that asks this question. If you are happy to consider participating please contact me at [barclay@paradise.net.nz](mailto:barclay@paradise.net.nz).)

# Home Educators Did It

## God's Leading in My Life

by Mrs. Crystal Paine



As I look back over the last 22 years of my life, I see how God has so perfectly prepared me for where He has me today. There were many times when things did not make sense, or I would not understand why God was leading a certain way. But, it has all been part of God's marvelous plan for my life.

From my birth my parents raised me with a vision. They motivated me constantly to be great, not in the world's estimation, but in the eyes of my Heavenly Father. They taught me that true success does not come from being well-known or making a lot of money. True success is achieved through a life poured out for God on behalf of others. They always encouraged me to minister to others without expectation of personal reward. My siblings and I were first required to prove ourselves faithful servants in our own home before we went and ministered to those outside of our home.

When I was 12, my parents allowed me to begin helping a large family from church. As time wore on, the Lord began opening up other doors. I started teaching violin to a few students and gradually found myself with 17 students. A local Christian homeschooling mother (whose children were grown) opened a lovely Victorian tea room. With my parents' blessing, I began working there one day a week. I was asked to tutor a special needs child one afternoon a week. Other opportunities arose in the following months and years: I helped edit a book for Christian young women, published a newsletter encouraging young women in Godliness and assisted a few families who owned home businesses at their booths at homeschool conferences, among other things. Really and truly, I sought none of these jobs or ministries. In each instance, my parents or I was approached about them, or the Lord just

laid them in my lap.

The Lord was using everything I was learning through those jobs and ministries to help me to better fulfill God's calling in my life today. The things I learned through helping families, serving at the tea room and teaching much better equipped and prepared me to be a wife and mother. The opportunities I had to help with small businesses and the people I met through my ministries to young women have been an invaluable resource to me in starting and running our own home business.

I had always dreamed of one day having my own sort of business, but I never imagined it would actually become a reality. God knew though, and He has been preparing the way for this for a long time. Let me share how it all came about...

The vision for our business, *Covenant Wedding Source*, was first birthed in 2002 when my husband and I were planning our own wedding. After just a few months of trying to find modest gowns and God-honoring ideas, we quickly became aware that there was a real lack of conservative Christian wedding websites available. The Lord began to put in our hearts the desire to fill this void. Over the next many months we began praying and thinking about what God would have us do. We initially were just planning a small, personal website with helpful information for couples. As time went on, though, the vision kept expanding. We felt the Lord leading us to launch our own full-fledged business to provide a God-honoring alternative to the secular wedding industry. In April of 2004 our dream became a reality and *Covenant Wedding Source, LLC*, opened its doors to the world.

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Since beginning our business, we have learned so much! Most of all, we have been amazed to see how God has brought customers to us. As we stepped out in faith and trusted His leading, God has blessed us far beyond what we could have imagined. Before the business began, the Lord laid it upon our hearts that we wanted to have economical pricing (as much as possible) so that large homeschooling families could afford to have a beautiful, God-honoring wedding. We wanted *Covenant Wedding Source* to be more of a ministry than a business. Our desire has never been to make money but rather to provide a much-needed resource.

Another desire of our hearts was to utilize the skills of young women who are living at home under their fathers' authority. Therefore all the wedding gowns we offer, the veils we sell and all our other customized products are handcrafted by an experienced Christian young woman living under her father's authority or a married woman who is a keeper at home under her husband's authority. It has been exciting to see God not only bring us customers but also provide such skilled and dedicated Christian young women to work with us.

With *Covenant Wedding Source* we desire to take a stand for righteousness, holiness and truth. Not only do we desire to promote values of covenantal marriage, purity and modesty and femininity, we have also started a line of products to assist parents to wisely prepare their sons and daughters for marriage. Through books, resources, courses, unique sewing patterns and handwork kits we desire to encourage parents to train their sons and daughters to be the next generation of valiant Christian warriors.

I share a little about my life and where God has me right now in hopes of encouraging young and old alike. Parents, it is vitally important to raise your children with a vision bigger than themselves. I have so far to go in this area, but I know that all that I know and am I owe to my parents giving of their lives to raise me and my six siblings with a vision to do great things for God. Young people, life is too short to be lived for self. Whatever your giftings or talents, offer them up to the Lord, and He can and will be faithful to show you how He desires to use you.

Only God knows what the future holds. My husband is in his second year of law school, we are expecting our first baby in January and there are still a lot of uncertainties about tomorrow. But we know today that we are in the center of God's will, and we trust Him for His guidance for tomorrow and however many tomorrows we have on this earth!

*Crystal Paine is a 22-year-old homeschool graduate. She married her beloved husband Jesse in January 2003. They are eagerly expecting their first child in January 2005. Crystal and Jesse operate Covenant Wedding Source ([www.CovenantWeddingSource.com](http://www.CovenantWeddingSource.com)) out of their home.*

# Letters



## Fabulous Articles

A heartfelt "Thank you"!! for all the fabulous articles, suggestions, resources you've forwarded to us today by email. I've opened several and am so grateful to you for these resources. They will be all well-used!!

We're at the stage of having made the final decision to homeschool our newly-turned-6-year-old who probably has Aspergers. He is *so* much more relaxed and happy (already!!) knowing that he does not need to attend school but can learn from home, and we had his morning tea farewell from his class today.

He may be eligible for free correspondence lessons (which I'd find easier in the short term compared with constructing a curriculum from scratch), and we see a Group Special Education adviser about this sometime next week.

However, the whole responsibility of homeschooling is new to us, and it'll be important I should think to "mould" his correspondence lessons to suit our son.

CPC  
NZ

## Impact Future Generations

In 1992 I wrote to you enquiring about home educating. Craig wrote a very substantial letter back. I don't remember the contents of that letter except for four words at the bottom of the last page. Those four words sparked something in me that gave me the courage and confidence I needed to home educate our children.

Today I was sitting in our lounge and beheld a wonderful sight; six of our seven children happily and contentedly working and playing. My heart was so filled with gratitude that we made the decision to home educate all those years ago in the face of opposition all around us. Then the Lord reminded me of the letter you wrote and those four words that were the turning point for me. I just want to express my sincere gratitude to you for those four words:

"You can do it!"

Such simple but inspiring words written with the utmost confidence that I could do it, thank you.

Our 17 year old son is in Auckland studying at the internationally renown Media Design School. He was given special permission to enter because of his "high professional standard of work": he taught himself at home! The school doesn't usually accept such young students. I can say with utter conviction he would never have survived state school.

Your positive influence helped change the course of our lives and will impact future generations, and I just wanted you to know that. God bless you.

Kathryn Molloy  
New Zealand

# Tough Questions People Ask

## How Do You Conquer Burnout? (Part 2)

by Ellyn Davis



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

### Beliefs as Energy Vampires

Think about it. Here we are, absolute amateurs, sitting around our kitchen tables, using our own children as guinea pigs and clinging to a belief that we can somehow give them a better education than an American institution that has multi-million dollar facilities and a professional staff and that spends an average of \$5,500 a year on each child. The only tools we have at our disposal are our own willingness to give it a try and assorted teaching materials modeled after those used in the public schools. So we are surrounded with constant questions — questions from our relatives, our friends, members of our church — that undermine our convictions. Even worse, we have to battle questions from our own minds like, “Can I really pull this off? Do I know what I’m doing? Am I doing too much or too little? Am I using the right teaching material? Am I simply wasting time? Am I going to warp my children and make them total misfits?”

No wonder we struggle with burnout!

Obviously, these questions can become “energy vampires” that erode our sense of confidence about what we are trying to accomplish. We need to surround ourselves with confidence builders that reinforce our convictions, like books by John Gatto that let us know all is not as good as it may seem in the public schools. Or books by Raymond Moore that tell us that warm, loving, family life overcomes any deficiencies there may be in our teaching materials and methods. Or books by Edith Schaeffer that make us realize our homes have the power to mold lives in eternal ways.

There are four major “energy vampire” beliefs I have noticed as I’ve talked with home schooling families across the nation. You can probably spot more self-defeating beliefs in your own life, but here are four I have noticed:

Beliefs have a powerful impact on how we perceive life. Next time you are frustrated, anxious, or depressed, ask yourself, “What would I have to believe to feel this way?”

**1. The belief in scarcity.** This is the belief in “not enough”: not enough time, energy, money, opportunities, resources and so on. When we hold a belief in scarcity, we limit ourselves. We tend to not step outside of our own “boxes” because we feel we must hoard what little we have, and we feel that no matter

how much we try, our efforts won’t be “enough.” We are always afraid we are going to “run out” of time, energy, money, opportunities, etc., etc. When we choose to believe in scarcity, we not only limit ourselves, but we insult God: our God Who is Enough, and Who, in fact, promises to give to us exceeding abundantly, pressed down and running over. We also lock ourselves into anxiety over finances and time pressure and into regret and grief over wasted time, energy and money. One of the reasons our family has tried to keep

Hudson Taylor’s biography in print is that he was a man with a firm conviction that God would always “be enough,” and his response to every extremity was, “Now we have an opportunity to see what God can do!”

**2. The belief in difficulty.** The word “bummer” has become firmly entrenched in the American vocabulary. It is reflective of a widely held belief that life is a hassle, a battle, an uphill climb, a constant proof of Murphy’s Law (“everything that can go wrong will”). Yes, it is true, we live in a fallen world, but that doesn’t mean we have to approach everything with a “What’s the use?” attitude.

One of the most important lessons I ever learned was about the power of repetition. I used to never make up my bed, because I would hit the floor running each morning and never slow down until I fell into bed again at night. The unmade bed always bothered me, but it seemed like an insurmountable task to tackle first thing in the morning. A friend happened to mention that if you do something for six months, it becomes a habit, and it no longer requires any extra emotional or physical energy. Silly as it may sound, I thought, “Maybe I can try making up my bed for six months.” Well, that was twenty-five years ago, and I don’t even think about making up the bed anymore. I just do it when I get up. Since that time, I have used the power of repetition to eliminate the draining effect of certain tasks that I dislike. I’ve found out that social scientists call this “unconscious competence.” All tasks, particularly tasks that require overcoming a certain amount of inner resistance, have a “competency” curve where once you reach a level of mastery, no further mental, emotional or physical effort is required. We see this all the time when we teach a child to read. For months it seems like we are getting nowhere, but all of a sudden our child reads effortlessly.

**3. The belief in failure.** Many of us believe (1) that mistakes are bad and (2) that there is only ever one right way to do something. These beliefs create a fear of failure, a fear of making mistakes, that thwart true learning. Yet most of us would agree that a lot of true learning comes from making mistakes, from falling down and trying again like you do when you learn to walk or learn to ride a bicycle. So failure always has something to teach us and often teaches us more than success does.

What if we really believed God works everything for our good and even redeems our mistakes? That would dispel a lot of our fear and anxiety.

**4. The belief that it will always be this way.** One of my mother's favorite phrases is, "This too will pass." It is her way of acknowledging the inevitability of change. Sure, right now you are up to your elbows in baby doo, your house is a wreck and there is no way you will have supper on the table in time. No wonder you feel stressed and harbor thoughts of sending the kids to military school! But believe me, there will be a day when you would give anything to have a peanut-butter and jelly smudged four-year-old son crawl onto your lap and ask you to read *Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel* for the four hundredth time. These days with your children will pass you by in an instant. All of my children are now well beyond the diapers and peanut-butter stage, and what I miss most are the snuggles, the little hands reaching up to me, the plaintive cries for "just one more story," the proud calls of "Mama, come quick and see what I did!"

How could I ever have thought it was a hardship to read *Mike Mulligan*? I would gladly trade all of the clean houses in the world for more of those stressful years when my children were small and every day held a thousand new wonders for them to discover.

Beliefs have a powerful impact on how we perceive life. Next time you are frustrated, anxious or depressed, ask yourself, "What would I have to believe to feel this way?" Recognizing the false beliefs you allow yourself to hold about people and situations and then consciously trying to align those beliefs with God's truth will dramatically change the way you approach life. For example, if you believe your children are "rug rats," you will relate to them totally differently than if you believe they are "blessings from God."

In *The Safest Place on Earth*, Larry Crabb says:

*We simply do not believe in a God who is so intrinsically good that His commitment to be fully Himself is equivalent to a commitment to be very good to us. When He tells us that He is out for His own glory, and will glorify Himself by making known who He is, we can relax. It's something like a wealthy, generous father declaring his intention to display his true character. We know we're in for a bundle. That is, if we're His heirs.*

### **Spiritual Friendships, Mentors and Christian Counselors**

We are relational beings, and ultimately all of our problems are relational. All of the practical areas discussed so far in this article have to do with changing how we relate to created

things (like time and our living environment) and changing what we allow to affect our relationship with ourselves (our thought patterns, our energy level, etc.). But there are other relationships that contribute to stress and conflict in our lives. Yes, we may have too much to do and not enough time to do it, but this time/space problem only reaches "burn-out" when there are underlying relational problems such as tension between husband and wife, conflict between parents and children or estrangement between fellow Christians. Usually the largest source of relational stress is in our marriages because most of us got married without ever being taught how to make a marriage work.

Those of us with relational problems don't need time-management courses or housekeeping seminars, we need spiritual friendships, mentors and counselors who help us develop right relationships with others and with God.

What about spiritual friendships? Unfortunately, many of us hesitate to share our deepest struggles because we suspect other Christians will treat us like a problem that needs to be fixed. Larry Crabb says in *The Safest Place on Earth* that all Christians yearn for...

*...a community of friends who are hungry for God, who knows what it means to sense the Spirit moving within them as they speak with you. You long for brothers and sisters who are intent not on figuring out how to improve your*

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*life but on being with you wherever your journey leads.*

We would give nearly anything to be part of a community that was profoundly safe, where people never gave up on one another. Scripture tells us that God intends for the Body of Christ to be just that: a safe place that nourishes the godly in us and brings us to a “joyful meeting with God.” It is worth searching for spiritual companionship, even if we find only one or two others who befriend us spiritually.

What about mentors? Within the Body of Christ, godly older women are specifically intended to help other women be all that they can be as wives, mothers and home-makers. But, as I once remarked to a Christian psychologist, “All of the older Christian women I know are faking it just as badly as I am!”

Most of us have struggled to become Titus 2 women (keepers at home, lovers of our children and husband, etc.), but very few of us have had godly older women to show us the way. Instead, we have been nurtured and discipled by women who are as unskilled as we are at fulfilling the Titus 2 mandate. I have always thought of my generation as a “sandwich generation.” We are “sandwiched” between a generation that never mentored us and a generation that desperately needs for us to mentor them.

How do we cope with this dilemma? First, we need to take a good, hard look at who our primary influencers are. Are these women worthy role models? Can they provide us with a pattern of beliefs and godly living as well as with practical skills that we can duplicate in our own lives? Is their influence causing us to be happier and more productive, or do we relate to them because “misery loves company?”

Second, we can search for women worthy of modeling. Sometimes this will mean we have to settle for second-hand modeling, by reading books or listening to tapes by women who are well-respected and generally acknowledged as worthy to instruct other women. Most of my role models are women I never knew personally: women like Corrie Ten Boom, Edith Schaeffer and others whose lives will withstand scrutiny.

In addition to the lack of godly, older women, there is a dearth of mature Christian counselors. It is hard to find someone to talk to whose advice isn't mixed with pop-psychology, or who doesn't try to superimpose their agenda over your problems. What do I mean by “agenda?” It's like the old saying: “When you have a new hammer, everything looks like a nail.” We've all had the experience of someone trying to make our problems fit their doctrine. If they happen to be into inner healing, then our problem becomes the “nail” to their inner healing “hammer.” If they happen to believe in demons, then our problem becomes the “nail” to their deliverance “hammer.” Don't be ashamed to seek professional help, but when you do, check the person out as carefully as you would any other mentor. And don't let anyone ever treat you like a “nail.”

(To be continued.)

# Parenting



*Victoria and Geoffrey Botkin with middle son Ben, 15.*

## Bringing Up Teenage Boys

Geoffrey & Victoria Botkin

### A Message for Mums

One of the inherent weaknesses in the modern home education movement is maternal dominance in the raising of sons. Mums do the hard yards because Dad is not around. Sons spend far more time with Mum than they do with Dad. In most cases this is because Dad must leave home to be the breadwinner. In other cases the father is relatively disinterested in the training process or too exhausted from work to take a deep interest in what's going on in a boy's development. So where does this leave a young lad once he is not young anymore? He will be disadvantaged unless you, Mum, are especially sensitive to three things:

your son's need for freedom;  
your son's need for male mentoring;  
your son's need for a multigenerational vision.

As you read this, please remember that “disadvantage” is a relative term. Many young men who suffer the relative disadvantages of maternal dominance are still better off — far better off — than young men who suffer real dangers in state-dominated education environments.

### Freedom

One of the inherent strengths in the home education process is the freedom parents give boys to learn at their own pace outside the stunting confines of an anti-masculine institution — the typical government school. For some reason I have yet to discern, many NZ mothers feel pressure to put an end to this freedom when their sons turn 13 or 14. Mums may feel inadequate to teach further, they may feel their sons need a credential the school promises to provide or they may feel the son needs worldly companionship. None of these are valid reasons to abandon the education alternative for which you have sacrificed much and which is vastly superior to the state school alternative during teen life.

Boys are not wired to thrive in a prison-like institutional setting. Regardless of what the schools teach in the way of content, the very structure of the classroom frustrates and demoralizes boys. The “bell”, the bullying, the pressure to be politically correct, the enforced emphasis on non-academic conformity, the twisted emphasis on subject material that has no relevance for real life, the forced age segregation...all of these compromise the natural masculine traits that can turn boys into responsible protectors, providers and nurturers in their own right. According to acclaimed American school-teacher John Taylor Gatto, school simply harms boys far more than it helps because it takes from boys the tools they need for critical thinking in the real world.

Says Gatto in his book *Dumbing Us Down*:

*Around the year 1850 all the free-form, casual schooling that made our nation of farmers far and away the best-educated the world had ever seen was done away with in a series of strokes of the legislative pen.*

*In the 1860s, Herbert Spencer...pronounced government schooling a preposterous endeavor doomed to failure. He said that this would happen because it deprived children of raw experience and responsibility precisely at the moment their natural development demanded it, and that this experience and responsibility could not be made up for later.*

*...I feel ashamed that so many of us cannot imagine a better way to do things than locking children up all day in cells instead of letting them grow up knowing their families, mingling with the world, assuming real obligations, striving to be independent and self-reliant and free.*

The purpose of this article is to help us imagine and pursue a better way.

A boy's teen years are the most vital in determining his interests, his bearings in life, his relationship to responsibility and forming his ideas of manhood. Freedom from an artificial, institutionalized world (public schooling) is essential for healthy development. Some observers would go so far as to say the modern school environment ruins a boy's chances of becoming a good father by teaching the wrong worldview about family life. Home education can continue to provide freedom, protection and an uncompromising road to manhood.

#### Male Mentoring

Four decades ago, when NASA began recruiting confident leaders for a manned space program, they discovered that boys who worked on farms with their fathers had the best advantages in coming of age, the best traits for adventurous leadership and the strongest character traits.

Boys learn about manhood from doing hard work and facing challenging problems with their fathers on a day-to-day basis. If such an arrangement is entirely impossible, Mums can help boys look for work or study situations that provide mentoring opportunities.

Apprentice-like relationships between boys and businessmen can be positively life-changing. Boys learn much by watching, and their bosses can teach much by coaching. If a boy cannot work with his father, find a man you trust who can take your boy under his wing for periodic or part time labour, preferably in a field in which your son has shown an interest. Age 13 may not be too early. Manual labor is especially valuable, but a disciplined office environment can be just as valuable if your son's supervisors are sufficiently strict and attentive.

In a mentoring environment, it is not the work that necessarily improves the boy's character and knowledge, but the direct interaction with his mentor. Good mentors should have character and integrity and a plan to impart a certain body of knowledge to your son. Ascertain from the mentor what that knowledge is, and how you can assess your boy's progress in picking it up.

In the right environment, your son will learn the proper customs of professional conduct, which will serve him in continuing along the path of self-learning down which you have pointed him.

#### An Intergenerational Vision

Even boys who have been given every advantage in life may reach age 20 without a vision of who they are, where they're headed or what they should do. It is not essential that they know precisely what they will be doing at age 30 and age 40, but it is essential that every young man is productive in the meantime. It is his labour in productive pursuits that will help direct him into his calling.

One of the most vital things you will ever give your boy in his education is the intellectual framework from which to make his most important life decisions: about his vocation, his estate, his marriage and his fields of study. This intellectual framework is not the academic stuff, it's the “worldview” stuff that encompasses the past, the present and a long-term future.

Because the big decisions are bearing down on him in his teens, he needs more direction in his teen years than at any other time of life. Without a long-term vision that includes his own children and grandchildren, he will not make good plans or good decisions.

#### A Message for Dads

If a father is the product of a forced government education (public schooling), the best thing he can do for his family is to admit to himself that he has been disadvantaged by the ideas forced onto him. This takes introspection and humility. He must then work all the harder to protect his sons from the same misleading life views that are rife in our culture.

The most compromising ideas picked up in school twist the concepts of family, education and work. According to the approved statist view, families provide children for the state which educates them according to an approved curriculum until they are declared “educated” and fit for lifetime employment in state-approved positions.

Because many fathers apply this flawed concept to homeschool situations, it is not surprising that they view Mum as the party who teaches the approved curriculum and their son as the state asset who sits at a desk until he is approved to go out and be another state asset's employee. In this scenario, what is Dad needed for at home? Isn't his first obligation is to be an employed state asset himself?

Indeed, Dads who apply this worldview logically will come to view home education as detrimental to a son's success because the new definition of success, according to Maxim Institute researcher Paul Henderson, "is to be the state's synchophant." How can a young man become a success if he doesn't become as familiar as possible with the state's wishes, the state's agents and the state's most faithful followers? Thus it is not surprising that many fathers are eager for sons to bail out of home education as soon as possible and get into a government school environment (public schooling). As many Mums are nervously aware, this is a road to disaster.

Before Dad gets properly involved in the home education process, he needs to reject this corrupted worldview and embrace a better worldview.

#### What Dad Should Have Learned from Great-Grandad

The main cause of the dysfunction in modern society is the disappearance of patriarchal influence and how sons protect their fathers' multi-generational vision. Before the advent of forced collectivist schooling (public schooling) in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, fathers and mothers had a healthy understanding of what made an educated man. The academic framework of the "three Rs" was only a very small part of a boy's education. The bigger part was a "real life" intellectual and moral framework. The priorities that guided a father's nurturing were *business and law*. One populist saying summed up this worldview. "If you do not teach your son the law and a trade, you train him to be a thief and a fool."

Fathers were the dominant and the guiding influence in a boy's education. "Business" learning was primarily character-related: professionalism, contracts and ethics instruction. "The Law" simply meant Biblical law as represented in the case laws of the Old Testament, without which civil society cannot be maintained. The "Three R's" were the tools required to maintain one's estate and one's society. These were essential but minor elements in the overall educational picture. Parents and operators of charity schools knew that the "academic stuff" could be learned to a sophisticated level (what would today be considered University level) by age 14 with only part-time schooling, which was often very part time and only during winter.

Families understood that all fathers were teachers of one sort or another. Either they were conscientious, devoted mentors, or by their neglect they trained their sons to be identically careless and neglectful of duty.

#### Bringing Up Teenage Men

Before statist governments seized complete control of education and family life, men passed on a healthy

educational worldview to their sons. One of the more important concepts was that a boy has duties that span several generations. Another powerful concept was that a boy becomes a man at age 13. Western civilization probably absorbed this idea from the Jewish practice of recognizing well-trained boys as "sons of the law" at age 13. Orthodox Jewish families still practice this custom which requires, among other accomplishments, that boys memorize the first five books of the Bible before age 13.

Thus, during a boy's earliest years, Western men were once strongly motivated to be intimately involved in the spiritual and mental training of their boys. If a boy was seen to be a child at age 13, that boy was a public manifestation of his father's shortcomings. The acceptance of this idea was universal in Western culture. Families held to the concept with a life-and-death seriousness. And for good reason.

Society regarded 13-year-olds as men and expected them to be prepared to act like it. Sea transportation law, for example, reinforced this custom during life threatening calamities. When the Titanic's captain gave the order, "Abandon ship! Women and children first!," 13-year-old men were expected to be grown-ups. Western society viewed these youths as men who could bravely sacrifice their lives for those who were weaker. Boys responded accordingly, acting like men of mature faith, who could manfully assist women into lifeboats and then calmly go down with the ship as Christian gentlemen. Many of them learned what a Christian gentleman was from watching their fathers.

Until the 1940s, many 13-year-olds carried these ideas of duty with them into fatherhood, preparing young sons and then providing manly guidance to 13-year-old young men of their own. But since the 1950s, an accepted culture of childishness, perpetuated by artificial schooling, has created a societal misfit called a "teenager" and has separated him from his father and his father's mentoring.

#### What Fathers Can Teach Best

For sons in the teen years, fathers are in the best position to provide the link between the best lessons of the past, an understanding of the present and the framework to plan for the future. This is sometimes called a "multigenerational vision." Elements of this framework must include character training (biblical obedience), theology (biblical literacy), history (biblical perspective), worldview (biblical relevance), statesmanship (biblical dominion) and the facts of life (long-term estate planning).

Armed with these rudiments, a young man can face adolescence and a complex world with confidence. He will know how to act and how to lead others. He will know what to look for in a fiancée, how to court her honourably, how and why to develop his entrepreneurial instincts, how to avoid dead-end employment, how to plan a business and run it successfully, how to save and invest his earnings, how to respect the benefits of Christendom, how to honour his parents and his heritage, how to contribute to the health of the community, how to disciple others, how to provide emotionally and

(Continued on page 27: **Parenting**)



# Over a Cuppa



## **Your children will be emotionally damaged if you isolate them from school and keep them to yourself!**

by Jennifer Koch

Just think a moment about the emotional damage they would receive *in school*! The peer pressure, the confusion of who is really the authority in their life — teachers or dad and mum — the bullying, the confusion of being taught about alternate lifestyles and evolution... I can't think of anything more damaging than sending my children away from my side for eight hours a day to a cesspool of false teaching, pressure to do evil and the constant rejection if you don't conform in all the worldly ways.

At home they are accepted, encouraged, respected, challenged according to their true gifts and abilities and provided with healthy role models. They are trained to think, to learn, to be responsible, to respect authority, to explore their unique talents. They have opportunities to practice life skills and home economics, to manage their time and money and to resolve peer conflicts with loving guidance and wise intervention. And most importantly, their teacher and guide through all of this is someone who loves them as no one else can and understands their personalities and their minds as no one else ever will. If they are struggling in any way, academically or personally, ask yourself: is it better that they struggle alone, in the context of teachers and peers who likely don't share their values and may or may not care enough, or have enough time, to get to the bottom of what's going on; or to have a wise counsellor/friend/shepherd — you — at their side to notice, help diagnose and help them navigate through the troubled waters? The place of safety and security for our children is not in being "like the world" but in being free to be who they truly are: unique creatures of God's design, His precious daughters and sons, and to have that affirmed and respected in every choice and challenge of their day.

If you feel that your children need more peer interaction, or need other opportunities to learn how to behave in a group or to respect other authorities, there is nothing wrong with supplementing your home education with classes, athletics, music lessons, community service/mission work or church social groups. These can be a valuable addendum to our basic home education program — even if only for the contrast (helps them appreciate being at home!).

But for the bulk of their time and instruction, I can't believe that the most emotionally nurturing environment can be other than sitting at the feet of a teacher who truly knows them, understands them, cherishes them and seeks the best for them above all else.

(With an MA in Biblical Counselling, Jennifer worked in youth ministries, Christian education, a crisis pregnancy centre and Christian counselling near her home in New Jersey prior to becoming a full-time mother. She and husband Edward have three daughters, Meghan (11), Gillian (7), and Robin (5) who have always been schooled at home. In

April 2004 the family moved temporarily to London while Edward works in the UK. Jennifer's current passion is adding to their homeschool library from the gift shops of every castle, abbey, cathedral, museum, and Roman villa which her children will tolerate visiting before they return to the States in November.)

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(Continued from page 26: **Parenting**)

materially for his wife and children, how to observe the legitimate demands of the state, how to handle the illegitimate demands of the state, how to understand and overcome the corruptions of the church, how to serve God without falling into religious game-playing and how to leave a substantial estate to his descendants.

These rudiments are not taught in government classrooms. Rather, they are treated with contempt. These rudiments are not easily taught in home classrooms. But they can be learned as fathers mentor sons in a real-life environment. For sons aged 10-15, fathers should consider every sacrifice that may be necessary to create the right father-son learning environment. Many wise fathers have sacrificed things important in a materialistic culture. This was the cost to become their sons' primary teachers. Some sacrifices involve pay cuts, resignations from careers or other economic risk taking, but this in itself is a valuable lesson for a son. It says, "You are important. Our family relationship is important. Your education is no insignificant matter, and we should be willing to sacrifice for that education. I admit that the risks are expensive and scary, but maybe we can overcome each obstacle by working together. Let's prove to the world just how valuable and powerful families can be. Let's see how our faith can grow and be the prized asset it is meant to be."

### Conclusion

The home education movement is a phenomenon that could rescue what is left of Western culture. It is yielding superior results academically. It is making dysfunctional families functional again. It is demolishing the so-called "generation gap." It is rediscovering the true meaning of education and academic freedom. It is challenging the more dangerous claims of statism, including the claim that only the state can train a person to fit into society.

But home education will never be all it can be without fathers becoming more involved, especially with their sons. It has been through sacrifice that home education has progressed as far as it has. It will take yet more sacrifice to develop the next phase. Today too many home-educated boys display symptoms of timidity or disorientation as they step out into the world. Their mothers have helped them excel academically, but that's not enough to help them conquer the challenges of the times. It's time for their fathers to help them excel spiritually and materially, as men.

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

had come from. We only went about 100 metres, and I got out and the family continued on.

The front had passed, and I came back through the blackened, smoked-filled paddocks to see if we still had a home. The fire had burnt eight of our ten acres, all the trees were gone, so were the vegetable gardens, and the heat had killed the chickens and our son's pet rabbit. But somehow the sheep had survived. But most miraculous of all our house was unscathed. The fire had burnt right up to it...in fact 6 feet under it on the west side...but the home had not caught fire! Perhaps you're thinking the home was of brick. Nope, it was all timber.

The fire was finally contained that evening and mopping up by the local CFA crews continued for several days. All who saw our house could not believe it was still standing. "It shouldn't be here...", "It's incredible..." Its survival was always greeted with disbelief. So often people would say, "You were lucky." But we were able to say, "It is not luck...it is the Lord's doing!"

So that is a brief synopsis of our first day as Home Educators. And after that first day, we decided we needed some school holiday time, to clean up around the place. That was our first lesson in being 'flexible' with schooling routines and timetables.

To give you the full run down on the family, there is Glenys (mum and head teacher), then Tristan (now 19), Celeste (17), Eloise (15), Brenna (8) and Erinna (7) and me.

Glen and I are both Australian born and bred and have spent most of our lives in and around Ballarat, Victoria. Glenys became a Christian during her high school years and was actively involved in Christian youth groups in her local church, which was at that time the York St. Church of Christ. Glenys had attended Sunday schools and church for much of her life, but she was around 16 or 17 when she 'believed and was baptised'.

My own background had very little church involvement. And my initial reasons for attending a church service were all the wrong ones. It was like this: At high school one day I overheard this girl telling her friends that she had become a Christian, and she was telling them of her decision to be baptized. I wasn't much interested in what she was saying...but I was interested in her! Some time later this same girl said to me, "Would like to come to church with me?" Well, I still didn't have much interest in the church, but more than ever I was interested in the girl. If going to church was the only way I could spend a little time with her, ***I was going to church!***

As it happened, the preacher was giving a series of talks on a Sunday night which he said would prove beyond reasonable doubt the historicity of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He presented evidence like in a court case, so to speak. Again, I wasn't particularly interested in the subject but dead keen on the girl; therefore I was in the church service several

weeks running. But I wasn't converted in the service... it was on a Wednesday night. I can still remember lying awake in bed when something the preacher had said the previous Sunday 'struck', and there and then I believed!

What was this 'thunderbolt'? Well simply this: "If Jesus didn't live, die and rise to life, why did His disciples travel around the known world telling people He did? Why were they prepared to die for this? Very 'unpleasant' deaths at that. If they knew that what they were preaching was 'false' and just a 'hoax', all they had to do to save their lives was say so! But no, they stuck to their story... and died for it! **WHY did they do that?** I could only come up with one answer: because it was the truth, and they believed it with all their heart. It was true. They believed it and died for that belief. If the resurrection is true, then Jesus is Lord, Jesus is the Son of God, He died for me...and I need Him. I made a public commitment the following Sunday and was baptized sometime later.

What of the girl, the reason I went along in the first place? Well, she consented to marry me three years later in the same church, with the same Minister officiating! That is over 23 years ago now.

With time the Lord blessed us with children. Our two eldest attended State School in Victoria for a few years, then we switched over to a local Christian primary school, which was an improvement environment-wise but still had its drawbacks. Our three eldest attended there for a couple of years. But over time and through various circumstances the Lord made us aware of the option of Home Education. I guess it is fair to say that Glenys was the more interested one at the commencement...and she needed to be, because a lot of the work load was going to fall on her.

Our final switch from the Christian school to home was confirmed by our moving from Ballarat to Berringa, a distance of about 35 miles. Even before our marriage it had been our desire to live in the country and be as self-sufficient as we could. With the realisation of this dream, homeschooling became a reality for us.

Have we ever had any unusual 'responses' from neighbours, family or friends to homeschooling? Well, the most unusual was due to a combination of homeschooling, our shift to the country and the fact that Glenys and the girls wear head coverings which you will have noticed in the photographs. The rumour got around, and then back to us...as rumours are wont to do...that I was Catholic Priest, Glenys was a Nun, and we were living in sin with our children.

Now that was the weirdest response....they weren't all that bizarre. We got the normal run of the mill, especially the "What about socialization?" question. But looking back over the years, with all the homeschooling families we have met, it is a stand-out point that in the main, most home schooled children relate far better to people across the whole age spectrum. They have no problem communicating with those younger than themselves, those older or with their peers. And I notice the reverse, that so many children in school cannot relate nearly as well with those outside their peer

group, and quite often don't relate that well with their peer group. Socialization is no problem for homeschoolers in my opinion. It is just a red-herring.

Over the years we have used various curriculum and approaches. When we started out, we really didn't know much about the whole thing and knew of very few curriculum options. As mentioned previously, in those early months we used Alpha & Omega (I think they were called Lifepacs), but we didn't feel happy with those. Then we moved on to Rod and Staff, which we felt was much better for us. I remember reading at the outset about Classical Education, and the idea really interested me, but the same article/book went on to say that there was little available as far as resources and curriculum to support this approach in the home school setting.

So we had Rod and Staff and continued with it. Later on we changed again, moving to Christian Light Education's Light Units. This has worked well with our girls for several years. Now after listening, learning and delving, I have discovered a wide array of materials that can be used for a Classical Education at home and wish that these had been available to us earlier.

I guess the most valuable lesson I have learned as far as home schooling goes is, **be flexible**. When you start off doing one thing, chances are that 12 months later you will be doing some things, if not a lot of things, differently. What works for one child doesn't work for another. No matter how good the curriculum is, each child is different. Some will thrive on a heavy text book approach, others will groan with horror just at the sight of a textbook. Some children are very much 'hands-on' learners, others not. As parents we need to be sure that we are not forcing our 'desired' methods on children. We need to find what works for the *child...* not what *we* want to work with.

The greatest advantage, I believe, from an academic perspective is that home schoolers can work at the child's pace, not the pace that the teacher has to set in a schoolroom to complete the work laid out by the education department. And the child's pace will vary... sometimes he/she will simply fly through work...and other times it is slow progress as the child comes to grips with something that is stretching him. Both situations are good.

So where are our children today eight years after we started...

Tristan couldn't wait to 'finish' schooling: he got out at the first opportunity. He is a wood worker and has been ever since we arrived in Ireland at the end of 2000. But during his 'schooling', he developed a love of reading. Because of this love of reading, I believe he will be able to learn all through his life. Any subject that interests him, he can pick up a book and learn. He is adventurous. In May he took a bike and a tent and headed for the Orkney Islands. He spent two weeks touring around sleeping in the tent or old abandoned

barns. Next January he is off to South America to climb Mt. Aconcagua with friends.

Celeste just finished homeschooling in June. Next week she heads to Switzerland for a week to meet up with friends. On her return she will commence a correspondence course to study Braille. She hopes to be able to work with visual impaired children, possible in a 'Mission' setting. Her course will be done through the Royal National Institute for the Blind (UK). It is a two-year course at the completion of which she will need to sit an examination in Dublin. This will be Celeste's first ever examination.

Eloise...well Elo' is not sure what she wants to do... but she has plenty of time to decide. Mum and Dad think that she has an 'artistic flair'... gets it from her Mum obviously. Glenys studied Fine Art at what is now Ballarat University after her high school days were completed. Eloise is also very good with dress making and with an 'eye' for colours can make up some astonishing 'fashions'. Both Eloise and Celeste make their own dresses and help Mum from time to time in the sewing of Brenna's and Erinna's clothing. And as for Brenna and Erinna... well there is a long way ahead for them.

And for Mum and Dad the road is just as long. I guess Glen and I have learnt a bit along the way...but home education is not just a learning process for the children...it is a never-ending learning process for Mum and Dad also.



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

not to toy with a girl's emotions, either on purpose or by accident, by using flattery or "buttering her up" to get your way. They need to keep their own emotions in check and realise that pairing off and dating is a very unwise course of action. When the time comes to court a maiden, a young man would ideally state his intentions up front to her father first. (A great book dealing with guy/girl relations at this level is *Emotional Purity* by Heather Paulsen.) And in the meantime, young men especially, keep your hands to yourself.

Of course they will want to know more; of course they will be curious about all kinds of things. We explain to them that all will be revealed when they get married, that they will have total freedom at that time to ask, explore, question, experiment to their heart's content.... and that they will have a willing spouse....and that they will have all the rest of their married lives....and that **then** – within marriage – all they do will be totally righteous, totally moral, totally healthy, totally joyous! We explained how this was part of living by faith: that taking our word for it now would pay great dividends later. And let me tell you, being products ourselves of the sensuous '60s with lots of friends who did not survive it well or at all, we can speak with conviction about these things; we know what we're talking about from front-line experience, not pie-in-the-sky theory. There is a time and place for most things: the time and place for investigating all the details of human sexual intercourse is after marriage with your spouse in the privacy of your own home.

Now this is all very fine, except that our children and your children have friends whose parents or school-mates or teachers or whatever do not hold to this same approach. Consequently they've picked up all kinds of stuff from other sources. We've tried to warn our children that they would hear stuff and be in conversations they'd need to suddenly walk (or run) away from. This is what we call "internal insulation". We cannot **isolate** our children from the world, but we can train them to **insulate** themselves by learning to flee sexual talk and developing a conviction about the necessity of doing so. This is especially necessary because of the curse of pornography so freely available on magazine racks and on the internet. We parents must declare total war on pornography, for it causes permanent brain damage by the images it forever burns on the mind within two seconds of time. And it can be as addicting as heroin. Never compromise. Train your children to be uncompromising, to trust your warning here if nowhere else and to flee at the faintest hint of the stuff. Once trained, by the grace of God, your children will be internally insulated.

Then there is the "external insulation" where we ourselves protect our children from the junk. When visiting friends, they'd always ring if the friend offered to screen a video for them. We would say no usually so it was us, not our child, who was the spoil sport. (Today we rarely let our younger ones visit away from home on their own the way our older ones did when they were young.) We discovered another principle of child rearing in this regard: sleep-overs are no good. Youth camps are worse. Young people in tents or a bedroom

at night, *with no adults around*, being all revved up from a day of fun will often turn to topics of conversation that are not normally brought up, just as their present situation at the camp or sleep-over is not a normal one. We now do not allow sleep-overs, **no matter who it is**, even the most trusted friend's children. Nor do we allow overnight camps with youth groups of any kind unless we are going to be in the same tent as our children. The danger is not the sleep-over or the camp: the danger is being unsupervised.

We discovered these principles after the damage had been done. A couple of our children came to us in tears months after events of this kind because the things of a sexual nature their good, lovely, Christian friends had told them had played so much havoc on their minds. These friends were asked by our children to stop telling them these things, but the friends had only just been told themselves and were **burning up inside** with the desire to tell someone else. Our children proved to be easy and perfect targets: they had not heard such things before; and lying in a tent late at night made it hard for our children to flee. It is better not to put our children into situations where such things can, and will, happen. We are talking about unsupervised children of whom the Bible says, "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child" (Proverbs 22:15). Two or more children together unsupervised simply means concentrated foolishness, not a good recipe.

The key is to have your children's hearts: that they would want to discuss these kinds of things with you first and foremost. That they would trust your judgment, whatever it was, in these areas, and if you said they needed to know so much and no more, they would accept that and try themselves to keep it that way.

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(Continued from page 11: **Underground**)

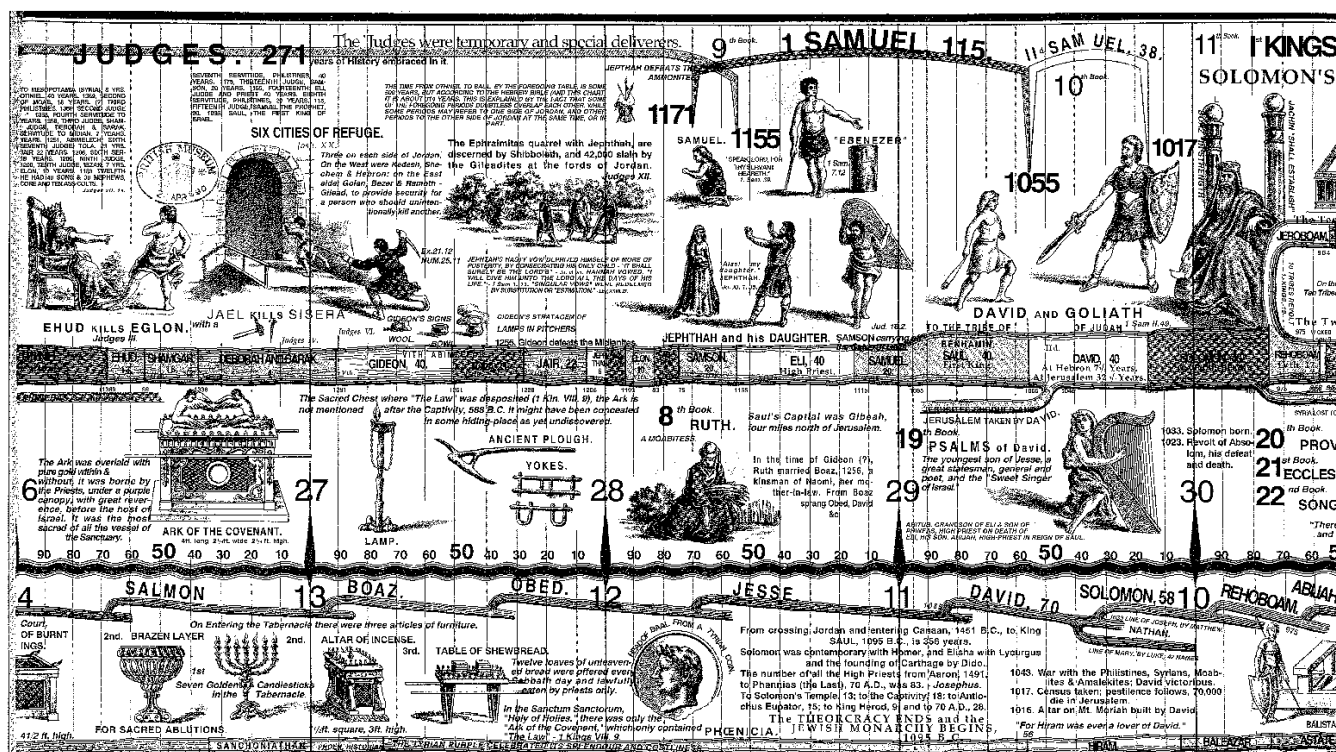
ter of a few hours, not years and years as it took in school. We did all calculations in our heads with such gusto I seldom use a pencil today, even for much more intricate computation. Pepys verified my father's unstated premise: You can learn what you need, even the technical stuff, at the moment you need it or shortly before. Sam Pepys wasn't put in charge of Britain's sea defense because he knew how to multiply or divide but because he had good judgment, or at least it was thought so.

[Compare this with what the military or Polytech insists on: NCEA English and Maths. The college of hairdressing requires the same, I just learned! I would suggest an eye for style, a friendly way with strangers and certain manual skills would be far more important for a hairdresser! My son lacked NCEA and in addition **failed** the RNZAF (Air Force) entrance exam by missing one question. However his overall grade was still higher than most, so they took a chance and let him into book camp. He just graduated, winning the trophy for academic excellence! We need to help these kinds of organisations and employers look beyond the simplistic academic qualifications to other factors. – Ed.]

(Edited excerpts from the book found at <http://www.johntaylorgatto.com/chapters/1t.htm>.)

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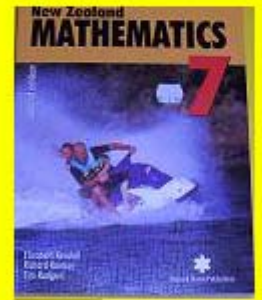
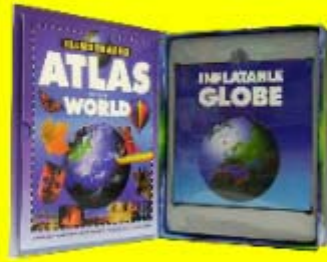
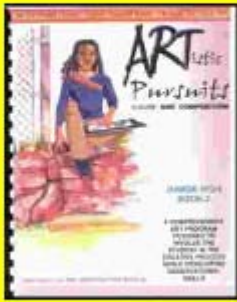
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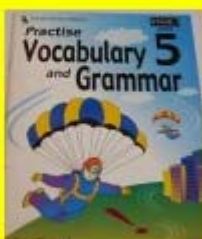
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