

Keystone

The Journal of Christian Home Schoolers

of Australasia

Vol. IV No. 2

July 1998

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

State Schools Weaken Families

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Can One Be TOO Family-Centered?

by Philip H. Lancaster

One of the common objections raised against those of us who are into the kinds of things discussed in this magazine (*Patriarch*) is that we are not balanced. Our emphasis on the family is said to be extreme. We take a valid point (the family is crucial) and carry it too far (the family is everything).

Well, let's confess that we do make it easy for others to assume that we are out of balance. After all, we promote home education, home business, home church, home birth, family ministry, family health, family worship — not to mention courtship and betrothal and family-based welfare. Truly, we rarely meet a hyphenated "family" or "home" word that we don't like!

Having pled guilty to being family-centered, however, let's appeal to anyone who is skeptical to take a more careful look. Though we surely are family-centered, we deny being out of balance. First, we do not say that the family is everything. As we will show below, we recognise that the family is one among a set of crucial institutions through which God is carrying out His purpose in the world. Second, we believe that being family-centered is appropriate — when properly understood — and that such an orientation is especially necessary in our day. Recent generations have so marginalised the significance of the family that only a properly family-centered approach can bring the home back to the place God intends for it to have in our lives.

So what is the proper place of the family in our lives? What is the appropriate sphere of its operation? How does it relate to the other crucial institutions to which we referred? How can we be family-centered without being out of balance?

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KEYSTONE

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

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Editorial



The thing that has really captured my attention of late is the Y2K (Year 2000) dilemma. It is such a simple problem to understand, yet the implications are beyond what anyone can even begin to predict. Even the NZ Government publication I've read on the subject prophesies doom and gloom of significant yet unknown proportions. The power and telephone failures experienced in various parts of Kiwiland of late are gracious little fore-tastes of what is in store less than 18 months away.

The letters I'd like everyone to read are the one next door titled "Help!" and the one from Doreen in the Sultanate of Oman. These both came in some months ago now, so please respond if you can and share them among other home educators you know. If you feel led to reply to this first one, I'd be keen to print it here next time or forward it on your behalf. Haven't we all felt like this at times?

Telecom and Clear both give away cash to legally constituted educational bodies. If your support group is or becomes an incorporated society or a charitable trust, it can receive 5% of your toll bills and the toll bills of people who nominate the support group to receive it. If your support group isn't constituted in this way and it isn't practical for it to do so, please consider nominating Christian Home Schoolers of New Zealand (CHomeS) to receive these funds. It is very easy to do, and doesn't cost you a bean. If you are with Telecom, ring them on 0800 724 665 and say you want to nominate CHomeS under their School Connection programme. If you are with Clear, ring them on 0508 888 800 and say you want to nominate CHomeS under their Friends of the School programme. In either case, CHomeS's phone number is (06) 357-4399. Thanks.

For quite some time now home educators have wanted some kind of network among themselves to really draw us all together and facilitate the flow of information, advice, tips on resources & curriculum, etc., etc. Well, to help that along a bit, an e-mail network has been established. It is all manually done at this stage (by yours truly), as I read every message that is sent in before sending it out to all the other subscribers, under a blind CC. Home educators from both ends of both Islands have linked up and we've had some interesting discussions already on the supervisory allowance, the rules and the Correspondence School. It was set up this way to ensure it is a private network for home educators and not open to just any ol' weirdo surfing the net and because that seemed to be the quickest and easiest way to get a home educators' net up and running.

Happy reading! Yours in Christ,
Craig S. Smith

Letters



Help!

After reading the April TEACH Bulletin I am worried that I am one of "all those others" that Liz Gordon said "ERO has to worry about". I have been home schooling for two and a half years, first with (one type of package curriculum), then (for the last three terms) with (another type of package curriculum) material. But my system is nothing like the ideal creative, flexible programme with happy children participating eagerly. I command a reluctant, foot-dragging brigade requiring constant urging and wheedling to complete the statutory number of pages per subject per day, with extra time served if not completed — and this often means working through to late afternoon or evening! The constant hassling to keep the children up to the mark is demoralising for us all. I am aware of the great potential home educators have but the whole scheme has not turned out as I'd hoped it would. I have a real fear of our exemption being revoked if I don't stick to a recognised programme, coupled with the fear that my method of applying such a programme is so inflexible the children are, in fact, missing out on experiential learning — and this, too, will be cause for ERO's concern.

Do you have any advice for someone so uncreative and unsure of their ability to give a well-balanced home education, and yet, committed to the cause? Even friends who might have been persuaded to support me morally by seeing positive results in the children have been politely reserved, and as I have no other home schoolers I contact with, I feel on my own really. My husband fully supports the idea of home schooling, but is not available to help because of work commitments, and he has no answers for my fears and questions.

Please tell me how you and others manage a home and a family's training (we also have a three year old and an 18 month old) with assurance that you will be blameless before God and the ERO? (Unlike the families you speak of in your Bulletins, I dread getting notification of an impending ERO review, and I didn't send in last year's evaluation of the children's education through fear of not "passing the test".)

I long to see my children develop their talents and personalities within the family, but I am so imperfect, fearful and frustrated carrying the burden, that I am ready to concede "school can do it better".

Please, can you point me in a different direction, or is God leading me out of an error I made in deciding to home school?

An Anonymous Home Educator
Somewhere in New Zealand

Thankful for Home Education

Our son has reached the end of his secondary education. In fact he has been doing some tertiary work this year. Next week he makes his debut in a public music recital. As many of his achievements would have been unlikely had he attended school we are thankful we decided to educate him at home. There are more basic spiritual reasons we are glad we enabled him to pursue his education at home. Thank you for your efforts on behalf of home educators. May God bless your work.

Allen Cookson
Oxford, NZ

Home Schooling in Oman

Being a "lone" home educator from this part of the Middle East, I wonder whether I could share my views (and fears!) with the readers.

When my daughter was just nine months old, we moved into this area of the Middle East which has only Arabic medium schools with English being taught only as a subject. The "American", "British", "Sri-Lankan" and "Indian" schools are all located in the Capital, Muscat, which is about 88 km from where we are stationed. The Indian and Pakistani families here send their children to attend these schools (in a hired van, every day). These children leave their homes at 6 am and face the ordeal of a bus journey up and down mountainous terrain twice in a day and arrive back home around 3 or 4 pm. I was a full-time working mother then and still my husband and I could not even imagine sending our daughter to attend these schools, as the journey to and fro is strenuous.

An old edition of the Christian magazine "Chrisma", lent to me by a friend, has sent me on this "life-line" of Home Education and has given me insight into the values which we as parents have to instill in a child. The "Teaching Home" magazines for which I subscribe from Portland, USA, gave me the confidence I needed to "do all things through Christ who strengthens me", as great portions of wonderful articles are written by home schooling mothers. Teaching tips picked up from these

magazines helped me to guide my daughter through her early years. From that time on our library (of Christian videos, audio cassettes and books), has enlarged considerably. My daughter had now turned five. Being in prayer to know God's will in my life and that of my child, a slip of paper with home schooling information in New Zealand fell out from one of the editions of "The Teaching Home" magazines which I received. We are Sri-Lankans but also permanent resident visa holders of New Zealand, and it was like the hand of God guiding us HIS way.

A letter to Craig brought on a flood of information and so it seemed to me the most natural thing in the world to resign from my job as a GP. I was also quite aware of the lop-sided financial status that we'd be in! It's been a year now that I've been home schooling my daughter Christine. Through all the "dips" and "bumps" of this first year, I still feel that all effort is worthwhile, as many have noticed a great change in Christine — from a timid, reserved child to a confident and polite one who is able to interact with individuals of all ages.

This is desert country and other than the walks, cycling and the trips to the beach in the cooler months of the year, there is nothing else that a child can do here. There are very few expatriates with children in our area. In fact, Christine has three friends, all girls, aged five, four and one! Christine loves to read, sew and dabble in any sort of craft work and she would be delighted if any little 8-year-old girl would be her pen-pal. Among my circle of friends, there is no one who has even remotely heard of home schooling and there is absolutely no one with whom I can relate to! I'd be happy too if any one of you home schoolers would like to correspond with me. Yours in Christ,

Doreen Arasaratnam
PO Box 50, Post Code 120
Quriyat
Sultanate of Oman

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Home Schoolers Did It



**Dave & Glenda,
Heather, Graham and Natalie Aiken
Take on the ERO**

The Strategist

Hello. I'm Dave. We drifted into home schooling for our three children really, after having our wishes for Christian schooling blocked. But having got into it, decided it really was the best option after all! We have been delighted to be able to protect our children from many of the normal pressures which children bear, and allow them to imitate us rather than their next door neighbours.

For our first review by the ERO, I went to the ERO offices by myself with samples of work done and details of the programme we followed. I tried to demonstrate by actual examples what we had done in our schooling. This was satisfactory to the reviewer at the time (several years ago now).

For our most recent review, we were told in no uncertain terms that the reviewer would require to talk to our children. We reluctantly accepted this but decided to put our best foot forward and again collect all the evidence together so that we could show the reviewer that we were schooling to the standards that we had set in our application. The secret was preparation. We were on display so we wanted the impression we gave to be a good one.

It involved quite a bit of thinking about what was the best way to make it clear how we thought we were doing! But once having decided this, the actual review was then something of an anticlimax because we knew exactly what we wanted to say. And we had thought through the answers to the standard questions that we had been told by the ERO we were going to be asked. Instead of having to think on the spot about the answers, to some of the questions we simply pre-empted them and gave the reviewer a sheet of paper which listed out all the activities that we wanted to be noted! Or said we would come to the answer to a particular question later in the course of our presentation. We then went on to emphasise and talk about at the interview the activities and things which we thought we really excelled in — especially where we had evidence to show for it — like live demonstrations! It involved a bit of effort. It was overall a positive experience and definitely worth-while putting in the extra effort!

Whatever we thought of the reviews as such (and there was a bit of an opportunity to express our view on this), we recognised that the reviewer had a job to do and we

wanted to make the job of reviewing us successfully (for us) easier. And in the event we did that. The reviewer was “working” all during the review absorbing the information we were presenting. We really had no need to be worried. At one stage she pointed out that we outnumbered her four to one.

But that's enough of the reviews. Our family will introduce themselves.

Thankful One

Hi! My name is Natalie and I am 7 years old. I am home schooled and I am in third grade (Year 3). I have a sister and a brother: their names are Heather and Graham. Heather is 13 and now goes to “school”. She was home schooled for 6 years then she went to “school” into grade 7 (Year 7, Form 1). Graham is 10 years old. He will be home schooled one more year before he goes to “school”. I thank God for my parents who care for me and love me. We live in Panmure, Auckland. Our house is quite old and quite small. I have to share a room with Heather. We sleep in bunks. Graham has a room of his own. We do home schooling in the dining room at the dining table. Outside we have got a tree hut. It is like a playhouse. We made it out of wood.

The Mad Scientist

My name is Graham and I have never been to school, even though I am 10! The best part of our home schooling is finishing at 12:30 p.m. These are the subjects I do every day: Bible, handwriting, spelling, history, English, science and maths. My favourite subjects are chemistry and science. I have done some interesting (and sometimes disastrous) experiments with my chemistry lab kit. Another favourite subject is art. I go to my sister's school (Carey College) and join in their lesson. I go there to get expert tuition, which I have not found anywhere else. We do gym with other home schoolers once a week, but soccer is my favourite sport. Sometimes we go on school trips.

Self Employed

Hello, my name is Heather and I used to be home schooled. We used to live in Pakuranga but we moved from there to Panmure so I can walk to school. I go to Carey College. It is a small, largely unheard of school, but I think it is the best place apart from home schooling! I am in the secondary class now, and I really enjoy it. I was a little bit nervous before I started school for I did not know most of the other children in my class. It is not like that now I can tell you! Before we moved, I was home schooled and I enjoyed this a lot.

My brother, sister and I run a business of our own — SENSATIONAL STICKERS AND STUFF. We found three very attractive, useful, fun products that other home schoolers were not able to get access to. They are Stickers, Wallcharts and Achievement Awards and thought this would be a good thing for everyone.

The dot Stickers come in packs of 100. There are three

different themes to choose from, with about five variations within the pack. The Wallcharts to put the Stickers on have three different themes (to match the Stickers) and consist of five different charts each with space to take 20 Stickers and the person's name. The Achievement Awards are like prize cards for encouraging and congratulating good work. There are three different Achievement Awards to choose from, with two Awards in each pack.

We use them for the club my mother runs, to keep a record of the children's attendance and correct answers to questions. When the charts are filled up with Stickers Mum awards the children an Achievement Award. My mother also uses them for motivating Graham and Natalie to do their share of the housework quickly and efficiently, and for Natalie's Spelling and Tables.

Mum helped us to get started by setting up the accounts and writing all the forms we needed. Together we drew up the Procedures. After we had studied them, Mum gave us Exams that required a 100% pass mark before we could begin the business.

This has benefited both the home schoolers who buy from us and also ourselves, for we have learnt many different aspects of buying, selling and business running. I have found that being manager of a business of my own has shown me what a great amount of effort and devotion it takes to run anything properly. I have also learnt the skills of selling a product. One other minor benefit we gain is the small pay which we get from the business. My pay goes straight back into the business. I am looking forward to the day when I can keep my pay and use it for other things!

Executing the Strategy

My name is Glenda, and I'm Mother (with all my multi-roles). When I heard of the ERO's intention to reinstate reviews, I was petrified, but comforted by the (naïve) thought that they'd run out of money long before they would ever get to us. Not so. The phone call came, requesting a review date. I made no comment but handed them directly to my husband, Dave. So I had to get used to the idea that a review was now to become a reality — in three weeks!

Our first point Dave made was that the review was not to take place in our home, but at a neutral venue, acceptable to both parties. We had decided long ago on this point — that to submit to a review was bad enough, but to have Review Officers into our home was neither necessary nor desirable. Our little church building was therefore selected as a suitable venue as we were able to rearrange the furniture to suit our purposes.

Having accepted the inevitability of the forthcoming review, I began to think how I would approach it. The simplest thing would be to do a

“show and tell” presentation with a couple of little live “items” for good measure. I placed several banana boxes on the lounge floor and began to place in them any items of art and craft, photos of trips, models, activities, etc., certificates from clubs, etc., as the days went by. The day before the review, we brought in several more banana boxes and filled them with text books we use, exercise books, resource materials (science kit, globe, encyclopaedia, hundreds board, cardboard clock, etc.), science experiments in progress, etc., etc. On the computer I made “subject” signs, as we study in “subjects”, and I intended to set out our display in “subjects”.

Other items we provided for the reviewer were, for each child: a list of subjects being studied; clubs and groups they were involved with; and school trips we'd done in the past year; a copy of a typical week's “timetable”, showing how we spent our “school” time; a copy of the original exemption application.

Review Day arrived. Job number one was “Cooking” — Natalie made meringues, and Graham scones. Job number two: take our boxes to the church and set up the display. I set up the room with three “circles” of chairs — one each for the children and one for me, the teacher. We put up the “signs” and placed the books, resources and examples under each, then went home for a leisurely and relaxed lunch.

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After lunch it was back to the church to meet up with Dave and the reviewer. We sat her down and fed her juice, scones and meringues, while Natalie and Graham played a recorder piece together. Graham then read to her, but Natalie came over all shy. I led the reviewer around Natalie's display of work, explaining what we'd been doing. Natalie followed behind to fill in the bits I missed.

As the reviewer was suitably impressed, we moved on to Graham's display which was about three times as large (having more subjects, more resources, etc.)

By the time she had seen his work, hobbies and interests, she hardly seemed able to take in my "area" — planning sheets, records I'd kept (my diary), resources I'm planning to use next. So we handed her over to Dave to finish off the review, while the children and I began packing things back in their boxes to take home. And so ended the "review".

Learning Disabled



Before Reading Begins

by Tom and Sherry Bushnell

Due to the emphasis on education in our country, reading has the highest priority in government schools. Never mind if a young adult can do anything with his hands.....can they read????!

Sadly, the government schools are failing on all accounts in thousands of children. They graduate from high school, and neither can they read, write or work with their hands.

Perhaps this has something to do with public education's priorities being out of whack. Consistent failure always has its roots in a lack of Biblical priorities.

When we prioritise our children's education, are we emulating government ideals for our little blessings? Do we look at the abilities God has given them and choose skills and subjects that honour God in their lives?

Although reading and writing are important and do open up a "whole world of education" for children, some children spend their entire childhood and early adulthood learning to read, and never attain a level to read the Bible (the best reason for learning to read). They could have spent this cherished time memorizing many simple Scriptures, implanting God's Word in their hearts.

Speaking as parents, our goals for our children must parallel their abilities. Observation is key. As our children learn and grow, their capabilities become apparent or *not apparent*.

Signs of Reading Readiness

These signs do not include speech, as many children that cannot speak or verbalize their thoughts can still learn to read.

- 1 Has memorized colours and can tell them apart.
- 2 Has memorized shapes and can tell them apart.
- 3 Knows what a good many objects are in his world. This is for reading comprehension. What good is it for a child to read the word "dog" if he doesn't know what one is?
- 4 Can understand opposites such as up-down, big-small, hot-cold, etc.
- 5 Can identify many, many objects in the picture form.

How Much Writing is Necessary for Reading?

Our answer is none. If a child's fine and gross motor skills hold them back from making legible letters, yet

woman leaves home for college there should be compelling reasons for her doing so.

Some Christian colleges will make an appeal that by sending your children to their school, they will find a Christian spouse. This would be good if the college is providing oversight. There was a time in American history when most colleges were all men's schools or all women's schools. The situation now is that there are co-ed dorms and live-in situations.

6. *What if my son or daughter disagrees with the principles of this booklet? Suppose they threaten to leave home?*

Answer: These Biblical principles must be taught with patience and love. Because of the diabolical influence of modern dating ideas the children and parents of this generation will be the "shock troops". The parent needs to point out that he is not asking his children to commit a sin and will even need to reassure himself of this too. It takes time to build a Biblical culture.

No parent should allow his children to blackmail him to submit to their own ideas. The father should not allow his daughter to charm him to compromise. The father must not allow his son to get away with appeals to pity (e.g., "I'll never get married under this system!") On the other hand, instruction should be provided from the Bible. This should start at earlier years.

If the young man or woman leave home in order to date, it must be remembered that this is a self-willed act. The parent should have a good conscience toward

God. Parents must never love their children more than they love God. They will have to pray for their children and for themselves too if they are filled with bitterness.

If their children have rejected their godly rule, they should pray that the children might see the light. They should not become harsh toward their children. Upon seeing them, from time to time they will need to resurrect this issue and ask them to defend their actions Biblically.

Conclusion

We have approached our subject from a Biblical view. This will disappoint those who start with American culture and force this culture onto the Bible. If the Bible says something that disproves a cultural practice, then the Bible must be obeyed and the practice rejected. Certainly, there are gray areas where the specifics of courtship need to be worked out. There are also cultural distinctives that must be respected. Also, the "system" that we have presented is a broad one, as the individual details will have to be determined by each family. Yet, having said that it is a "broad one" does not invalidate the clear parameters that are laid down in the Word of God.

Is this system an infallible one? Will it guarantee a marriage "made in heaven" that will last until doomsday? This system is designed to increase godly communication and fellowship, to prepare the two for a marriage that will withstand the hurricanes of life, and to reduce, significantly, a marriage that may self-destruct. It is a dramatically wiser approach. Yet, it cannot infallibly guarantee protection against "the sin that does so easily beset us."

In conclusion, we want to re-emphasize that these Biblical parameters need to be *adopted by churches and schools*, as the courtship laws and practices of the nation will never be changed, unless the church herself develops a specifically Biblical culture. Can we expect the adulterous culture in which we live to change when the church herself has imbibed dating ideas that are founded on lust instead of godliness?

Sir Julian Huxley's book on humanism is actually entitled, *Religion Without Revelation*. The enemy doesn't mind religion or religious people....as long as he can get us to replace the thoughts of God with our own thoughts his purposes are served.

Puzzle



Each group of letters below is a perfect word — except that three or four O's have been left out. Just fill them in and see how many words you can complete correctly. Example: given the letters cttnwd, you can fill in four O's and get the word cottonwood.

- | | | |
|-----------|----------------------|------------|
| 1. Vd | 9. Ratri | 15. Rcc |
| 2. Snrus | 10. Crrbratr | 16. Frenn |
| 3. Ffsht | 11. Scilgy | 17. Lng |
| 4. Ctrn | 12. Dubln | 18. Ftlse |
| 5. Prtcl | 13. Bh | 19. Rthdx |
| 6. Lkut | 14. Durus | 20. Hmlgus |
| 7. Mntnus | | |
| 8. Strern | (Answers on page 20) | |

The Travelling Horsefly

Two cyclists approach each other on a straight road, pedalling at 15 kilometres an hour. When they are 30 kilometres apart a horsefly alights on one bicycle, then dashes off to the other. It shuttles back and forth between the two at 20 kilometres an hour until the riders meet. How far has it travelled?

(Answer on page 20)

Tough Questions People Throw Your Way

by Craig Smith



Will you PLEASE take my Johnny in and school him along with your own?

A home schooling situation to watch out for is teaching someone else's children. You may foster a stranger's child long-term; you may look after a relative's child long-term; you may adopt a child; you may home school another home schooler's child(ren) on a casual or regular basis in certain subjects. As commendable as these actions are, they will cause definite drawbacks to your home school that must be soberly considered before making this kind of arrangement an everyday lifestyle.

One of the major advantages of home schooling one's own children is the tutoring aspect, the one-to-one time with each child. This is immediately compromised and possibly sacrificed altogether when teaching foster children at home. Why is this? There is so much you have to learn about this foster student, how he thinks, his learning style, his attention span, his current understanding of every topic under study, his emotional and mental and intellectual maturity levels and abilities, his learning gaps, etc., etc. These are things you often know or have observed and internalised in your own children without, it would seem, any special effort to do so. (Incidentally, it is this aspect of parenting, the depth of understanding of one's own children, which makes parents so well qualified to teach their own children in the first place.) In addition, foster children often have their own set of problems arising from the reasons leading to their need to be fostered.

You now have to spend extra time with him trying to figure all these things out. And it takes time for him to learn how to fit into your scheme of things, which may prove impossible to do in the end because of his personal makeup and the totally new set of group dynamics now at work within your family.

However, homeschooling a foster child is an unparalleled opportunity to influence, love, nurture, train and discipline another life for the sake of the Gospel and the Glory of our God and Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

This writer was home schooling his four children when our family became co-guardians and custodians of an 8-year-old boy. This boy, who we shall call Sam, had been to public schools until we got him. His attention span was 30-45 seconds. My children had attention spans of 60-90 minutes. We would often sit and draw or

play with leggo, while I read science or history or geography to the group, stopping frequently to discuss words & concepts and to ask questions or follow tangents. Sam found this intolerable at first.

When he first arrived I gave Sam a page of simple addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division problems as he told me he was doing all of these at school. He finished this assignment in record time. Upon examination it was found that all the answers were wrong. I pointed this out and he was unable, it seemed, to grasp what I was saying. In fact, he just became frustrated and declared, "I don't understand," as he withdrew into a foul mood, arms crossed, head down, brows knitted tightly together. It turned out that he was accustomed to filling in the blanks, but had no idea that sometimes the red marks alongside the returned assignment meant the answer was wrong. He had no understanding of place values, no idea of how to add and carry or subtract and borrow. To add $24 + 35$ he would add $2 + 4 + 3 + 5$ and wonder what was wrong with his answer of 14. Even after working with him for 8 months, it was simply too taxing on his concentration and logic to arrange maths skills in a logical sequence to figure how much change he should get after buying several items. He had a twisted self-image, occasionally saying he was no good. His mental, intellectual and emotional levels were more like my 5-year-old, yet he was older by a few months than my own 8-year-old son. When an officer from the Education Review Office in Wanganui came to review our home education, she was surprised to learn that Sam was 8, as she had decided he was 6 or less after observing all of the children for 30 minutes or so at close quarters. We therefore assigned him a place between our 5- and 8-year-olds in the family pecking order. He never accepted that and began to devise ways to victimise our 8-year-old, whose place in the pecking order Sam was determined to usurp.

To effectively teach him anything at all required my full attention. I was reduced to giving assignments to my other children and hoping they could cope on their own. They resented this straight away as it was both robbing them of tutoring time and interrupting the normally quick flow of their own learning curves. Although we had always thought that our home school was pretty relaxed and casual, we discovered that to this product of the state schools, it was quite intense, unbearably so in fact. To accommodate this new addition, our whole home education process had to be both radically modified and slowed down. Now I know for sure what an impossible job school teachers face.

We considered sending Sam to school while continuing to home school our own. We decided that was unacceptable. It would make Sam seem to be a second class citizen in our family, make us look like we were not that convinced about home schooling, and then most of all it would just import straight into our home some of the problems of the state schools, problems we were determined our children would not have to endure.

Sam lives elsewhere now. I loved the challenge he

presented and the progress we made. I believe we helped him form a Biblical self image to replace the hopeless one he had. We were with him when he prayed to the Lord for forgiveness and salvation. He made so many very big changes to his behaviour, that we find it amazing as we look back over the time. His attitudes were much more difficult to change; in particular, we were unable to shift his attitude of resentment to his place in the pecking order. Our own children's attitude hardened toward him as he victimised one in particular, and as his simply being there so completely changed our family's group dynamics. We continued to foster children, pre-schoolers for short-terms, and have since adopted two full siblings through the contacts made while fostering. Being adopted, these two could not be any more a real part of our family, although they are without question wired up differently than our natural offspring. But I would never try to homeschool again any foster child older than my youngest.

Taking on the job of home schooling a foster child is one thing, but how about home schooling the child of a friend or neighbour? Some of the possible problems are the same. In addition it may well cause your own home school to become more like the classroom you wanted your child to avoid in the first place. Larger numbers, less time for personal tutoring, children with different backgrounds pose all sorts of problems for an otherwise homogeneous and more-or-less harmonious family who understand each other and know how to

work together. If these new children have been to public schools, then there will be all those negative aspects which have to be weeded out, which may or may not be entirely possible.

A few years ago, just after Sam had left us, I attended the Christian Home Educators of California's annual conference at the Disneyland Hotel in Los Angeles. There were 4,000 conferees (parents only!), and each elective hour had 15 different workshops plus six more that were demonstration workshops of commercial resource people. I attended one workshop about home schooling other people's children, but all they covered was taking in friends or neighbours for pay. They had ALL the typical problems.....chewing gum stuck under their dining table, kids carving their initials into their dining room chairs, lesson plans and marking every night....just like a school classroom! One woman there asked about home educating foster children. Nobody knew anything. So up went my hand, and suddenly all chairs were turned around and we had another workshop in progress. The other workshop attendees wanted to come to grips with really influencing a child who needed foster care, not with how to run a classroom. There is a place for serving others by tutoring their children, and I reckon we will need to see a lot more of it as the state system continues to fall apart. Just be aware of what any such service for others does to the prospects of your own children's educational potential.

For about a year, for only one morning a week, I tutored mine plus two like-minded, like-standard children of close Christian friends. These sessions were a real pleasure. Being all close and alike in background and expectations made the teaching a real joy and a nice variation for all concerned. But I couldn't see us doing that any more than one morning a week, otherwise my own programme with my own children would have been compromised. If I were paid for teaching others, that would be a whole different story, as then I would be a de facto professional rather than a volunteer amateur. But even then I would still have to determine whether my objectives in home schooling my children were being served or severed by home schooling these others.

My advice would be to know for certain what your own personal objectives are for home schooling your own children. You must ask whether taking on another home schooler, either a foster child or the child of a friend, will help or hinder the fulfilment of those objectives. Be tough, be convinced of your calling before God, and be unafraid to say "No" to even the tear-jerking requests from both foster agencies or close friends.

Keystroke

Geosafari Multimedia Game



Review by Phil Astley

This CD-based quiz (available for Windows 3.1 / Win-OS/2 or Mac) offers three sections - Geography, History and Science. It comes with a set of paper-based activities for each area.

You could use this program to review an area you have been studying, or study each area and take the quiz. Here, we just jumped in and took the quiz. This means we learned many right answers by first giving wrong answers. In this context, we had to retake each quiz, as you only get a medal if you get a perfect score. Once you have a medal for each game in one of the three areas, you then get a trophy.

You can also play a super challenge - but I suggest you wait until you have all three trophies first - the questions in super challenge are randomly selected from any of the questions. You can also replay areas - the person with the current fastest time in each area gets a red ribbon.

Multiple players can play as individuals or teams - but these scores are not recorded. Two players can also compete against each other - each player has their own key - the first one to press it gets to answer the question - but if they get it wrong, they lose three points.

We didn't have time to get through all of the areas - but I'm not sure we would bother. The science areas are relatively standard - but I'm not sure too many Kiwis want to learn the US Presidents, The First Americans, USA States (1 & 2), or USA Capitals (1 & 2). Other sections like "Who Said That?" and several others all tend, not unexpectedly, to have a high proportion of US-based content.

Our children certainly found it challenging, and they enjoyed the way the program told them what to do (in an American accent). My wife and I found it a little overbearing. When I had to leave the program to do something else, it called me several times - but then what do we know - we're only adults. Our children certainly enjoyed it.

Some Science Sites

<http://www.nasa.gov/>

NASA home page. The pioneers in the use of Internet for education are still out there. This is a massive compendium of knowledge presented really well for all levels. The site is heavily loaded towards astronomy but some excellent sections of flight, weather, materials and the NASA spin offs that have resulted from 25 years of research. A great site with daily updates, meet the astronauts etc. etc. A top ten site.

<http://www.newscientist.com>

The home page for new scientist. This has to be the best overall science page on the web offering information from the magazine as well as daily news articles, research news, as well as lots of excellent science material at an excellent level for both senior students and teachers. You will have to subscribe to this page but that is free and well worth the effort.

<http://actein.edu.au/Questacon/index.html>

Australian Science Centres resources. This is an excellent site with some really good science for the primary age science student. Join in with the solar car challenge, head off to the furthest reaches of space or get into the hands on (virtual hands only here) activities. This site featured in the top 100 best sites recently anywhere in the world and we agree. A top ten site from Australia.

http://sirius.chch.planet.co.nz/sci_alive/

Science Alive is the Science and Technology Centre based in Christchurch New Zealand. This is an excellent page and makes it into the top ten sites. It has good material available, it has been excellently constructed and looks good fun. If you are in Christchurch or its surrounds this is essential viewing and even if you are not then there are some excellent ideas for some good science.

<http://www.fourmilab.ch/earthview/vplanet.html>

Earth viewer in real time. So, you think as a teacher you understand the basics such as night and day? One look at this home page and I had to rethink what I had been teaching all those years. This is a top ten page. Download a view of the earth and see what the shape of the day night shadow looks like and realise that it changes through the year as the earth's tilt changes. This is great science. You can view the earth from the sun or the moon, look at up-to-the-moment weather satellite information.

http://chico.rice.edu/armadillo/Simulations/Mars_Project/mars.html

The Mars Project. This is a simulation of a journey to Mars. Considering the lack of success with the 96 American and Russian probes this may be the best way to see what is going on, on Mars. This is very large/complex site is well put together and very thorough. E Mail is used to contact NASA experts on Mars (they live on earth). You can check out other schools and what they did for previous simulations. You will need to register and check the next date for simulations as they are not running continuously. An excellent project for the whole class or as an extension for the astronomy or science club.

<http://www.fisheredu.com/>

Don't be put off by the fact that its prime purpose is to sell test tubes to teachers, this very well presented site contains over 5000 links to other Internet sites of interest to teachers and students.

<http://stripe.colorado.edu/~kgshtml/Home.html>

Kids as Global Scientists. There are a range of activities here for students that allow them to play the role of a scientist. Your school can become a KGS school and get involved with these activities. Most of the activities are climate orientated. This allows students to work on a global project and see results.

<http://quest.arc.nasa.gov/interactive/livefrom.html>
"Sharing NASA" project site. Allows students to share in the excitement of NASA's authentic scientific and engineering pursuits like flying the shuttle, spacecraft explorations of distant planets, and space-based life sciences research.

<http://kendaco.telebyte.com/billband/Possibilities.html>

Possibilities : Integrating the Internet into Science. This is a must see site for all science teachers at any level. Internet sites are organised according to the types of activities that are offered at each site. This is a good site to make us aware of what types of activities can be done using the Internet in science.

English As She Is Spelled

I have a spelling chequer
It came with my pea sea
It plainly marques four my revue
Miss steaks eye cannot sea.

When eye strike a quay, right a word
I weight four it two say
Weather eye am wrong oar wright
It shows me strait aweigh.

As soon as a mist ache is maid
It nose bee fore two late
And eye can put the error rite
Its rarely, rarely grate.

I've run this poem threw it
I'm shore your pleased two no
Its letter perfect in it's weigh
My chequer tolled me sew.

Sauce unknown

Over a Cuppa



English Official

The European Union commissioners have announced that agreement has been reached to adopt English as the preferred language for European communications, rather than German, which was the other possibility.

As part of the negotiations, Her Majesty's Government conceded that English spelling had some room for improvement and has accepted a five-year phased plan for what will be known as EuroEnglish (Euro for short).

In the first year, "s" will be used instead of the soft "c". Certainly, sivil servants will resieve this news with joy. Also the hard "c" will be replaced with "k". Not only will this klear up konfusion, but typewriters kan have one less letter.

There will be growing publik enthusiasm in the sekond year, when the troublesome "ph" will be replaced by "f". This will make words like "fotograf" 20 percent shorter.

In the third year, publik akzeptanse of the new spelling kan be expekted to reach the stage where more komplikated changes are possible. Governments will enkorage the removal of double letters, which have always ben a deterrent to akurate speling. Also al wil agre that the horrible mes of silent "e"s in the languag is disgrasful, and they would go.

By the forth year, peopl wil be reseptiv to steps such as replasing "th" by "z" and "w" by "v".

During ze fifz year, ze unesesary "o" kan be dropd from ze vords kontaining "ou", and similar changes vud of kors be aplid to ozer kombinations of leters. After zis fifz year, ve vil hav a reli sensibl riten styl. Zer vil be no mor trubls or difikultis and evrivun vil find it ezi tu understand ech ozer. Ze drem vil finali kum tru !

How One Dad Protected His Daughter's Emotions

(The following true story, written by the father about events that took place in New Zealand in 1993, has only had the names changed.)

He was a nice guy, young Daniel. About 17 years old, clean cut, quiet and respectful, Daniel had met my daughter Sally at the weekly Air Training Corp meetings she had just begun attending. At 13 years of age she was tall and attractive. They both liked the discipline and orderliness of ATC, especially the marching drill. In fact, Daniel would come over to our place -- quite a lot, actually -- and they would march up and down the footpath in unison, he giving the odd tip as to form.

Both my wife and I read the same signs at the same time. It was clear that Daniel was attracted to more than Sally's availability to participate in drill. And Sally's emotions were being stirred up.

I took her out for a drive and a walk in the gardens and a father-daughter chat. But she was totally ill-at-ease and didn't want to hear about the chemistry between a man and a woman. Although a teenager, Sally had never been to school since we taught her at home ourselves. She had, therefore, not been exposed to the constant emphasis on boy-girl relationships and romances in both the written and unwritten curricula of today's schools. Neither do we own a television. In addition, we had taught her that much information and knowledge carries its own burden of responsibility, and that there was much in this area that she didn't need to know until she was ready for courtship and marriage. During our "chat" it was clear that she had no desire to find out about where attraction of a man for a woman leads. All the same, she enjoyed the attention Daniel paid to her.

OK. So it would have to be a man-to-man talk. I spent some time writing out and polishing what ended up as a four-page explanation of the personal backgrounds of my wife and I, our Christian commitment to Biblical standards in the area of inter-personal relationships, and my decision, as Sally's father, as to what form this relationship between Daniel and my daughter must now take.

I presented this document to Daniel over a milkshake in town while I explained its contents and our convictions. I know what it is to be a 17-year-old male. I know very well what effects are wrought on a guy by regular contact with an attractive and friendly female. It leads down a road both my wife and I had unthinkingly travelled many times in our own youths. We were convinced and determined it was a road that our children should avoid at all costs.

Daniel took things well. He and Sally could see each other ONLY at ATC activities. Sally couldn't understand what was going on. But she knew from our accurate descriptions of her own emotional swings that WE knew what was going on. "You'll have to trust me on this one," I had told her, and she was willing to do so.

Our concern had been the growing emotional attachment and involvement. By intervening as we did, we seem to have cut the problems off at the pass, as was our aim, because neither party suffered any of those heart-break blues of breaking-up so many accept as part of life. I had been through that kind of stuff as a youth and knew it not only messed up your mind, it also left emotional scars and left you hankering for more... next time. I don't think I could sit back and watch that kind of thing happen to any child of mine while claiming to be a responsible, caring parent. No, I am more hands-on than that.

What's the Story with Educational Vouchers?

by David Chilton

Educational vouchers will result in nothing less than the functional destruction of private and Christian schools... (not to mention the home schools who also accept them). In fact, such a system was responsible for the demise of Christian schools in Great Britain. Remember this iron rule: what the state finances, the state regulates. No exceptions. (This is definitely true in the USA. New Zealand seems to have a different political history and set of legal precedents which do not make this necessarily so. Having said that, politicians have been known to change, and the present political climate would indicate a trend of decreasing funding yet increasing control via manipulation of those receiving the funding. — Ed.)

The Only Solution

Roy Maynard's impassioned plea for vouchers in a recent *World* magazine cover story (August 17-24), "Pro-Choice (on Education)", cleverly ignores the fact that any possible voucher plan requires the government to confiscate more tax dollars from citizens in order to fund a "Christian" education. (That is, since the government is now paying all the costs of all the private schools, it will have to extract more tax dollars from you and me than it did when it was not totally funding all the private schools -- Ed.) Even in the Name of Christ, theft is still theft. Oppressive taxation is a great evil. But it will never be abolished by a tax rebellion. The only way to rid ourselves of an unjust tax burden is what economist Hans Sennholz calls a "benefits rebellion" -- when the American people develop the moral character to "Just Say No" to government handouts.

Taxation will stop when everybody refuses to be bribed. Do you want real choice in education? Simply abolish public schools, and education taxes along with them. Why make the state the middleman? Just let parents have complete freedom about where to educate their children, and leave them alone. Offer parents a clear alternative. If they want, they may enrol Dick and Jane in a secular humanist school. The kids might not learn how to read and write, but they'll sure find out all there is to know about condoms. Or the parents may choose a traditional Christian school with strong disciplinary standards, or a Jewish or Muslim school. Or they may opt out of the system altogether and teach their children at home. In any event, this would offer a true choice in education -- a choice, incidentally, that the political and educational establishments will fight tooth and claw to prevent you from getting. It'll never happen. So let's stop dreaming about the government suddenly turning benevolent and get back to reality. If there must be a voucher system, let's make sure it applies only to public schools! That way, parents can have their children indoctrinated at the state institution of their choice.

(Continued from page 1)

To begin to answer these questions we need to recognise the place of the family in God's order. And to properly understand that place, we have to see the family in its relationship to two other institutions, the church and the state.

God has created three covenantal institutions, three groupings of people through which He works out His plans for history: the family, the church and the state (i. e., civil government). These institutions share some common characteristics though they differ significantly from one another. Each has real authority given by God and leaders who are accountable to God. Each experiences God's blessings or curses based on their obedience to His revealed will. Each has the God-given responsibility to carry out sanctions upon its members, represented in three tools of punishment: the rod for the family, excommunication for the church, and capital punishment for the state. Each has a crucial role in giving shape to life in this world. Christians are part of all three institutions and must understand how to relate to each, and they should learn the proper relationship to each of the institutions to the others.

The Family is Foundational

We do believe that the family is the foundational institution, although as we said, we do not believe the family is everything. But it is a lot!

What we mean, first, is that the family has the broadest jurisdiction, by far, of the three. There is more of life that rightly falls under the authority of the family than under that of the other two institutions combined. In God's order the family is responsible for birth, for the education and raising of children, for physical provision, for health and welfare, for business, for inheritance, for social relationships, for marriage, for death and burial. From the beginning of life to its end, and for most of what lies between, God has given the family control of most of what is vital for life in this world. Truly the family is the most significant from the standpoint of the scope of its functions and the reach of its authority.

Second, as a consequence of its extensive jurisdiction the family has the greatest influence of the three institutions. It is the home that shapes the persons who give shape to the church and the state. The family is the training ground for churchmen and statesmen. Church and state can only recruit their members and leaders from the homes that make up a society. Men, as heads of homes, represent their families in the conduct of the affairs of the church and the state (at least that's the plan). Someone has said that "the home rules the nation," and it is true. It is not that the family has authority over church and state (we do not believe in a familism or tribalism that nullifies the authority of church and state). But the family does shape the society from the grassroots. The sheer pervasiveness of the family and its day to day ability to mold people makes it the most important shaper of society. God designed things this way; that's why He has always chosen to work His grace and salvation through families (Genesis 17:7, Deuteronomy 7:9, Acts 16:31).

Third, the family is foundational because it is the source of funding for the other two institutions. God has ordained that the church receive its support from the tithes which families are commanded to bring into "the storehouse" of the church (Malachi 3:10, Matthew 23:23). Similarly, families are obligated to pay taxes to civil authorities so that the latter can carry on their necessary functions (Romans 13:6-7). Without the work and productivity of hardworking families there would be no means of supply for the vital work of the other covenantal institutions.

So the family has a truly foundational role to play in any society. It has the greatest practical control over the shape of life in this world. For this reason it is necessary to be family-centered. If so much of life is under the dominion of the home, then that will necessarily be where we devote most of our time and energy.

A major problem of our contemporary society is that so many functions belonging to the family

have been given over to other institutions: education to schools, Christian nurture and discipleship to the church, welfare and financial security to federal and state governments, health care to doctors and hospitals. Families need to get back to God's plan for the home by reclaiming sovereignty over all these areas. If ever a generation needed to hear the admonition to be family-centered it is ours, because that is the way God meant it to be.

The Family Is Subordinate

God always arranges things so wisely! Having given so much influence to families He tempers that influence by placing families under authority. The family is subordinate to both the church and the state. The home may rule the nation and the church in terms of influence, but the home is ruled by these other authorities in terms of jurisdiction.

Though the church and state have smaller legitimate spheres of authority than the family they do have real authority, and that includes authority over individuals and families. God has given the church jurisdiction over the proclamation of His Word and over the administration of Christ's ordinances (baptism and the Lord's Supper). The church also has jurisdiction over the lives of its members in matters of doctrine and morals. A man who is the unquestioned authority in his own home is subject to the oversight of the church through its elders and can be disciplined by means of admonition, private or public rebuke, and even excommunication (being cast out of the church and turned over to Satan; Matthew 18:17-18; I Corinthians 5: 5, 13). A woman can bring her husband before the church elders if he refuses to perform his duty to provide for the family or if he misuses his authority by physically abusing his wife and children. The church has real authority over its members.

Likewise God has given the state the task of administering justice and punishing evildoers, and with that job He has given rulers the authority to force people to stop doing wrong (Romans 13:3-4, I Peter 2:13-14). Dad may rule his home, but if he's caught doing 70 in a 55mph zone he'll pay the fine or go to jail. And if a man takes another man's life, in a godly nation he will be executed. We find a picture of God's intended plan for the state in I Timothy 2:1-2, where Paul calls upon Christians to pray for those in authority over them so that they can live quiet, godly lives. The job of civil government is to deal with the bad people so the rest can live life to the full for the glory of God. The state must have authority over individuals and families so that families can live in peace and thus be able to fulfill the myriad tasks God has given them.

Families and their members are subject to the respective authorities of church and state, but families have no authority over the latter. Jurisdiction is a one way street. (We should also note that God has not given the church or the state any authority over each other. They are parallel institutions, each answerable to God (Romans 13:4, Hebrews 13:17). When we follow

God's order we have vigorous and influential families operating under the real but limited jurisdictions of the church and the state.

The Church Is the Defining Institution in This Age

Some of you may be wondering by now if we are giving short shrift to the church. After all, the church is the Body of Christ, the agency for the advancement of the Gospel in this age. Yes, actually we have not as yet given full due to the church, but that does not change the truth of what we have said so far. Up to this point we have been speaking of the relative weight of the covenantal institutions in terms of practical and jurisdictional control. And we stand by the conclusions we have reached thus far.

But we need to say more. To fully understand God's work in His world we have to look beyond the sociology of primary institutions. Things are not always what they seem in this age. For example, to look at the church today one might conclude that it is a pretty ineffective power when viewed alongside the awesome and growing power of the state. And that conclusion would be right....and wrong.

The church in its institutional manifestation certainly is weak when compared to the expanding and increasingly tyrannical state in many parts of the world, including our own. But such a view is an exercise in comparing apples and oranges. The church never should wield the kind of power that civil government wields because the nature of their respective power differs. God has given the state the use of force, raw physical force. The police can lock you up and judges can sentence you to death.

However, the church has no such power. It has a greater power! It has the power to bind and to loose, to welcome into the community of the redeemed or to cast out into Satan's domain. It has power projected into eternity! (Matthew 16:19, 18:18). The church exercises its awesome power through the proclamation of God's Word in the energy of the Spirit of God. It is a power that reaches and changes the heart, and by changing the heart can change the world...and eternity. The worst the state can do is kill you (Matthew 10:28). In the church God is exercising a force that exceeds the other power on earth.

So while the church as an institution in this world has a comparatively small jurisdiction in terms of day to day life, it is actually the defining institution of history! Moreover, the church is the only one of the three covenantal institutions that will outlast this world. Both family and state are merely temporal institutions; they will end with the passing of this present world (cf. Luke 20:35, Romans 7:2, Job 12:23). Further, a man's response to the message of the Gospel determines his relationship henceforth to his family and to civil rulers. Jesus said, "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me," (Matthew 10:37) and "from

now on five members in one household will be divided, three against two, and two against three" (Luke 12:52). The loyalties that the church and its message create are superior to any other loyalties, including those of family. If forced to choose, you had better choose Christ and His church over your family!

Striking the Balance

So do we have to modify our family-centered vision in light of these truths? Does the defining role of the church in our lives mean that we should be church-centered rather than family-centered? That would seem logical in light of what we have just seen.

To correctly answer our question we need to pause and ask another question. What is the church exactly? Is it a building? Of course not. Is it a professional staff of people operating religious activities? We know it's not. The church is the people who make it up, the baptized in Christ who gather around the Lord's Table, who submit to one another and to godly leadership under the authority of Christ, who conform their lives to God's Word. The church is God's people, and the local church is made up of..... families! (Or partial families if the gospel has brought division in a home.)

You see, apart from the initial matter of choosing for or against Christ, we ought not set church and family over against one another, as if we must center our lives on one or the other. The fact is that the best way to be church-centered is to be family-centered — because the Christian family is the first form of the church in the world. Pastor B.M. Palmer stated it this way over 120 years ago (*The Family in its Civil and Churchly Aspects*):

Each pious household is a separate fiber of those roots by which the Church of the living God takes hold upon the earth, and preserves its existence in a sinful world.

The church has no manifestation on the earth except through the people who make it up, and those people are grouped into families. The church is not the family, and the family is not the church, but there is such a symbiotic relationship between the two that we can scarcely speak of one without the other. Without strong families, the church cannot be strong. So by being properly family-centered we are making our most effective effort to strengthen the church of Christ. Our choice is not either the church or the family; we must choose *both* the church *and* the family.

We are anxious to be understood clearly. Those of us who are family-centered know that the Gospel and the church define everything else in this age. We know that we must choose Christ over family. We know that we must not neglect the local church while making the excuse that our family is more important. We know that we owe the church our loyalty, our time, and our tithes. Anything less is sub-Christian.


Happily, though, we don't need to neglect our families or our church. They fit hand in glove; they are perfectly harmonious. The church shapes families through the gospel, the teaching of the Word, and discipleship. These families in turn give shape to the church. (The church of the New Testament is harmonious with family-centered living, though the church in the form it has taken today is not necessarily so. But then that's why we promote church renewal as well as family renewal!)

So, getting back to the point at which we began, we deny the suggestion that we are guilty of making the family everything to the neglect of other Christian duties. Our intention is to strike the proper biblical balance, though we are still learning to live up to our own ideals and undoubtedly fail in many details.

We realise, however, that since we emphasize such a seemingly radical agenda of home-this and family-that, we may seem to be imbalanced. Our appeal would be simply that any who look skeptically on our family-centered agenda do what we are trying to do: test everything by the Bible.

Our actions are rooted in our belief in the sufficiency of Scripture. We believe that the Bible adequately addresses all areas of life and that it contains the direction we need to shape our families. We practice (or aim to) home education, betrothal, home business, family worship, etc., because

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Action Station



1) "I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for... kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence."

we see in the Bible precepts, principles, and patterns that lead us in those directions, and we believe the Bible is the only safe guide in these matters. We are actively suspicious of any family patterns that have arisen as the Christian family has been influenced by the surrounding culture. We believe that our agenda seems radical only because our society has deviated so far from a biblical way of life. Our trying to live family-centered lives (as we have defined and limited that concept) is an expression of our attempt to live Bible-based lives.

The purpose of living out the Bible's prescription for living is that we might "do all to the glory of God" (I Corinthians 10:31). Our ultimate aim is not to create a cult of the family but "to know nothing...except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (I Corinthians 2:2). Fulfilling the job description Jesus left us means obeying all that He commanded us, including the Bible's teaching on the family (Matthew 28:20). Properly defined, family-centered living is Christ-centered living.

Concluding Admonitions

Now, how about those of us who are already sold on family-centered living? As we draw to a close on this subject let's make several important applications as a summary of what we have seen.

1. Your family must be your primary focus in life. You are not being imbalanced to be preoccupied with ordering your household. So much of life falls under the jurisdiction of the family that you must spend huge amounts of time and energy on family affairs. Add to this the fact that most of us are trying to "bring home" so many responsibilities that have been abandoned by the home, and we can see that we have a tremendous job ahead of us.

2. You must be a committed member of a local church. Church is not optional for the Christian. It is as important a commitment as the family, though it takes far less time. You need to be under the authority of biblically-qualified elders. You need to be supporting the church with your tithes. You need to be modeling for your children the importance of fellowship and accountability in the Christian life. If you neglect the church you confirm the suspicions of those who say we are imbalanced. (Finding a biblical church is not easy, and it is the reason we spend so much time addressing church issues in *Patriarch*.)

3. You must submit to civil authority. The state, too, is a covenantal institution created by God for our good, and our submission to those in authority is part of our submission to Christ. Now the form our submission takes in the context of evil laws, lawless judges, and even lawless laws (in this constitutional republic) is another matter. But let us always be committed to submitting to civil authority as an essential part of our worship of God.

4. We must strengthen the family and the church as alternative institutions to the state. The state in our day is consuming all jurisdictions and taking over the work of family and church. The only way to combat that perilous trend is to rebuild the family and the church. We do this by bringing back to the family those responsibilities which have been abandoned and yielded to the state: education, health care, welfare, etc. But we also must support the church with our tithes so that it has the means to carry out its God-given tasks and act as a buffer between family and state. A church that has use of all the tithes of its families for gospel workers, shepherds, and for ministry to the truly needy will be a strong church. The church can then be the backup institution to the family God means it to be. (For example, the church can help the widows in need rather than sending them to the Social Security Office. I Timothy 5:16.)

5. Do you get the impression that we have a major piece of work ahead of us?! Do we ever! But what a privilege to be instructed by the Spirit in these things so that we can lead our families, churches, and yes, our nation back to the Lord and His ways. Let's keep studying the Word, discussing these things together, praying for wisdom as to which step to take next — and then let's take that step, confident that the path we are on is the path of God's choosing. May the Lord keep us on the right path when it comes to family, church, and state so that we can be *Christ-centered* in all that we do.

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