

# Keystone

The Journal of Christian Home Schoolers

of New Zealand

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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



Feature Family  
Craig & Jill Mortimer  
Jasmine (19), Joshua (13),  
Rogan (9), Zachary (5)

## KEYSTONE

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

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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.**

# Editorial

There were plenty of people around when I was a kid who had been born in the 1800s. There were still a couple of American Civil War (1861-1865) veterans alive....I saw them on TV. I walked the streets with people who were contemporaries of Billy the Kid, Sitting Bull and Wyatt Earp. But such folks are virtually extinct these days. You have to be over 100 years old to say you were born in the 1800s.



I've become aware of another group that did virtually become extinct, but thanks to the home education movement, is experiencing a modest but significant growth in numbers: full-time parents. I am talking about parents who have not just spawned children, but parents who *parent* children as a vocation. No, I don't mean day-care centre workers or teachers. I mean *parents who parent and rear their own children* as their chosen full-time profession.

Think about it: the vast majority of parents send their children away for someone else to raise for vast portions of each day. It is at least 6 hours a day, 5 days a week, and coupled with day-care and kindy and after-school study hall and other extra-curricular activities, many parents only see their children in the early morning and then in the evening (where TV often looks after them some more) and then the weekends. Surely this has a significant impact in three important areas: 1) what these parents really know about child-rearing; 2) who is responsible for the children; 3) loyalty and obedience factors among the children.

Home educators by and large, and the mums in particular, are full-time parents. They rear their children themselves, sharing the task with virtually no one else for any significant lengths of time, from when the child is born right through to adulthood. I submit that this is a phenomenon this country has not seen in any great numbers in 50 years or so, when there were still a lot of children at home on Correspondence School lessons.

Compulsory schooling plays the main part in breaking up family solidarity, forcing children to bow to two authority structures (their parents and the school) with their often very different systems of values and morals, each competing for loyalty and obedience. Schools claim *primary* authority over children's academic development, but *no* responsibility for academic failure. School teachers are taking on pastoral, socialisation and counselling tasks, yet they are not themselves experienced at parenting full-time. The same goes for our politicians: they are encroaching ever more into family integrity, saying what is and isn't good parenting, when they themselves know very little of it first hand. *They should be looking to you mums* who home educate and parent full-time for advice on what to do: you alone as a group have the knowledge, wisdom and experience of what is right and of what works.

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**We are supposed to teach  
“as regularly and well as in  
a registered school”. If  
that’s all we achieve, I’ll  
consider ourselves failures.**  
-- Craig Mortimer, Moerewa

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# Feature Family



## Craig & Jill Mortimer

Moerewa, Northland

### Craig:

How did we get into home schooling? It wasn't because God showed us this was the right thing to do. It wasn't because we knew people doing it and could see the benefits of it. It was because our oldest child Jasmine wasn't learning at school. In fact, it was finding out that she couldn't read at the age of nine. She had covered up brilliantly at home by memorising virtually every book that had been read to her. We already knew she had problems with maths and each parent - teacher interview had raised it with her current teacher only to be told not to worry about it, the kids didn't really do maths until a certain age. Then it was, "Give her time." Then all of a sudden it was, "What are you going to do about Jasmine's lack of learning?" We thought this was a bit rich, because at each parent - teacher interview we had suggested we supplement her education at home only to be firmly dissuaded.

With this in mind you will understand Jill's rather vehement response. "What are *you* going to do about it?" I am afraid he got a bit of a browbeating. The teacher's solution was that Jasmine should move to a desk right beside him where he could keep her under better supervision. This didn't work as we soon found out from Jasmine. She was really enjoying school as, being closest to teacher, she was his errand girl and general dogs body.

I must explain in his defence that this particular school had been without a head master for several weeks, and Jasmine's teacher was acting head as well as trying to teach a class of 36 children. On top of this he was very supportive when we told him we were going to teach Jasmine at home, unlike the rest of his colleagues.

Although God hadn't spoken to us specifically about home schooling, He had been gently preparing us for it. Jill's mother was teaching two of our nieces at home, and in one of those funny happenstances I had, for some reason unknown even to myself, turned the radio on to the National Programme one Sunday afternoon and discovered a guy called Craig Smith being interviewed about home schooling. Despite our prejudices we were quite captivated by his interesting, informative and exuberant responses. We have yet to dissect a rat (like the dissection Craig described on radio), but since that time I have often used his information on how well home schooled children do, both academically and socially, compared to regularly schooled children.

Well, we had told Jasmine's teacher that she would not be returning to school, it was holiday time and we had two weeks to sort out what we were going to do.

Getting an exemption in that time was out of the question; Jill was feeling totally inadequate for the task ahead; we didn't qualify for the NZ Correspondence School; and we were not about to break the law by home schooling without an exemption. Desperate times for people who knew virtually nothing about the options available.

Thank God for Michael Drake. Some how we discovered that we could enrol Jasmine as a correspondence student of Carey College, and as she would be registered as a pupil of that school would not require an exemption. Jill was also very appreciative of the fact that a teacher would only be a phone call away. We enrolled Jasmine.

### Jill:

We will always be grateful for the help and encouragement given by teacher Diane Eastwood and by Michael Drake's policies. The Carey College programme didn't suit Jasmine at all but gave us the confidence and information to be able to launch out on our own.

As Craig was working, the responsibility of educating Jasmine fell to me. Pretty scary as I had no formal education beyond 5th form, no qualifications or know how. I did have bits of advice, a determination that our daughter would at least learn to read, and God. Those first few months were pretty rocky for both Jasmine and me. We sure fought a lot - I guess I was very tense, and I also expected way too much. Often Craig would come home to find us both in tears. But eventually I loosened up, and with quite a lot of help from my children I learned how to pass on knowledge. Of course we had been unconsciously doing that for years, but now it was a matter of harnessing it.

I think that one of the biggest lessons I've learned is that each child is so different, and often that requires a different method of teaching. But mostly, the child will help you do that. Sometimes it's simply a matter of changing the way you say something.

Making and taking opportunities is another thing we've learned to do. When our son Joshua (now almost 14) began showing an interest in flying planes, we encouraged him to pursue it. The first opportunity made and taken was his visit to Auckland Air Traffic Control (see *Keystone* Vol V No. 6 - November 1999 under "Home Schoolers Did It"). He has since followed this up with actually flying a plane!

When Jasmine was 11 she began working as a volunteer one afternoon a week at our local library. She benefitted by learning indexing, cataloguing and many skills involved in library work.

Rogan (now 9) avidly desired to learn to drum. A local college student agreed to tutor him for a small fee. He moved on fairly quickly but through the local college we found another student taking music, (the head boy no less) to take over. Both have benefitted and have formed a mutual respect and friendship which is truly delightful.

There are many resources out there, just waiting to be tapped into – especially people! The children have learned to start with their interest and look for a way to develop and expand it.

There have been hard times such as the opposition, especially from family who felt we were isolating and disadvantaging our children. This particularly affected our eldest, and eventually we succumbed and agreed to send her to College for her 5th form year (at the age of 14). It was a decision that was to lead to much heartache – a time when we could do nothing but cry out to God. As a result of this experience I feel very strongly now that State schools are no place for our beloved children. I think we don't always realize how given over to all manner of evil they really are.

**Craig:**

As the children get into college age, Jill feels less able to teach because of her lack of education. This is a real problem in a small Northland town where resources are limited, but we will not again make the mistake of sending any of our children back to school. For this reason I have started supplementing Joshua's education this year in the areas of history and science. This has been rather difficult as my workday has been between 9 ½ - 10 hours consistently for the last 6 years. I very soon found that Joshua disliked intensely two things: writing book summaries and science. Because of my hours of work, I had been setting books to read and asking him to write down important details in the case of science and book summaries in the case of history. This proved to be a formula for frustration on both sides.

I thought I could pass on my love of science to Joshua, particularly biology, but found out very quickly that this did not happen and that biology was his pet hate as far as science went. I did discover, however, that he did have some interest in basic physics (just as well, as this is a requirement for a pilot). I have not used textbooks but have used instead books out of our own extensive library. For instance, for science I used *National Geographic's Everyday Science Explained*, and Joshua is currently reading through the *Time/Life Planet Earth* volume titled *Atmosphere* which he is quite enjoying (again something a pilot should know about).

For history we have been studying World War II all year, a) because Joshua is interested and b) because I think it is a good jumping off point for understanding modern history. I started out making him write a summary on each book but now only get him to do this occasionally because of his dislike of these (although pilots do have to write reports!). I think the most important thing I have learned (or maybe it is belatedly remembered) is that you don't have to write things down to remember them, and that if you are interested in what you are studying, you will remember; and if you don't, you will refer back to the books studied.

**Jill:**

Well, we have been home schooling about ten years now, and I guess I'm very proud that we have surpassed

the requirement in the Act that states we must teach as regularly and as well as State schools.

Our youngest child Zachary, having just turned 5, started the formal part of his education last month. He has been looking forward to this for a long time, and thus far is thoroughly enjoying himself.

**Joshua:**

I am now thirteen and have been home schooled since I was five, so I don't really know what going to school is like. But in my opinion home schooling is best. As there are only a few of us, compared to a large classroom, the teacher (Mum in my case) is able to give us more time with just her, so that there are no other distractions. I have also been a Christian for as long as I can remember. I do my own Bible study every morning before school, which I have been learning a lot out of. My favourite subjects are history and art, and I hate science. I hope to become a commercial pilot one day. As I do not wish to join the airforce and the course at the local airport costs over fifty thousand dollars, I expect that will be difficult.

I enjoy making models, especially aircraft from the Second World War. I also enjoy going on long bike rides. We only do school work in the morning, but we often have educational experiences throughout the day.

**Rogan:**

I am nine and have been home schooled since I was five. I am a Christian. I enjoy home schooling a lot. My favourite subject is art. I work from about eight thirty in the morning right through with no big breaks until lunchtime. I have some small breaks when Mum is hanging out the washing, and stuff like that. Every so often Josh and I will go for bike rides after lunch, or Dad will bike with us on real long bike rides on the weekends. I play the drums. I have been playing them for about a year and a half. Home schooling is real fun!

**Jill:**

Jasmine, our oldest at 19, has finished her formal education for the time being. She went through a time of hating being home schooled but nevertheless benefited from such extras as library work and work experience with the Police and also at the local hospital. Despite some years of rebellion, she recently told me she was glad we had given her a home education; that it was thanks to us she can read and has a level of education which school could never have given her.

We are very excited because even as I write this we are waiting for the arrival of our first grandchild. Jasmine is very tired, very swollen and a little overdue! But she is on the threshold of continuing her education in a far deeper and more "hands on" way!

As for me, I am entirely involved and enjoying all the amazing feelings associated with becoming a grandmother. "Schooling" tends to revolve around that just now, especially as Jasmine is here with us now and will be here for a week after the event!

We have only briefly touched on some of our

experiences but love the opportunity to share. We would be happy to talk, write or share with anyone who is interested.

**Craig and Jill:**

We would like to thank the Smiths for being there at the beginning of our saga, for their work for all home schoolers and to say that one of the highlights of our home schooling experience was meeting the Smiths and putting them up for the night, together with the Warings, last year. It was lovely to meet the Warings, but for us we were far more interested in finally speaking face to face with Craig and Barbara and finding kindred spirits. Thank you for bringing encouragement to us.

PS -- Jasmin delivered a healthy baby girl on October 31; 11lb, 2oz. Praise God from Whom all blessings flow!

# The Faith of Us Fathers



## Male Passivity: The Root of All Evil, Part 1

by Philip H. Lancaster

Since sin begins in the heart, then both Adam and Eve sinned before they actually took a bite of the fruit. James identifies the development of sinful acts: "But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death" (James 1: 14-15). The outward act takes shape only after the sinful heart has chosen to sin. This is consistent with the words of Jesus: "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things that defile a man...(Matthew 15:19-20a). It is clear that the covetous desire for the fruit was a sin that preceded the actual eating of the fruit. It was not a morally pure man (and woman) who grasped the fruit and ate, thus becoming defiled. It was an already defiled couple, who having sinned in their hearts by desiring what God had forbidden, grasped the fruit and consummated the sin.

### A Failure of Leadership

Since Adam was the covenantal head of the human race, we might have expected that he would be the one to take the lead and drag his wife and all the rest of us into sin. But what we see actually unfold in the Garden is that, while he retains his formal authority as representative head of the race (and it is indeed his act that dooms us all), Eve becomes the de facto leader and Adam the follower as they rebel against God. In the midst of the formal acts of disobedience (eating the fruit) we find another perversity at work: the breakdown of the proper relationship between the man and the woman.

Clearly Adam was supposed to lead in the relationship, not Eve. Yet she took the lead into sin. While she is culpable for her part in getting out from her husband's authority, the leader is always the one who bears responsibility for the relationship. When she attempted to take the lead, he should have resisted, asserted his authority, and refused to go along with her. Instead, he followed her.

More specifically, Adam failed in his leadership by not protecting his wife. The serpent sought out the more vulnerable of the two to work his wiles (Genesis 3:1). Where was Adam? Why did he not step in and shout the serpent down when he questioned the word of God? It appears from the language of verse six (he was "with her") that Adam was present but simply passive and ineffective in his role of leader-protector. Though the

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text is not explicit, it seems as if Adam simply watched his wife be beguiled into sin and then just went with the flow and sinned with her. It is explicitly clear that he followed her into sin. It is implicitly clear that he was passive even before that and failed to lead his wife by providing protection against their spiritual enemy.

So it would seem that the context of the specific acts of disobedience (eating of the tree) was a general failure of obedience to God's created order in the marriage relationship. It would not then be too much of a stretch to say that the first sin was Adam's passivity and his failure to lead and protect his wife. It was this failure that led to her being tempted and succumbing to sin. Even if some may doubt that inference from the passage, it is certainly clear that it was Adam's passivity that led to his sharing the fruit his wife offered him. Any way you slice it, the passive male appears to be a major factor in the entrance of sin into the world. We might even put it this way (to borrow a phrase from our Lord): the passive male is the root of all evil. If Adam had been an active leader-protector instead of a passive follower, the curse would not have been pronounced on the world.

Sin did not just sneak up on the first couple and tackle them. They fell because of their own passivity in the face of temptation. In their hearts they did not resist the evil suggestions of the serpent that contradicted God's words. They yielded, they took the easy path of acquiescence rather than saying "No" to the tempter. Likewise, the passivity of Adam in relationship to the tempter and to Eve led directly to the Fall. He failed to guard her and to lead her. Instead he yielded to her leadership and ultimately to that of Satan. The rest, as they say, is history.

The well-being of the whole creation rests on the proper functioning of the various authority arrangements that exist. God the Father is the head of Christ; Christ is the head of man; man is the head of woman (1 Corinthians 11:3). The order that exists in the Godhead from all eternity is the model for the order that the Creator has built into His creation. When this order is violated, chaos and death result. Satan was a high angel who stepped out of his role and rebelled against God's order. He came to earth to wreak havoc with the perfection God had established here. Eve got out from under her human authority, Adam, and instead of seeking his leadership took the initiative in rebellion and led her husband into sin. Adam failed to take the lead in the temptation episode and chose instead to accept the leadership of Satan and of his wife. The story of sin and misery is the story of a series of failures either to submit to God-given authority or to exercise God-given leadership.

Our focus is on the man because, again, he is the one God put in charge and the one He holds accountable. Unfortunately men from Adam onward have inherited his penchant for avoiding the demands of their leadership calling, especially in relationship with their wives and family. Men today have almost totally abdicated their calling as family leaders. Whatever remnant of leadership energy they have tends to be

directed to callings outside the home, business and politics in particular. But it was a failure of home leadership that thrust the world into darkness, and this is still the most costly form of leadership failure.

Perhaps as we consider the situation in the Garden we can discern how Adam may have acted differently, more in keeping with his leadership calling. In the process we can discover ways to help improve our own performance in this area as well. What were the qualities that Adam failed to display in the face of Satan's attack on his family and which would have enabled him to be the spiritual leader God created him to be?

### **Alertness**

The first quality Adam lacked was alertness. Now we can perhaps understand that he had never faced a threat before. Living in a perfect environment did not prepare him to expect an attack, especially the subtle, crafty attack which the serpent waged. However, Adam's devotion to his Creator and God's clear commandment with its equally clear warning should have caused a vigilance that would make him alert to any attack on God's veracity or any suggestion of rebellion against His authority. The very warning not to eat of the tree should have made him super-alert to any suggestion to the contrary.

However, it appears as if Adam was asleep at the wheel. Satan was allowed unimpeded access to Eve and was offered no resistance by Adam. Even if one gives Adam the benefit of the doubt and assumes he was unaware of the Eve-serpent dialog, he definitely failed the alertness test when Eve made her proposition to him. There is no sense of vigilance at all: "She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate" (Genesis 3:6). And he ate. Period. No protest. No resistance. No alertness to the danger the act represented. "And he ate."

We, too, often fail in our leadership at home through a lack of watchfulness to danger or through a general lack of alertness to other opportunities to show leadership. We, too, are often asleep at the wheel, just letting things happen and hoping for the best.

Are you aware of the temptations your wife and children are facing this week? Or are you just waiting for the results of their yielding to temptation to blow up in your face? Talk to them. Find out what is in their minds and their hearts. Keep track of who they spend time with, what they read, what they view on the screen or video, the music they hear. Is the serpent working his wiles on your little flock? Are you alert to the dangers faced by those under your command?

(Abridged from *Patriarch* #28, Oct 98 [PO Box 725, Rolla, MO 65402; sent on donation of US\$25.] By Permission.)



# Bits of Books



## Poison Drops in the Federal Senate

by Zach Montgomery  
Published in 1886 by Gibson Bros., Washington, D.C.

Chapter 4.

### Yet Another Startling Test--A Voice from the Grave of the Suicide

The gratuitous and utterly unsupported assertion has sometimes been made by the friends of State-controlled education that the reason why statistics show the largest list of criminals in those localities where the most money has been lavished upon the public schools is because those are the only localities where the criminals are all, or nearly all, caught and convicted; while in those places where there is little or no public-school training the criminals cannot be caught.

Now it will scarcely be denied that dead criminals CAN be caught even in those States where they have no public schools. Then how stands the record with reference to this particular class of criminals?

As we have already seen, it was in the early period of their first settlement in America that the colonists of Massachusetts, Maine, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Rhode Island tried the experiment of taking from the fathers and mothers the educational control of their own children and entrusting it to the general public, while six other colonies, to wit, Maryland, Virginia, Delaware, Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina left this educational control of children in the hands of parents, their natural guardians. With slight exceptions, in a few of the last-named communities, (towards the close of the period,) this experiment continued down to 1860.

The comparative number of suicides in these two localities, as shown by the United States Census Reports for that year, was as follows. (See Table 1 below).

An analysis of these figures will show that in every solitary instance where the political State had controlled the education and training of children, the ratio of suicides ranged from 250 percent to 800 percent higher than where the education and training had been left to parental control, while the aggregate ratio shows over four times as many suicides under State education as under parental education. This enormous excess in the number of suicides amongst people educated under State control over that found amongst those educated under parental control must have a cause, and a cause adequate to the effect.

(Continued on page 12)

**Table 1** — Suicides in U.S. in 1860 (From United States Census Report, 1860)

Suicides Where States Control Education			Suicides Where Parents Control Education		
State	1 suicide per....	No. per 100,000	State	1 suicide per....	No. per 100,000
Maine	19,738	5.07	Maryland	49,074	2.04
New Hampshire	10,518	9.51	Virginia	53,210	1.88
Vermont	15,749	6.35	Delaware	56,108	1.78
Massachusetts	11,191	8.94	Georgia	48,058	2.08
Connecticut	16,433	6.09	North Carolina	66,074	1.51
Rhode Island	12,472	8.02	South Carolina	87,963	1.14
Aggregate	13,285	7.53	Aggregate	56,584	1.77

(Continued from page 10)

who are gifted. ERIC EC Digest E522.

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## What Is the Cause?

In explanation of the facts shown by the foregoing statistics, we maintain that there are chiefly two causes, both of which are intimately connected, the one, in fact, springing from the other. The first cause which we propose to consider is the loss of parental authority and home influence over children, through and by means of a State-controlled system of education. The second cause, and one which, as stated, is closely allied to the first, is a neglect of moral and religious education and training.

It required little argument to prove either to readers of history, or to the close observer of current events, or to any affectionate son or daughter, who has grown to manhood or womanhood under the guardianship of an intelligent, affectionate, and conscientious father and mother, that parental influence is one of the Almighty's chief agencies for promoting the purity, preservation, and happiness of the human race. All history, all philosophy, and all poetry point to the home as the birthplace and nursery of virtue, morality, patriotism, and religion. Home is the ever-living fountain of present joys, sweet memories, and cherished hopes.

What artist has ever yet delineated the matchless charms of the true conjugal and maternal love that beams in the eye, dimples the cheek, or quivers the voice of the true wife and mother, radiating, illuminating, and cheering the home and sending sunshine and warmth, and life and hope and happiness into the hearts and souls of husband and sons and daughters and friends? Or where on earth can there be found a truer picture of the primeval paradise than in an intelligent, virtuous, orderly, affectionate, united, and happy family of father, mother, and children? He who enjoys such a home, or the cheering hope of such a home, or even the bright and soothing memory of such a home, will find therein an ever-present talisman, an almost infallible shield against the horrible crime of self-destruction. Who, in his sane mind and sober senses, can ever seriously plot against his own life, however burdensome that life may become, when remembering that in doing so he is plotting against the happiness of brothers and sisters to whom he is bound by the endearing ties of blood and ten thousand sweet memories; against an aged father and mother whom he loves, and by whom he is beloved with an ardor that knows no cooling; against the devoted and faithful wife of his bosom, and against his own helpless, innocent, and confiding babes?

These considerations are, however, in one sense, only collateral barriers against the crime of self-murder, and, unless supported by higher and stronger motives, are liable to be battered down by the surging billows of human passion, or to be crushed by the almost unbearable weight of worldly woes.

But a deeper and stronger barrier against this black and horrid crime is found in an educated conscience.

In marshaling our proofs in support of this position, we shall assert:

First, That man is a rational creature, and, being rational, whatever he does while possessed of his reason he does for a motive. The motive may be a good one or it may be a bad one, but it is, nevertheless, a motive.

Secondly, Above all other considerations personal to himself, man naturally hates misery and loves happiness. Hence, whatever he does or refuses to do while in the exercise of his reason, is done, or refused to be done, for the purpose of avoiding misery or of finding happiness.

Thirdly, Men differ widely as to their choice of roads in the pursuit of happiness, as well as in their efforts to avoid misery; and,

Fourthly, There are chiefly three roads by which men travel in their pursuit of happiness or in their flight from misery, namely: (1) The road which leads to the gratification of the animal appetites, and which avoids whatever tends to their restraint; (2) the road which leads to human applause and worldly honors, while keeping at a distance from whatever wounds pride or vanity; (3) the road which leads to truth and justice; to the triumph of God Almighty's law; to honors imperishable; and to happiness unmixed with pain and as enduring as eternity itself. Unlike the other roads, this turns neither to the right nor to the left; neither to shun that which pains the body or mortifies vanity or pride. Its course is ever upward and onward. The truly faithful traveller upon this road, instead of repining at the endurance of bodily pain, the loss of fortune, the betrayal of friends or the malice of enemies, seizes upon those passing woes as so many precious coins with which to purchase imperishable joys.

Now, it requires but a moment's reflection to enable us to see that a man's choice, as between these three roads, must, in the nature of things, depend very much on his early training and education.

Man has three classes of faculties, namely: the faculties of the body, the faculties of the mind, and the faculties of the conscience; and, undoubtedly, all these three classes of faculties were designed by the Creator to be exercised, and to be exercised in harmony. But, in order to be exercised in harmony, it is necessary, in the nature of things, either that the demands of these three faculties be always in harmony, or else, in cases of conflict, one class of desires must yield obedience to another class. But it is easy to see that these three classes of desires are not always in harmony, for it often happens that one class of desires--as, for example, in the case of an inordinate desire for strong drink or impure pleasures--are directly at war with the desires of the mind and the conscience, and it can scarcely require argument to prove that, in such cases of conflict, the desires of the body ought to yield obedience to the opposing desires of mind and conscience. But then,

again, the mind may, and often does, in defiance of conscience, at the peril of bodily health and life, and even at the hazard of disaster to itself, desire to circumvent, overreach, defraud, and ruin others, and would, in its vaulting ambition, go so far as to usurp the throne of God Himself. Hence, in all cases of conflict between the

unjust desires of mind and the dictates of conscience, the conscience should rule supreme. And, unless conscience does rule supreme, there is no adequate barrier to check the wrongs which the body and mind may perpetrate against themselves, against each other, against conscience, or against God and society. Hence, the true welfare, the safety and the happiness of every man's body, mind, and conscience, as well as the safety of society, demand that every man's conscience should reign supreme over both his bodily appetites and his mental desires, aims, and ambitions. But all these three classes of man's faculties need education, training, and exercise. The physical man needs education, training, and exercise, not only to give him bodily strength and skill, but to teach and accustom him to subject his animal appetites to the dictates of mind and conscience. The mind needs to be taught and trained and exercised, not only to strengthen and store it with knowledge necessary for the proper direction and government of the body, and the enlightenment of itself and of conscience by the lamp of reason, but to accustom it to habits of prompt and willing obedience to conscience. And the conscience needs to be educated, trained, and exercised, in order that it may learn and accustom itself to walk always in the path whither duty calls and to which right reason points, and never to allow either itself or its mind or its body to stray from that path. But, while it is true that the entire man, including body, mind, and conscience, requires education, training, and exercise, it is no less true that the conscience, the governing part of man, most of all requires this education, training, and exercise.

If an individual in the private walks of life makes a mistake for the want of proper education or training, the evil consequences of such a mistake are usually unfelt by the general public, but if the governor of a State, or the President of the United States, for a similar reason, make a mistake in his official capacity, then the whole country must suffer the consequences. So, likewise, if, for the want of proper bodily training, a boy stumps his toe or cuts his finger, while his whole body must endure a temporary pain, yet his mind is not impaired nor his conscience tarnished. So, if for want of mental education, the boy should insist that the world is flat instead of round, or should prove himself so deficient in a knowledge of figures as to lose his situation, he might still escape the pangs of a guilty conscience and preserve a spotless reputation for integrity. But if, for the want of a conscience, educated, trained, exercised, and strengthened in habits of honesty, he should pocket his employer's money, in obedience to the demands of his animal appetite or to satisfy the claims of vanity, the whole man would suffer. For example: the conscience would suffer not only from remorse, but it would suffer from being blunted and obscured, and rendered less fit to perform its functions; the mind would suffer from anxiety and the fear of discovery, or from the

mortification of detection; and the body would suffer from the labor required to cover the tracks of guilt, or from being forced to endure the punishment which either the natural or human law, or both, would visit upon it. Can it, then, be denied that the education, training, and constant exercise of the conscience is of the very first and greatest importance in giving direction and formation to the human character? Of course we are now addressing ourselves to those who recognize the existence of the human conscience as the great director and regulator of human motives and human actions. Ought, then, the consciences of children to be developed, instructed, and exercised as a part of their education? And ought this instruction and education to go hand in hand with the education and training of the mind and body during the hours of school?

It is maintained by multitudes of parents and many clergymen, while admitting that it is necessary that the consciences of children should be educated, that this education ought to be confined to the home circle and the church, and that the daily school should be exclusively reserved for the education of the mind and the body. But have we not seen that the conscience must be the governor and supreme ruler of the entire man; that the conscience must be taught the habit of governing, and that both the mind and body must be taught habits of prompt and willing obedience? But if, throughout the live-long day, the conscience is to remain practically dormant, while the mind and body are both in the process of active development, what will be the necessary result?

Is it not a universally admitted fact that every human organ, whether it be an organ of the body, the mind, or the conscience, is strengthened by exercise and weakened by disuse? Then, how is it possible that the conscience can maintain its supremacy over the mind and body if it is to be left sleeping or chained down in mute and motionless bondage, while the body and mind are daily growing in strength, activity, and habits of insubordination? If, from the cradle to the grave, there is any one period of life more than any other when the conscience not only needs to be trained, but to be called into active service, it is during the time spent at school. It is then that pride and vanity, and anger and lust, and all the other passions that war against conscience are in their most active development; and if, instead of training these growing passions in habits of subjection to conscience, and instead of training the conscience to the habit of wielding its authority over these passions, the passions, on the contrary, be trained to lord it over the conscience, what must be the natural result? When a child has reached manhood, with passions fully developed and trained to command, and a conscience dwarfed and enfeebled by disuse, and trained to habits of base and cowardly servitude, what power, short of a miracle, can sufficiently restore the lost energy of such a conscience or give it the mastery over the entire man? But when the conscience has lost her sceptre and become the slave of the mere animal or intellectual man, then such a man lives only for the present life, and looks not beyond the portals of the grave, either in his search for happiness or in his flight from pain. Such a

man seeks happiness, chiefly, either in the gratification of his animal appetites, or in the acquisition of wealth, or in the paths of worldly ambition, marching to the music of human applause and grasping at the bubble of fame. So long as an average success continues to crown the efforts of one of these seekers after mere worldly happiness, the chances are that he will consent to live; but let distaster overtake him, and what then? If a man of wealth, let fires, or floods, or a touch of hard times sweep away his accumulated millions; if an over-ambitious man, let the last lingering hope of political preferment be blasted; or if he be a man enchained in the bondage of his unholy lusts, let even the crime-steeped partner of his debaucheries frown cruelly upon him, and what assurance have we that he will not cut short the miserable existence that has ceased to yield pleasure and promises nothing but disappointment and pain?

The man who suffers from a raging tooth-ache is not censured for swallowing a small dose of laudanum in hope of putting himself to sleep until the period of pain shall have passed; and if death were an eternal sleep and life promised nothing but pain, who could be censured if, to escape a life of suffering or shame, he should so enlarge his dose of laudanum as to render his sleep perpetual?

Here, then, in our humble opinion, is the true source of that alarming growth of suicides so prevalent in the United States. It is found in an educational system which has broken down parental authority, sundered the sacred bonds of affection that bound together brothers, sisters, parents and children, and which has weakened and almost obliterated the human conscience.

It requires but a moment's reflection to show that the same causes which lead to the crime of suicide lead to every other crime known to the laws of God or man. Both reason and daily experience prove that the man or woman who has no sweet and endearing memories of childhood's home; who cherishes no love for father or mother or brother or sister; and, worse still, the man or woman who believes in no God, no devil, no heaven, no hell, can ever be trusted. Such a man may reach the very pinnacle of wealth and fame and political power; he may be flattered and praised and applauded by the press and the people as the very pink of patriotism and honesty; but let the day of trial come; let the voice of duty call to the right, while his ruling passion for guilty pleasure, forbidden wealth, or crime-bought fame beckons to the left; and duty may call, and call, and call; but, alas! it will call in vain.

## In Line With Scripture



**“Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”**

— Hebrews 12:11

### The Corporal Correction of Children, Part 4

by Craig S. Smith

#### Spank for the Child's Best Good

Spanking deals immediately with the issue. Many readers would have seen the clip on TV with the cute little girl throwing a temper tantrum. She stops and tells the viewing audience that it is no fun when no one is paying any attention. This, then, is a sample of the kind of child-rearing advice given by our state agencies: ignore the child when they misbehave, as it is only a fun ploy to gain your attention. This advice contains basic conflicts of logic: the child wants your attention, so you are advised to ignore it; the behaviour is unacceptable, but again you are advised to ignore it; it is assumed the child is having some fun at your expense, when any observer can tell that children do not enjoy tantrums. It is typical of the kind of nonsense spoken by ivory tower types, who know nothing of full-time parenting.\* And it totally fails to deal with the twin issues of unacceptable (sinful) behaviour and need for attention.

\*(As a matter of fact, home educators are probably the only full-time parents in the country: everyone else unloads their children off to day care or kindy or school as soon as they can. Consequently most of them listen to these ivory tower types, for they know just as little themselves, only seeing their children in the mornings and evenings and a bit during the weekend. Come to think of it, we home educators surely have regained child-rearing wisdom and skills which must have been common knowledge prior to compulsory schooling, and we surely should be listened to, our opinion should be actively sought, by state policy-makers. Ah, but I have digressed.)

Facing the tantrum square-on as the manifestation of sinful foolishness that it is, giving a spanking to drive the foolishness out (according to Proverbs 22:15 remember) and using the Word of God as your guide in counselling afterwards, you deal with all the issues. The child's need for attention is met with clear authoritative instruction.....the child usually has no idea why it threw the tantrum; it just came out. Your attention has been focussed on an area where your input is essential for the child's growth in maturity and self-

awareness and understanding. Another measure of foolishness has been driven from the child's heart so that it is not allowed to take root and become an integral part of the child's character. Best of all, you have yourself conformed your actions to the Word of God through your obedience to Scripture.

Spanking does so much good for the child and for you. Apart from the several advantages already mentioned, it restores the ruptured relationship which sin always causes. You don't sweep it under the carpet where it will fester and become cancerous, you deal with it head-on. Ancient wisdom says the same: "Nip it in the bud," "A stitch in time saves nine." The air is cleared of the anger, guilt, mistrust, frustration and disappointment generated by the sin. A spanking completely settles the issue (although restitution, a separate issue, may be required). Sending the child to its room or grounding it or depriving of some privilege for a period of time is not dealing with the issue of sin: it is only allowing the rebellion to foment inside and saddles you with the extra burden of having to police this period of grounding or whatever, which also serves to negatively remind everyone of the misdeed all over again. Who needs these extra complications? A spanking allows everyone can get on with life.

Now, I am not saying there is no place for sending a child to its room for a period of time out, or for grounding or some other restriction. These can be great training tools in a parent's child-rearing arsenal. One of our children was particularly responsive to even the *threat* of fining her for certain behaviours...the imposition of a \$2 fine was to her particularly irksome.

#### **Spank for Breaking the 4 "D"s**

So the question arises, "When should one spank, and when should one use some other tactic?" Recall the foundational concept behind spanking: to drive the sinful foolishness out of the heart. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." (Ephesians 6:1). "Whoever knows what is right to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin." (James 4:17 RSV) *Sin* in the camp is the parent's cue to apply the rod. We're not talking about childishness or accidents or being boistrous or hyperactivity....we're talking about the manifestation of sinful, wrong and unacceptable behaviour.

Keep the rules simple and few. Your children will remember every careless rule you utter and may learn from your forgetfulness that you are not serious, that you are inconsistent, that you do not keep your word. We spank our children for breaking one of the four "D"s: Disobedience, Disrespect, Dishonesty, Destructiveness. Just about every wrong will fall into one or more of these categories. Ensure that the guilty party is aware of the rules before spanking for an infringement. Disrespect must be explained, examples given, and possibly you will need to take a child who has just been grossly disrespectful aside and explain to him his sin. This first explanation may not need a spanking for the child may have had no idea it was being disrespectful. In fact these days, with our current brand of humour which seems to appreciate insults

given to one another with a smile, the child may have been demonstrating a very clever talent for emulating adult social behaviour observed in another context. (It may also say something about our need to review our own sense of humour!) And do not spank for childish mistakes or accidents. Our son was playing waiter by balancing heaping plates of spaghetti and meat sauce on his fingertips at shoulder height between kitchen and dining room, when he dropped one onto our brand new, light grey, \$6000 carpet. It was an accident, not sin. The rod was not employed, but he sure worked hard to clean up the mess. Dishonesty is usually seen in stealing and lying. But the concepts of private property and truthfulness must first be explained, and this can take some time. Grab every opportunity to demonstrate: when the shop assistant gives you too much change, return it. When you find some lost property, hand it in. Exaggeration is not lying. Pulling a practical joke or trying to fool someone may be getting close to lying, so beware. But trying to shift blame onto someone else by telling a false tale is lying of the worst kind and cannot be tolerated. Dropping a crystal glass and breaking it is not Destructiveness...unless the child was told not to carry the glass or handle it in that way....then the child is guilty of Disobedience. But willfully throwing rocks through a window or putting a match to the sofa just to see what would happen is Destructiveness.

#### **Spank in Private**

Chastisement in public is humiliating, so avoid it if possible. In fact, you could be accused of child abuse by the self-appointed anti-spanking vigilantes these days, so by all means, be discreet. With our two-year-old we just need to say, "Are you being disobedient?" for him to behave in a public situation...he knows what the alternative is! For us a spanking is often a 10-15 minute process. We go to the bedroom, collect the spanking rod, then fully discuss the crime. I ask the child to identify which of the four Ds was broken and to explain why I have to spank rather than tongue lash or do something creative like give lollies. There is always an opportunity to plead extenuating circumstances, and if appropriate, no spank is given. After the spank there are cuddles and prayer, at which time the child is very open, teachable and receptive. Here is the time to reason with words of instruction and encouragement.

Now, it really is a hassle to drop whatever we're doing to embark on this process. But as the Scripture says, "...it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it", and I reckon that includes the parents as well as the children! Remember, the object is to drive out the sin, restore the relationships spoiled by the sin, inculcate words of admonition and instruction, reaffirm your love and commitment, and get on with a life now more fully able to glorify God.

# Exploring God's Creation



## Organic Evolution Has Never Been Observed, Part 1

by Walt Brown

Before considering how life began, we must first understand the term “organic evolution”. Organic evolution, as theorized, is a naturally occurring, beneficial change that produces increasing and inheritable complexity. Increased complexity would be shown if the offspring of one form of life had a different and improved set of vital organs. This is sometimes called the molecules-to-man theory--or **macroevolution**. **Microevolution**, on the other hand, does not involve increasing complexity. It only involves minor chemical alterations or changes in size, shape, or color. Microevolution can be thought of as “horizontal” change, whereas macroevolution (if it were ever observed) would involve an “upward” and beneficial change in complexity. Notice that microevolution plus time will not produce macroevolution (micro + time macro). ≠

Both creationists and evolutionists agree that microevolution occurs. Minor change has been observed since history began. But notice how often evolutionists give evidence for microevolution to support macroevolution. It is macroevolution, which requires new abilities and increasing complexity, that is at the center of the creation-evolution controversy. In this book, the term “organic evolution” will therefore mean macroevolution.

### The Law of Biogenesis

Spontaneous generation (the emergence of life from nonliving matter) has never been observed. All observations have shown that life comes only from life. This has been observed so consistently that it is called the law of biogenesis. The theory of evolution conflicts with this law by claiming that life came from nonliving matter through natural processes.

And yet, leading evolutionists are forced to accept some form of spontaneous generation. George Wald, formerly of Harvard University and a winner of the Nobel Prize in physiology and medicine, acknowledged the dilemma:

*The reasonable view was to believe in spontaneous generation; the only alternative, to believe in a single, primary act of supernatural creation. There is no third position.*

With no rationale given, Wald goes on to accept the impossible odds of spontaneous generation rather than creation:

*One has only to contemplate the magnitude of this task to concede that the spontaneous generation of a living organism is impossible. Yet here we are as a result, I believe, of spontaneous generation.<sup>1</sup>*

Another writer makes it even clearer:

*The beginning of the evolutionary process raises a question which is as yet unanswerable. What was the origin of life on this planet? Until fairly recent times there was a pretty general belief in the occurrence of spontaneous generation. It was supposed that lowly forms of life developed spontaneously from, for example, putrefying meat. But careful experiments, notably those of Pasteur, showed that this conclusion was due to imperfect observation, and it became an accepted doctrine (the law of biogenesis) that life never arises except from life.*

*So far as actual evidence goes, this is still the only possible conclusion. But since it is a conclusion that seems to lead back to some supernatural creative act, it is a conclusion that scientific men find very difficult of acceptance. It carries with it what are felt to be, in the present mental climate, undesirable philosophic implications, and it is opposed to the scientific desire for continuity. It introduces an unaccountable break in the chain of causation, and therefore cannot be admitted as part of science unless it is quite impossible to reject it.*

*For that reason most scientific men prefer to believe that life arose, in some way not yet understood, from inorganic matter in accordance with the laws of physics and chemistry.<sup>2</sup>*

### Mendel's Laws

Mendel's laws of genetics and their modern-day refinements explain almost all physical variations observed in living things. Mendel discovered that genes (the units of heredity) are merely reshuffled from one generation to another. Different combinations are formed, not different genes. The different combinations produce the many variations within each kind of life, such as in the dog family. A logical consequence of Mendel's laws is that there are limits to such variation.<sup>3</sup>

Alfred Russel Wallace, who independently proposed the theory of organic evolution slightly before Charles Darwin, was opposed to Mendel's laws of genetics. Wallace recognized that Mendel's experiments showed that the general characteristics of an organism remained within distinct boundaries. In a letter to Dr. Archdall Reid on 28 December 1909, Wallace wrote:

*But on the general relation of Mendelism to Evolution I have come to a very definite conclusion. This is, that it has no relation whatever to the evolution of species or higher groups, but is really antagonistic to such evolution! The essential basis of evolution, involving as it does the most minute and all-pervading adaptation to the whole environment, is extreme and ever-present plasticity, as a condition of survival and adaptation. But the essence of Mendelian characters is*

their rigidity. They are transmitted without variation, and therefore, except by the rarest of accidents, can never become adapted to ever varying conditions.<sup>4</sup>

Breeding experiments<sup>5,6,7</sup> have also confirmed these boundaries.

*All competent biologists acknowledge the limited nature of the variation breeders can produce, although they do not like to discuss it much when grinding the evolutionary ax.*<sup>8</sup>

*A rule that all breeders recognize, is that there are fixed limits to the amount of change that can be produced.*<sup>9</sup>

Common observations confirm these boundaries as well:

*. . . the distinctions of specific forms and their not being blended together by innumerable transitional links, is a very obvious difficulty.*<sup>10</sup>

*Indeed, the isolation and distinctness of different types of organisms and the existence of clear discontinuities in nature have been self-evident for centuries, even to non-biologists.*<sup>11</sup>

## Natural Selection

Natural selection cannot produce new genes; it only selects among pre-existing characteristics. “[Natural selection] may have a stabilizing effect, but it does not promote speciation. It is not a creative force as many people have suggested.”<sup>12</sup> For example, many have mistakenly believed that resistances “evolved” in response to pesticides and antibiotics. Sometimes a previously lost capability was re-established, making it appear that something evolved.<sup>13</sup> In other cases, a few resistant insects and bacteria were already present when the pesticides and antibiotics were first applied. The vulnerable insects and bacteria were killed, allowing resistant varieties, which then had less competition, to proliferate. “The genetic variants required for resistance to the most diverse kinds of pesticides were apparently present in every one of the populations exposed to these man-made compounds.”<sup>14</sup> While natural selection occurred, nothing evolved and, in fact, some biological diversity was lost.

The variations Darwin observed among finches on different Galapagos Islands is another example of natural selection producing micro- (not macro-) evolution. In other words, while natural selection sometimes explains the survival of the fittest, it does not explain the origin of the fittest.

*Darwin complained [that] his critics did not understand him, but he did not seem to realize that almost everybody, friends, supporters and critics, agreed on one point, his natural selection cannot account for the origin of the variations, only for their possible survival. And the reasons for rejecting Darwin's proposal were many, but first of all that many innovations cannot possibly come into existence through accumulation of many small steps, and even if*

*they can, natural selection cannot accomplish it, because incipient and intermediate stages are not advantageous.*<sup>15</sup>

Actually, natural selection prevents major evolutionary changes. In 1980 the “Macroevolution Conference” was held in Chicago. Roger Lewin, writing for *Science*, described it as a “turning point in the history of evolutionary theory.” He went on to say:

*The central question of the Chicago conference was whether the mechanisms underlying microevolution can be extrapolated to explain the phenomena of macroevolution. At the risk of doing violence to the positions of some of the people at the meeting, the answer can be given as a clear, No.*<sup>16</sup>

*In a generous admission Francisco Ayala, a major figure in propounding the Modern Synthesis [neo-Darwinism] in the United States, said, “We would not have predicted stasis [the stability of species over time] from population genetics, but I am now convinced from what the paleontologists say that small changes do not accumulate.”*<sup>17</sup>

As stated earlier, micro + time macro.

*One could argue at this point that such “minor” changes [microevolution], extrapolated over millions of years, could result in macroevolutionary change. But the observational evidence will not support this argument . . . [examples given] . . . Thus, the changes observed in the laboratory are ≠ not analogous to the sort of changes needed for ≠ macroevolution. Those who argue from microevolution to macroevolution may be guilty, then, of employing a false analogy--especially when one considers that microevolution may be a force of stasis [producing stability], not transformation . . . For those who must describe the history of life as a purely natural phenomenon, the winnowing action of natural selection is truly a difficult problem to overcome. For scientists who are content to describe accurately those processes and phenomena which occur in nature (in particular, stasis), natural selection acts to prevent major evolutionary change.*<sup>18</sup>

## Acquired Characteristics

Acquired characteristics cannot be inherited. For example, the long necks of giraffes did not result from their ancestors stretching their necks to reach high leaves. Nor can the large muscles acquired by a man in a weight lifting program be inherited by his child.

While almost all biologists agree with this statement, many unconsciously slip into the belief, called Lamarckism, that the environment can directly and beneficially change egg and sperm cells. On occasions, Darwin did. This desire for a mechanism for macroevolutionary change reflects the insufficiency of presently claimed mechanisms. A few biologists are actively seeking ways to justify Lamarckism. However, the minor acquired characteristics they are claiming have no real significance for any present theory of organic evolution.<sup>19</sup>

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# Keystroke

## Online Learning Questioned



Money spent on online learning programmes might be money wasted, according to research conducted for IT education company, Com Tech Education Services.

Market research consultancy, The Leading Edge, surveyed training managers at 57 of Com Tech's top Australian customers who have 80,000 employees. While 34 of those companies were using some form of online learning, only five, or 15 per cent, rated it as a "very successful" way to pass on skills, and less than half reported good staff participation or enthusiasm.

"We were not surprised by the results of this survey," says Com Tech's general manager, Steve Ross. "***We believe humans learn best from humans and that online learning is not an acceptable substitute for face-to-face training.*** Staff enthusiasm for this type of learning is low because it is mass personalised and a sterile and artificial form of communication. People are different, yet online courses are pitched to everyone in the same way."

"There is a role for e-learning, but it appears to be best for more simple task-based applications and for gaining specific skills. The best way to use online training would therefore appear to be as a subsequent refresher of course-based skills."

Cheryl Regan, of Auckland training business, The Learning Curve, says ***many online packages are not designed for the way people learn.***

"Many are template-based, where the user just presses buttons. It's not intuitive, so it's not involving the learner." Ms Regan says classroom interaction is essential: "Some universities thought they could get rid of instructors by moving courses online, but they're now finding they need more people, not fewer."

(The above was excerpted from an article in *NZ Herald* 13 November 2000 by Adam Gifford. Emphases added.)

There are obvious implications here for us home educators. You can't beat face-to-face tutoring or mentoring. And it doesn't cost the earth, like a computer and updates and the educational software can! If you do not feel you are sufficiently conversant with the subject matter to teach your child, fine....learn it alongside your child, together exploring and discovering. Your greater years of life experience will enable you to make more connections between the subject being learned and how it fits into the real world, the big picture, than your child will. And you are bonding and strengthening your relationship at the same time. A winning combination!



# Home Educators Did It



Associated Press

(Editor's note: this story is from the USA where the word "college" refers to a tertiary-level institution and is virtually synonymous with "university". A four-year university degree is labeled thusly: 1st year - freshman; 2nd year - sophomore; 3rd year - junior; 4th year - senior.)

## Flying with Candidate Bush

by Laurie Kellman  
Associated Press

Robert Hughes looks like any other 13-year-old school kid, ready for a growth spurt and eager to shed his braces. But he doesn't go to classes at a school. His "classroom" is George W. Bush's campaign plane.

The youngster is being home-schooled by his mom, Karen Hughes, who is Bush's campaign spokeswoman. So Robert's curriculum is heavy on press release-writing.

And his classroom flies.

The campaign plane takes him on field trips to the nation's gymnasiums and veterans' halls for rallies. On-board, he perches on a seat or rests on an elbow watching his mom do everything from advising the candidate to briefing reporters.

Literally a student of politics, Robert Hughes also has become something of an assistant to Karen. "He's my detail man," Karen Hughes says with a laugh. "I rely on him."

Karen wanted to stay in touch with her son as her boss' presidential campaign escalated and required nearly full-time travel. After checking with Robert's school about the home-schooling option, Hughes approached Bush about letting the boy come along.

"I was thrilled to do it," Bush says, with no regrets.

The arrangement doesn't hurt Bush's appeal to women, either, his campaign believes. The candidate sometimes mentions it during town hall meetings, and gets applause back at the mention of home-schooling.

For Robert, the experience seems only to be a plus. Of all of the grownup jobs he's witnessed -- writers, photographers, travel aides, speechwriters -- he finds the work of the Secret Service agents the most interesting.

He gets to see his friends back home on weekends and says he doesn't feel much different from them, despite his unique experiences. Do his buddies tease him about it?

"Nah," he says. "They think it's awesome."

Nicole Tan wants to cure cancer, find a vaccine for AIDS and treat sick children in Vietnam. It might sound impossible to squeeze all that into one lifetime, but Tan has more time than the average college student.

The home educated 12-year-old started her first day at a four-year college this year, 2000, with 14 units of physiology, chemistry and Chinese. The biology major from Byron, California, is the youngest full-time student to ever enroll at the University of California at Davis (near Sacramento). Her only sibling, Andrew, was the youngest student at Davis. Now 14, he is a senior, ready to graduate.

Nicole said she can't imagine what it would be like to be in sixth grade like other 12-year-olds. "Home schooling was a big advantage because you can go at your own pace," she said.

Nicole's legs aren't long enough to touch the floor when she sits back in her chair. Although the shy preteen doesn't look intimidating, she will likely throw off a few test curves.

She passed the state high school proficiency exam three years ago and has since taken enough courses at a Pittsburg, California, community college to make her a junior at Davis...meaning only two years to graduate.

Accelerated home schooling allowed her to skip some dreaded teen-age experiences: junior high school and the SAT exams. "I play with other children my age," Tan said. "I don't study a fixed amount. Sometimes I study all day and sometimes not at all."

University administrators admit they had some concerns about enrolling a 12-year-old, but say Andrew Tan's success at the university convinced them.

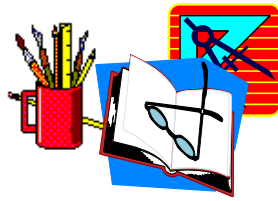
"She has earned the right to be here, and we are pleased to give her the opportunity of some accelerated learning," said admissions director Gary Tudor.

Davis students say their young colleague also should try to squeeze in other college activities. She says she probably won't go to football games, but does want to hang out with her classmates outside of the lecture halls. She might even help them with their homework. "If they ask, probably," she said.

## Preteen Prodigy Enters UC Davis

by Audrey Cooper

# Home Education Research



## Investigating Young Children's Perceptions of Home Schooling, Part

### 1

by Donna Broadhurst  
Adelaide, 1999

(source & copyright unknown)

The notion that education necessarily involves attendance at school is foundational to much contemporary thinking about education. While attendance at school is the recognised form of education for the majority of Australia's children, and indeed for children from many other countries, there are some parents who choose to undertake their children's education at home, thereby challenging the idea that education and school necessarily go together. Homeschooling or home-education can be defined as follows: parents make a conscious decision to provide an education for their child or children in place of that provided by schools, and where the parent or parents are the main teachers or facilitators in the program of education.

Homeschooling is a growing phenomenon in a number of countries (Meighan, 1995; Hunter, 1994; Common & MacMullen, 1986). In the USA, it is estimated that over 500,000 children are being home-educated (Lines, 1996), while in the UK 10,000 families are reported to be homeschooling (Meighan, 1995). In 1994 it was estimated that at least 10,000 people were involved in homeschooling in Australia (Hunter, 1994). While in the USA there is a growing body of research on home-education, in Australia only limited research literature exists. Partly this is because conducting research on home-education is often difficult; homeschoolers are a marginalised group and gaining access can be a problem (Mayberry, Knowles, Ray & Marlow, 1995). The researcher must invest time and effort to gain trust in the homeschooling community. Much of the research, therefore, has been conducted on a non-representative sample of homeschooling families, and presumably conducted by researchers who have shown themselves to be supportive of the homeschooling concept. For the same reason sensitive issues may also have been avoided as research topics. One of the neglected areas of research has been children's perceptions of their home-education (Adams & Purdy 1996; Mayberry *et al*, 1995). This study attempted to redress this by investigating Australian children's perceptions of their home-education.

What is termed the "traditional educational system" has really only been around for about 200 years (Ignas, 1979) and has been dominant only since about the mid 19th century (Smith, 1979) yet school is now the

central activity of children's lives. Schooling has been transformed from a luxury to a necessity and the state has become increasingly responsible for school maintenance and staffing (Boyd & King, 1975; Smith, 1979). The system has been condemned as ineffective - it does not serve all children equally well - and inefficient by numerous educational theorists and writers (e.g. Holt, 1964; Smith, 1986; Illich, 1970; Postman & Weingartner, 1969; Reimer, 1971; Kelley, 1947; Middleton & Hill, 1996). It does not do what it is supposed to do and is very expensive to operate and maintain (Ignas, 1979). Society's response to the failure of mass education is constant innovations in curriculum, teaching methods, classroom organisation (Humphreys & Newcombe, 1975) - but not a fundamental analysis and evaluation of the institution itself, which is what is sorely needed today. There is however, a trend emerging in the USA wherein some educators and schools are working in partnership with homeschooled children being allowed access to resources, independent study programs or part-time enrolments (Dahm, 1996).

Despite this criticism of the institution of schooling, home-education has usually been considered a subversive activity, resisted by educators and education authorities. It has been suggested home-education threatens some of the implicit assumptions to which the educational system clings, such as "there is an important body of knowledge and skills that children should learn", "children will learn this knowledge best in schools", "children learn best in age-graded classrooms" and "teaching is a highly specialised and complex activity that can best be conducted by trained and licensed people" (Common & MacMullen, 1986, p. 7; Meighan, 1984; Smith, 1979). But those assumptions may not stand up to the test. Parental reasons for choosing to homeschool challenge those assumptions. These reasons include dissatisfaction with the curriculum content, conflicts in values between home and school, perceived ineffectiveness of schools, a desire on the part of parents to maintain family unity, concerns about adverse socialisation as a result of school attendance, bullying, regimentation of school, children's special needs not being catered for and family lifestyle (such as an itinerant lifestyle for circus families) (Van Galen, 1989; Webb, 1990; Wartes, 1989; Barratt-Peacock, 1997).

The topic of homeschooling arouses strong feelings - for and against. Opponents frequently voice concerns about the social development of children educated at home (Webb, 1989). However, the research on the effectiveness of home-based education demonstrates that in terms of social skills, social maturity, academic achievement, confidence and communication skills, homeschooled children are superior to their school attending peers (Meighan, 1995; Webb, 1989). Social opportunities outside the home of homeschooled children are often greater than for children attending school (Nicholls, 1997). Others are concerned by the lack of teaching

qualifications of parents (Mayberry et al, 1995). But the possession of teaching qualifications does not guarantee an individual will be an effective teacher, nor does a lack of teaching qualifications automatically lead to ineffective teaching. The home is considered to be an effective learning environment (e.g. Thomas, 1996; Tizard & Hughes, 1984; Jalongo, 1990). It has been suggested that home education is effective because parents engage in an activity called “dovetailing”, where they respond to cues provided by their children to support the next stage of learning as the child decides to encounter it (Wells, 1986, cited in Meighan, 1995). Meighan (1995) suggests that to date, over 30 learning styles have been catalogued and that the homeschooling families he has observed take it for granted that learning styles differ and adjust learning situations accordingly. Students in the Washington homeschool project were found to perform well academically on achievement tests. There was found to be little or no relationship between educational outcomes and parent education level, level of structure in the curriculum, contact with a certified teacher, hours of formal teaching or parent income (Wartes, 1989).

Children who have been home-educated have successfully applied to and been allowed entrance into prestigious universities (Webb, 1989). One family from the USA educated their four sons outside the school system, and the three oldest successfully applied to attend Harvard University (Beaven, 1990). In Australia, a homeschooled youth has recently gained entry to Melbourne University after completing a course designed to assist adult learners prepare for tertiary education (Herbert, 1998). Webb (1989) notes that there appeared to be no prejudice exhibited towards home-educated teenagers and adults when they attempted to obtain employment, despite the absence of the ubiquitous certificate attesting to attainment. She found that people who had been home-educated pursued a wide variety of options post-homeschooling and that these included self-employment, journalism, further education and trades.

Tizard and Hughes’ (1984) study of female preschool children in the UK at home and at nursery school had as one of its aims the identification of anything distinctive about learning that took place at home which differed from the kind of learning that happened at school. They found that at home the children engaged in much more dialogue with an adult than at school, and that the children asked many more questions at home. The talk at home was found to be qualitatively different, with much lengthier dialogues happening in the home context. Tizard and Hughes suggest conversations are a powerful tool for enhancing children’s understanding in a way that is closely matched to their

intellectual level and interests. They found that the pace of academic learning at home was set by the children, who would also terminate the educational sessions when they became too demanding. Here we have some classic examples of exemplary educational practice. Thomas (1996) found during a week “living in” with a home educating family who had two children aged 11 and 13, that incidental conversation covered a vast array of topics and there was a great deal of it going on. The family appeared to have continued the type of learning that Tizard and Hughes found to be so effective in children’s preschool years. Jeub (1994) suggests that homeschooling accomplishes many of the goals of contemporary educational philosophy. *Viz.*, students develop at their own pace, learning is not compartmentalised but integrated, and the need for individual attention and assessment is addressed.

It is important to remember that not all learning requires teaching, learning can and does happen naturally. It can happen when the learner is alone or more often, because we live in a social milieu, it happens when we watch or listen to other people performing activities before we try them ourselves. This happens wherever people live, work and play together (Middleton & Hill, 1996). We should be taking account of the rapid pace of change, and work on recognising and facilitating learning which does not take place in a classroom. We need to re-examine the role of schools and teachers and perhaps recognise that “the very idea of a complete preparation for life is illusory” and that given the changes during this century the “canonical position of pedagogical precept or hallowed curriculum may look like an archaic survival” (Boyd & King, 1975, pp 412-413).

Meighan (1995) reported that home-educated children who had previously attended school reported to him that they were able to be more efficient in their learning at home than when at school, in that it took them less time to get through their work. Another aspect which these children commented on was the relaxed

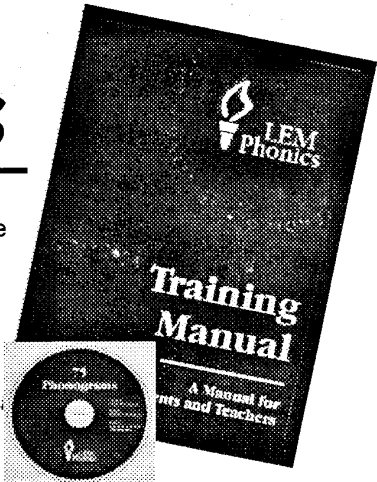
# Home Educators


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atmosphere at home, which encouraged them to be self-managing about their learning. Beaven (1990) found families were free to organise their time and any "school work" that might be undertaken was dealt with within a couple of hours in the morning. This left the children with many hours each day to pursue other interests of their own choosing. If this is the case for many home-educating families, there are opportunities here for children to make decisions how to spend their time and thus have some control in their lives. It is possible children would derive a great deal of satisfaction from this sense of control and it would presumably impact on their perceptions of their home-education.

This study was based on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory and the notion that how the environment is perceived can affect people's development. Bronfenbrenner's theory of human development envisages a series of nested environments impacting and being impacted upon by the developing person. The innermost environment is the microsystem, the single immediate setting containing the developing subject, which is defined as "a pattern of activities, roles and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given setting with particular physical and material characteristics" (p. 22). Bronfenbrenner states the crux of the definition is in the term "experienced", which he related to Lewin's (1935 cited in Bronfenbrenner, 1979) idea of "life space", wherein reality not as it exists, but as it appears to a person, is what is of importance for understanding behaviour and development. Environmental events and conditions outside the microsystem can have a profound influence on behaviour and development within the microsystem and such influences have a pivotal role on defining the meaning of the immediate situation to the person experiencing it. This would include values and attitudes held by wider society, in this case about homeschooling. Investigating children's perceptions of their home-education could therefore be considered worthwhile in developmental terms. Given that attendance at a school is the norm for urban-dwelling children in Australia, those children who do not attend a school are in the minority. Van Galen (1989) suggests one of the social consequences of home-education and part of its hidden curriculum is children learn about society's limited tolerance for dissent. This leads one to question whether children who are being homeschooled feel marginalised in any way. It was of interest to the researcher how these children perceived (i) their home-education experiences, (ii) their neighbourhood relationships and (iii) institutional schooling.

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# CHomeS Round Up



## Older Women Training Younger Women — Titus 2:3-5 Part 2

by Barbara Smith

[In Part 1 Barbara introduced the idea that these older women just don't seem to be around...well, they're around, but not available or willing or qualified to teach the younger ones....and there is so much a young Christian home educating mum needs and wants to know! It is at first surprising to see that Titus 2:4 bids the older women to train the younger ones how to love their husbands (maybe not so surprising) **and their children!!** Apparently God knows that mums need to be taught **how to Biblically love** their husbands and children. Much instruction is found in Proverbs 31, and Part 2 picks up as Barbara continues to review ideas from this passage.]

V13 She **works** with **willing** hands.

V14 She is like merchant ships which were fetchers and carriers.

As an example, we see in Genesis 24:18-21 that Rebekah worked hard for the servant of Abraham. She worked "quickly". She said, "I will draw for your camels also, until they have **done** drinking". "So she **quickly** emptied her jar into the trough and **ran** again to the well to draw, and she drew for **all** his camels. The man gazed at her in silence to learn whether the Lord had prospered his journey or not". Do you know how long that servant (and the men who were with him V54) gazed at her in silence? Verse 10 says that there were 10 camels. They had just come on a long journey. One camel drinks 20 gallons, so 10 camels would drink 200 gallons. In those days they used water jars that held 5 gallons of water. So that would have taken 40 trips from well to trough. If it took Rebekah 3 minutes to fill the water jar, run to the trough, empty the water jar and run back, it would have taken her 2 hours to have watered the camels until they had "done drinking". Rebekah must have been strong. She worked hard, and she was willing and she worked quickly.

### Children Are Our Holy Things

V15 She is quick to get out of bed in the morning, and knows that she is the heart of the home, the one in charge. She personally makes the meals, and oversees everything regarding her family. Ezra 44:6 says God gave the charge to the Priests not to the uncircumcised. Are we keeping the charge of the holy things God has given into our care, or have we handed them over to the uncircumcised? What holy things has God given to us? **Our children! Our seed!** Children are a blessing from God. When we interfere in this process our objective is to render the seed within our bodies ineffective, to

purposefully make them non-productive, rather than letting God's perfect will take place. The Bible is not saying we must have lots of children, 15 or so at least. The Bible is about being available to God, being in the center of God's will. It is about being obedient to God. God is about Life, promoting, protecting, defending life; He is not about killing life or our seed. It is about letting God decide the size of our family, about letting God bless us with His blessings. God will supply all our needs - so we can have more babies. Are we willing for God to choose the size of our families? Are we willing to face work and do work like a Rebekah?

**Our Babies and Toddlers.** I let my children move away from me; I don't move away from them. I believe that the beginning of peer pressure is when the children are still very young and **we leave them** in creches, daycare or with babysitters that they are not intimate with. Let your children tell you when they are ready to move away from you. When Jedediah was just little, we were invited to a 50th birthday party (yes, we are nearly that age). I said that I couldn't come unless my baby came with me. (There are not many people that age with babies). When babies and toddlers are left to be with lots of other children, they learn to depend on other children rather than depend on the parents God assigned to them to be dependent upon.

**School Age Children.** The peer pressure increases into school age whether at a Christian school or a State school, for with whom do they spend the bulk of each day?

**Youth.** This is where peer pressure really takes over. More and more I keep hearing from people who say that their children were great until they went to secondary school: then they went astray. But be sure of this: it didn't begin in secondary school. Teenagers don't just suddenly become peer dependent when they become teenagers. In many cases it is that we have been training them since babies to be peer dependent. It only manifests itself in the teenage years. The foundations for parents losing their children begins in day care and primary school.

### So How Do We Keep From Losing Our Children?

How do we look after the Holy things God has given us? How do we keep our children pure? Proverbs 22:6 may say, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it," but what does it mean to "train up a child" and what is "the way he should go"?

The who, what, why, when, where and how of it are all found in Deuteronomy 6:1-9 (and many other places as well....look some up yourself!): "Now this is the commandment, and these are the statutes and judgments which the Lord your God has commanded me to teach you (the WHAT), that you may observe them in the land which you are crossing over to possess (the WHY); that you may fear the Lord your God (another WHY) to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you (another WHY), you and your son and your grandson (the

WHO; and note, we don't stop with our children), all the days of your life (the HOW LONG), and that your days may be prolonged (another WHY). Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe it (the HOW), that it may be well with you (yet another WHY), and that you may multiply greatly (note most of these WHYS are for our blessing, including this one about multiplying *greatly*) as the Lord God of your fathers has promised you -- 'a land flowing with milk and honey'. Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength. (the WHAT — love God — and the HOW — with everything we've got. This should be our number one goal for home educating our children). And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them (the WHAT) diligently (the HOW) to your children (the WHO), and shall talk of them (the WHAT) when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up (the WHEN & WHERE -- everywhere, all the time).

### The Fear of the Lord

Proverbs 1:7-9 says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction. Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and reject not your mother's teaching; for they are a fair garland for your head, and pendants for your neck." (RSV)

Psalms 111:10 - 112:2 says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who practice it. His praise endures for ever! Praise the Lord. Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in his commandments! His descendants will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed." (RSV)

From these two passages we are told that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge. How can our children learn anything when they are in the State schools where the fear of the Lord is forbidden by Section 77 of the Education Act (the "secular" clause)? If the fear of the Lord is the *beginning* of wisdom and knowledge, and the State primary schools are forbidden to teach this, exactly what does that leave the schools to pass on to the children? How can our children be taught "diligently" the commandments, statutes and judgements of God, unless we do it ourselves?

Proverbs 6:20-22 says, "My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not your mother's teaching. Bind them upon your heart always; tie them about your neck. When you walk they will lead you; when you lie down, they will watch over you; and when you awake, they will talk with you." (RSV) Combining this with Deuteronomy 6 and Proverbs 1 above, we find the parents are commanded to diligently teach their children, and that the children are to look back on his fathers instructions and commandments and to *reject not their mother's teaching*. If we teach our children "diligently" for half an hour a day, then that will be reflected in how long our children will remember it when they are old. However, if we diligently teach our children the commandments, statutes and judgements of

God and to love the Lord their God with all their heart, with all their soul and with all their strength as they sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up....then when they are old they will know that God's Word is for all of life and for all of time. It is under this scenario that the Scripture is fulfilled: our "descendants will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed."

Then too we will have children who are Holy and Pure. Genevieve our 20 year old is like other children who have been home educated, she is holy and pure. She has not been on a date, she has not been kissed. Her desire is that her first kiss be on her wedding day. What a contrast to children who have been to school and been influenced by worldly standards, and unfortunately this includes Christian schools.

(Now back to Proverbs 31):

V16 She is not impulsive or compulsive.

V17 She is strong and eager to get started. In Genesis 24:51-61 we see that Rebekah's mother had trained her daughter for life. Both Rebekah and her parents were willing for her to leave the next day, even though they at first asked for 10 days. Her mother was confident that she had trained her daughter in all that she needed to know, and Rebekah was sure in the training.

V26 "She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue." This ties us back to just what Titus 2 says we older women need to be doing in regard to our younger Sisters. Younger women, seek out older Godly women who are Biblically qualified and encourage them to share their Godly wisdom with you.....you will both benefit.

V28 She has invested her time into her children. She has looked well to the needs of her husband and glorified God in all her doings. Well, this isn't most of us older ones today....we messed up. As pioneers in HE and as stay-at-home mums, we had to learn things the hard way. Our older children absorbed our mistakes, our younger ones are benefitting, and we now want to pass on what we've learned to our younger Sisters. We trust that the Lord will impress His life-long calling on you younger women and on our daughters, as in:

V30-31 It is the work of her hands that will bring her praise. Investing in others rather than in self will bring praise from others. I want to be willing to be willing. How about you?

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# Letters



## What Support!

(I recently outlined the support group network and gave a brief list of the resources available just in NZ on the Internet and by post to a home educator. Her response:) Wow!!!!!! that's about all I can say, Craig. And anyone who knows me knows that it takes a lot to leave me speechless. This really puts everything in perspective for me now. With this much support out there, it makes you wonder why there aren't even less children in school than there is now. I shall make it my mission to spread the word.

T...A....  
Auckland

## Love It

I loved reading your magazine, it is very informative and encouraging. I am from NZ, although have lived here for many years now, but find it interesting to know what is happening on the NZ home front.

Mrs Lee Rowe  
Queensland

## Absolutely Love It

Thank you so much for a rapid reply. I do appreciate the time you have spent on our behalf. I have been home-schooling for only 3 years. I absolutely love it. It seems to get better as I work the program into our daily life being careful not to duplicate the "failed" public system. Thanks again and I look forward to reading/searching the information provided.

Marina Mackintosh  
Australia

## Pat on the Back

I have an acquaintance in M....a who parttime teaches rebellious reject children (my terminology) at the local high school. She tells me it costs \$1,000 (yes, one thousand) each *week* to keep *one* of these youngsters in school. One of our church homegroup leaders is an accountant at a local firm, who does the books for some of the schools here. She is aghast at the pittance we receive from the MoE to help us in our efforts. She says schools are doing very well financially, thank you. Why aren't we? Another friend who teaches at T... Girls High tells me he spends about two minutes on each student's review reports per year. The school inspector breezes in and out again. He can't understand why HEs should be subject to such intensive scrutiny. In an odd sort of way all these professional people encourage me enormously. When I think we don't do enough, aren't achieving enough, they tell me my children are impressive!

My daughter's friends are all in school. Sometimes I unobtrusively compare their educational and developmental status with that of my children. And within our meagre means and often unconventional circumstances, we always do better than I think, all by the grace of God. And so far my children have not fallen or begun to slip into the moral and spiritual

wayside so many of our school educated youngsters slip into. That is an achievement in itself.

We save the MoE much money. Most of our children do not go from school to dole-queue. Nor do they become drug addicts or criminals. We do it for our love of our children, not to be a burr in the MoE's side. I think we deserve a pat on the back, don't you?

(Name and address  
withheld by Editor)

## Not All Is Rosey

We need the supervisory allowance for books, etc., as we're unemployed, but according to our ERO review are doing a great job.

Our local school disgusts us in their cover-ups, power plays, teacher thieving and one male teacher year after year walking in on the girls changing after P.E. and making sexy remarks to them. Then you have the drunk and dope-smoking teachers there as well. Our eldest went to school there, for what, I don't know. He didn't receive an education, just a bad attitude. As we didn't put money into the school like the surrounding rich farmers, our son was never allowed to go on trips. The calf club prizes all went to the farmers' children regardless of how bad they were. We are so glad God told us to save our other children by home schooling them.

(Name and address  
withheld)

## Quite Capable

Our boys have nearly finished their polytechnic courses and will both have employment. We weren't going to homeschool our five year old, but after a few days at school, we changed our minds. The teacher was very motivated and enthusiastic and Bethany enjoyed her time there, but the reality would be that we would be using the school to babysit because we now know we are quite capable when it comes to educating our children, thanks to the wealth of resources and encouragement available.

Plus, like it or not (and a lot of our fellow church goers don't like it) the school is not neutral, and the ideas and philosophy the teacher was bringing into the classroom were not God honouring, despite her intentions to lift the self-esteem of the children and to make everyone "feel good".

Thanks again for all the hard work you and Barbara do to encourage the rest of us. We enjoy receiving your publications and scanning the emails. Hope you manage to get a break over the summer and have time to put your feet up!

Alan & Vicky Taplin  
Whangamata

# Teaching Tips



## Do You Have a Child Who Struggles?

by Beth Sherwood  
Rotorua

I have been asked often about what to do with a late learner, and I thought that this time I would share some of those thoughts and insights that have come from my experience. As some of you know, my third child has fitted into this category. He turned 9 in October and I am only this year happy that his reading level and ability are to a suitable level for his age. He is still below where my first two children were at his age, but hey, he is reading and actually wanting to. When I had my ERO review two years ago, I was very concerned that he was not interested in reading, that he would forget words as soon as he had read them, and that the whole thing seemed to be such a struggle. To be honest, it made me feel like a failure and giving up.

So with that brief background here are some thoughts and encouragement. (By the way the review officer was not concerned about him, said that boys are sometimes slow learners and it was good I was getting him to do little bits of everything.)

Relax. (Easier said than done!!!!!!) Your tension will not help the learning process. Take a look at that wonderful curriculum you mortgaged your house for and see if it really is the right thing for your child. Each child learns differently. If you are not familiar with learning styles, do some research. Diana Waring's book is one good resource.

Take time to go over the basics, lots of play dough, drawing, puzzles etc. (My son only got interested in these things last year. But keep offering them anyway.) Teach the basics and reinforce with lots of hands-on activities where possible.

I know in some education circles they say to leave the child until it is completely ready. But that's hard to do with neighbours and family watching. If you can do that then go for it, although you still should give the child plenty of some of the above anyway. I had to throw out all those workbooks and make my own short activities. A little story writing here, some phonics practice with cards, etc., and maths with manipulatives.

One of the biggest things you can do to prepare any child is to READ ALOUD to them each day for as long as you have time to. Use a variety of books, let your child choose some of them at the library, and also choose topics that fit the science and social studies slot and read aloud from these. There are heaps in the library. To follow up you may get them to draw a picture, act it out (jumping round the room like a kangaroo is such fun), narrate back, this is telling back

what they remember, ask some pointed questions and listen to the answers, and anything else your creative mind comes up with. A craft from the time is another thing.

One thing we did last year was to study the life cycle of the frog. We read books, kept a tadpole, and made this big chart. Each child drew two stages from the life cycle, then they narrated to me a sentence or two about it. Then my third child got excited and wanted to copy them out on the computer. And that's what he did (much to Mum's surprise). We pasted them all on a large piece of cardboard and hung it on the wall. It was great. By the way this activity was with my three younger children.

Use everything to stimulate an interest in learning. Observe nature in the backyard, the work on the construction site down the road, etc. Don't feel a failure, it can be a struggle, but slow down the pace and what you expect from this child and gradually you will be rewarded with each improvement in your child's learning. It is very rewarding when even the smallest concept is grasped.

I hope these thoughts are an encouragement to any of you who are experiencing this in your home schooling, and I know that just knowing that you are not alone, it is not an isolated problem, will give you another boost to keep on going. Bless you all heaps this term, as we all try to do the best for each of our children.

(Beth Sherwood has been homeschooling for 9 years, with five children aged 13, 11, 9, 7 & 5. She may be contacted at [sherwood@maxnet.co.nz](mailto:sherwood@maxnet.co.nz). Article from Manukau HS Support Group Newsletter. Used by permission.)

## Geography

1. Draw maps of make-believe countries, showing first the natural features (rivers, mountains) and deciding on general weather patterns. Then discuss why & where they should place the manmade features (highways, major cities).
2. Photocopy maps. Cut them into puzzle pieces and use rivers, roads and borders to reconstruct. Or just give one piece and see if they can work out where this is from the names of features on that one piece.
3. Collect ways of counting from 1 to 10 in as many different languages as you can and learn them. This *really* impresses an ERO officer, not to mention the neighbours!
4. Design a set of Postage Stamps for a country.
5. What plants and animals would your yard eventually have if allowed to "go natural"? Block off a section and see what happens.
6. Inspect the labels from the foods, clothing, toys, books, etc., in your home. How much is imported and from where compared to home-grown?



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