

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

Featured Family

Mark & Carol Munroe

Jonathan (13), David (20), Cameron (8),
Andrea (17) and Amy (16)

Feature Family
Colour Photo of a Home Schooling Family
Cover is Navy Blue background with
Silver Gray lettering

KEYSTONE

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Keystone correspondence to:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Editorial



You may notice this issue is coming out quite a bit earlier this month. In fact, about a month earlier! Well, praise the Lord! He caused a close relation to make a large profit on the stock market last year, moved him to give his relations some of that in cash at Christmas 2000, and we are using our bit to visit as a whole family my relations in California and Washington for the first time, plus the Warings in South Dakota, plus *The Teaching Home* editor in Portland, Oregon. And since our flight stops overnight in Tokyo, we will re-establish contact with a Japanese family who attended our church earlier this year and encourage them to consider home schooling. While in the USA I hope to take my sons to a live gridiron football game....I haven't been to one in 30 years!!! And Lord willing, we will spend some time with Christian Home Educators in British Columbia at Christmas time....our first white one. Since we leave the country immediately after being at the Home Education Workshop in Papakura 3 November, we had to get this *Keystone* out beforehand!

The World View Conference in Auckland of 7-12 April 2002 is being staged with home educators uppermost in our hearts and minds. Consequently we have not advertised or promoted it among the wider Christian community as yet. So before we do, make sure you consider whether you need to go and take steps to reserve a place.

I've done something I haven't done before: on page 19 is an article that is also appearing in *TEACH Bulletin* this month. It has a number of points a group of very experienced and fairly objective home educators put together as a foundation for further debate on how such a diverse and amorphous group such as home educators can maintain lines of communication and work together to preserve the best possible legal and social environment. There are several huge blocks of home educators in the USA, defined pretty much according to religious, philosophical and political characteristics, and there is, sadly, very little communication among these blocks. In fact, there is some quite virulent criticism of some by others. We really want to avoid that kind of thing here as much as we can. It is going to be hard, for Christian home educators are not united on many issues. Once you add the growing number of non-Christian home educators to the mix, you may wonder if there is any common ground at all. Yet to maintain the current excellent political and legal home education environment in NZ, we need to become familiar with the issues and debate the various political options open to us. The idea is to understand why we differ and be quick to respect, rather than revile, our differences and to seek the areas where we can unite before the opposition when needed. My tentative comments are on page 20. Please contribute your comments on these issues for printing in future issues of *Keystone*.

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**When you want to teach children to think,
you begin by treating them seriously
when they are little, giving them
responsibilities, talking to them candidly,
providing privacy and solitude for them,
making them readers and thinkers of
significant thoughts from the beginning.
.....Bertrand Russell**

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

The Home Education Foundation is a charitable trust established to serve, promote and strengthen the home education community in New Zealand. Since November 1998 the Foundation has contracted Craig & Barbara Smith (whose six children are all totally home educated) to serve the home education community full-time. They are continuing to build on their volunteer work since 1986 in the areas of publishing (such as *Keystone* and *TEACH Bulletin*), counselling, correspondence with politicians and educationalists, lobbying, researching issues of concern to home educators, running National Leadership Forums (annually since 1996) and National Christian Home Education Conferences (six since 1987), initiating the National Home Education Awareness Week, moderating five home education email discussion groups, producing media releases, speaking at local seminars, hosting overseas speaker tours, and networking among local support groups and with overseas home schooling organisations. Their efforts are conducted under the eye of the Home Education Foundation's Trustees and a Board of Reference which represents 21 locations all over New Zealand.

The Home Education Foundation, Christian Home Schoolers of New Zealand and the projects they take on are supported entirely by home educators subscribing to *Keystone* and/or *TEACH Bulletin*, investing in a TimeChart or making tax-deductible donations either by cheque, credit card or by automatic bank payment (ask us for a form). The Foundation can also be supported through Telecom and Clear who both give a percentage (5% & 2.5% respectively) of your toll bill to the Foundation, *painlessly and without costing you an extra cent!* Telecom subscribers can ring 0800 724 665 and ask to support the Home Education Foundation, ph. (06) 357-4399, through Telecom's "School Connection" Programme. Clear subscribers can ring 0508 888 800 and ask to support the Home Education Foundation, ph. (06) 357-4399, through Clear's "Friends of the School" Programme. Please ring today!



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Feature Family

Mark & Carol Munroe

of North Shore City

When our first son was around three years old, we became interested in home-schooling him both then and on into his primary years. That was 17 years ago and home-schooling was considered a radical idea way back then.

For a number of years we were asked, "And when is little David going to go to school?" You could just hear those silent words, "and get a real education." I am pleased to report that David is now at his second year at Massey University and doing very well along side those who received a "real education." His sister Andrea (17) is at her first year university, and Carol still home-schools our other three children at home; Amy (16), Jonathan (13), and Cameron (8).

I think it is fair to say that our foremost opponents to home-schooling were fellow church members. Why were we not supporting the local Christian school? We were told we were "selfish" home-schooling our first child when we should be using our God-given talents to teach the children of others as well.

As rewarding as home-schooling is, I think the parents - and particularly the women folk -- need all the encouragement they can get. If I had my time over again, I would still stand by the decision to home-school, but I think it is best to attend a church that has a healthy attitude towards home-schooling if possible. I fully support Christian schools, and have spent some time teaching at two of them, but there is something wrong if home-schooling parents are supposed to feel guilty for taking full responsibility upon themselves to educate their children. As we know them, schools are a recent phenomenon. Against the record of human history, home-schooling is the norm.

And what has kept us going when times were tough? There have been times when our luxury of home-schooling seemed to be in jeopardy. Carol has rung me at work and said, "That's it. I'm not home-schooling any more. Jonathan is going to school!" I am pleased to say that we have worked through those times, and Jonathan has still never "gone to school." Actually, the

mere threat to him that we would send him to school should he not be more accommodating to our instruction has helped him mend his ways.

I think there have been several things that have encouraged me to help my wife home-school our children. These things have not come all at once but have developed over the years. The first is that there is a special relationship with parents and their children whereupon the parents are introducing their children to the world that God has made. How to think as a Christian and take on the world for God's glory is so key. This is so much more able to be accomplished in the home-schooling environment than in the Christian school or state school. How can we say that the world belongs to God and then send our children off to the state school for history and science lessons? I find the mere fact that we are home-schooling, whilst saying to our children that we should be faithful witnesses to others we meet, is a consistency worth preserving; we are trying to change the world and not be so immersed in it that we are molded by it.

The second source of encouragement is the many parents and their children that we have met over the years. For almost as many years as we have been home-schooling, we have been selling home-schooling material to home-schoolers and Christian schools. This has given us the privilege of meeting many fine folk we have had come through our home. I think without exception I have found home-schooled teenagers pleasantly different to those schooled otherwise. They are able to relate to adults with no hang-up about a so-called generation gap, and they do not have a self-absorbed ego.

Thirdly, we have known several children who were home-schooled for their earlier years but sent off to state school around 14 years old. The survival statistics are poor. It seems that in the teenage years, it is just as important to protect your children from undue peer pressure and a godless environment. If the Bible says, "Bad company ruins good morals", why do we have to keep on proving it?

In the earlier years of home-schooling I was in the fortunate position of being able to teach the kids (three of them at that time) one morning a week whilst Carol went out for groceries. They were good years, and the regular, purposeful teaching was rewarding. Since then, as a father, my involvement in home-schooling has been largely confined to daily family devotions. I think at the very least this is one area where fathers can be involved when they are often precluded from further involvement due to the responsibilities of work outside the home. Though kids will learn all sorts of necessary things from their mothers, the impact of the religious teaching of the fathers is immense.

In more recent years, Sunday afternoons have often been a time when we can enjoy the children the most. I think in times past we were too busy on a Sunday with church matters that we neglected our own children. I think this is a big mistake for young families. I have often wondered what the children will remember most

of their childhood when they leave home, and I dread to think that it would ever be that dad was too busy to spend time with them.

... and now a word or two from Andrea

I have lived in the Munroe family for over 17 years, and so have learned many things about home schooling. One is to keep a low profile to avoid flying textbooks when things go wrong. Homeschooling doesn't always have to be a quiet operation, nor does it have to have a lot of routine, but it is extremely convenient:

a) convenient to the pantry. This is very useful for both students and teacher.

b) convenient in terms of flexibility. We have been allowed to follow our interests -- woodwork, music, folk-art, line dancing, drama, swimming -- even one game of cricket! One was enough. And then there are field trips -- Rangitoto, beaches, the skytower, the Waitakeres, Kelly Tarltons, the zoo...

You don't have to conform to a particular system or teach in a particular way, just so long as you teach, and learn.

Now, a point that is really original about home-schoolers, I think, anywhere in the world....I'd even say anywhere in the universe: they learn, they have fun while they learn sixty-seven percent of the time, and they really think that learning is a lifelong thing. And we learn to learn. The funny thing is some people think that education is a definitive thing -- you collect it for a few years and then you're done. Nope. Here's the shocker -- education isn't just knowing how to count! Which is a relief, because anyone who has tried to count the "one" point in this paragraph should have run out of phalanges by now. Education is also life-skills. Character skills. Social skills (which means people skills, not making one's self dizzy 3:00 a.m. Saturday at the Froth and Bubble).

In fact, not much academic know-how is needed when starting bursary, or a degree, because they start at the beginning -- how to use the library, how to write an essay, how to become a motivated, self-directed learner (what's that?!...never heard of it in my life). Unfortunately they didn't teach me to write properly, how inconvenient is that, which of course is why this passage is full of grammar mistakes.

But what is really important about home-schooling is the relationships built within the family. Building these relationships is not easy all the time, I note, as I dodge another text-book. We have our good and bad times -- kids and parents. At least, my experience says so. But however imperfect, if we children can regard our families as supportive, solid, and secure, there under our God to guide and comfort, then homeschooling has imparted the invaluable.

The Faith of Us Fathers

The Christian Man and His Children, Part 2

by Craig Smith

The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it? -- Jeremiah 17:9

Last time we established that the Lord our God is going to hold us fathers responsible for how we raise, shepherd and disciple His children who have been given to us by Him that we might steward them on His behalf. And the Lord has so ordered things that in fact we willingly co-operate with Him in their conception; that is, we cannot say to God, "I never asked for these children. Why did You give them to me?" The Lord has delivered our children into our hands, we are responsible for them, and He will call us to account for how we rear them.

We need to have a clear understanding about the inner nature of these our children. Yes, they are little chips off the old block in many ways. But don't think for a moment they are little bundles of innocence. In a solely human respect they are lovely to behold and speak to us of human innocence like nothing else apart from the person of Christ. And they appear to do nothing intentionally bad or evil for a while anyway from their birth. Yet "I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me" (Psalm 51:5). Our children arrive in our arms as little bundles of depravity and it's all downhill from there....unless we train them and shepherd them to higher ground.

The Lord tells us through Jeremiah (see above NKJV) that our hearts are more deceitful than anything else..... that is, we are prone to self-deception! We see lovely little babies and think, "How sweet!" We receive kisses and cards from our youngsters and think, "My, but they have little hearts of gold." Be careful: their hearts are the worst parts of them: deceitful and desperately wicked, says the Scripture; so wicked one is hard pressed to understand the degree of wickedness found there. We have all very recently witnessed the incomprehensible nature of this evil in human hearts as passenger aircraft ploughed into the twin towers of New York City. While our children do not manifest evil as much as they could, as much as they are apparently capable of, to the praise of God's mercy and grace toward us, we must not underestimate the capacity for evil that could develop within them if separated too much from His Word and His people. Charles Manson, Idi Amin, Osama bin Laden, Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin

and Pol Pot were all lovely little innocent-looking babies at one stage.

Although there is that fallen nature within them which gives them a downhill tendency, this is not the natural state of affairs. Neither our children nor ourselves exist in a state of normalcy: we are cursed with a fatal sickness called sin, which will eventually bring us to the grave. Unregenerate folks and unbelievers either think we are all basically good and morally healthy (I'm Ok, You're Ok) or that we're evolving in that direction and with Polyanna discount the notion of evil and put it down to misunderstandings (....or religious bigotry, a malady secular folks reckon they never catch!) So we need to carefully take our medication and follow the Great Physician's orders, for both ourselves and our children. This is why our lifestyles do and must differ from the unbelievers: we are sick and we know it. They are just as sick, but refuse to acknowledge it. As Christians we are taking measures to counter our sickness: we live and train our children to live godly, disciplined lives, obedient to the Scriptures. Unbelievers reckon life is just the way it is, so let's make the best of it and hope for the best. Christians, even aware as we are of our sickness and frailty, are called to a much higher objective than that....to show forth His glorious light out of these earthen vessels, demonstrating that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us (II Corinthians 4:7).

By virtue of the children being created after the likeness of God, by virtue of His grace and mercy toward them and us, by virtue of the sanctifying work of His Holy Spirit and the living word read and preached to them, by virtue of the positive effects of our prayers and examples and instructions and corrections our children do develop godly characters and sweet personalities. This is how it should be. But do note: it doesn't happen all by itself. We recall that we are fatally infected by sin. Proverbs 22:15 says, "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction drives it far from him." We are told to use the rod of correction, generally taken to mean corporal chastisement, to drive the sin and rebellion (foolishness) out of our children when it manifests itself, lest it be allowed to settle in and become a permanent fixture of their personalities. In addition, and just as importantly, we are to instruct in good behaviour, model good behaviour and pray the Lord will regenerate their hearts so they'll desire good behaviour and loathe the bad.

This two-pronged approach to godly training (to love the good and loathe the bad) is sensible and logical.... but far from easy to perform. First and foremost again, men, we must be sterling examples of this. Trifling with sin is asking for trouble. If you flirt with questionable TV shows, videos and publications, your children may do more than flirt: and being young will be far more deeply, and negatively, influenced by it. Being slack in performing our duties is all the excuse a youngster needs to himself procrastinate when he should act decisively. Instead let our children see us rub our hands in anticipation of each new day, a new set of 24 hours the Lord has graciously granted that we may serve Him all the more, strive to become more like Him, give of our selves to others, struggle to understand the issues of the day from the Biblical perspective and to then order our ways accordingly. Apart from being ourselves consistent, we also need to spend time with our children shaping their tastes by our enthusiasm in loving righteousness and by our example in hating sin.

I Thessalonians 2:11-12 (RSV) says, "...for you know how, like a father with his children, we *exhorted* each one of you and *encouraged* you and *charged* you to lead a life worthy of God, Who calls you into His own kingdom and glory." We're talking high standards here. And fathers are specifically alluded to as doing three things to build their children's lives to be worthy of God. Exhort is what a more experienced man does to one much younger, what a superior does to an inferior, to bring him up to the higher level: it is mostly a one-way flow. It is drawing the immature into experiences that will try and test them but that will also be fun, exciting, challenging. Yes, there is a sense of duty about them, but that doesn't mean they have to be dull and boring. Impart vision, men, while doing routine chores: "Mowing these lawns is tending to this property

the Lord has entrusted to us, so our work is for the Lord, and He tells me all labour for Him is not in vain!!” (Colossians 3:23-24, I Corinthians 15:58). Fathers, we are to exhort our children to come up to where we (hopefully) are, occupying a place of godly character, respected in the church and community, fulfilling responsibilities to our wives and bosses.

Encourage is what men do to one another, how peers sharpen each other up: the flow is two ways. By the time our children are young adults, we should get a lot of encouragement from their fellowship, their insights into Scripture, their respect for elders, their pure relationships with their peers. There is a mutual respect, for your children know you are fair and wise and they have seen your hunger and thirst for righteousness. Though they no longer think you can do no wrong, they know you will not rest until you’ve tried to right your wrongs, no matter how difficult it is to apologise, no matter how expensive and inconvenient it is to make restitution. And your gnarled old heart almost melts as you watch them react in the same godly way to the wrongs they commit! At this time we are not ashamed (a real understatement!) as we stand shoulder to shoulder with them in the gate (Psalm 127:5). Your children don’t have to go job hunting: because of your reputation and standards of excellence and because of what people can see in your children’s behaviour, job offers are coming in all the time.

Charge is what one does who is not going along, it is passing the responsibility on to another. Even home educated children leave home. They will take jobs away from home for a few hours at first, then maybe a couple of days a week. Then it will be full time. Each time you will remind them that their future reputations are being formed, that your own name and reputation which you have painstakingly built up over decades is also riding on their shoulders. The Name of Christ will also be adorned...or muddied...by the way they act and fulfil their responsibilities toward others. These are important concepts, and we need to charge our children to remember who they are and Who they represent. They may do a big OE or study in another city. You will charge them to keep the faith, to defend the faith, to correct their opponents with gentleness.

Training our children is a full-time job. And it is to carry on into their adulthood. How on earth can the task be done when our children are separated from us for a big chunk of time each day at school? Well, the Lord is merciful, and He appears to have ordered things so that the caring home and loving mum and concerned dad are the major influences even when a school is interposed. How much more effective can our commitment be by removing the interposed school and educating at home!

Learning Disabilities



Homeschooling LD/ADD Children, Part 2

by Suzanne H. Stevens

Who Will Do the Teaching?

The one ingredient absolutely essential is total commitment. Without enthusiasm and co-operation from every family member, educating children at home is not likely to be successful. In most homeschooling families the mother does the bulk of the day-to-day instruction, but fathers are often actively involved in the teaching of a subject or two. The men often volunteer for math or science and do their part in the evening after they get home from work.

Most families that are providing school at home are quick to point out that homeschooling is a lifestyle -- an undertaking that involves every member of the family every day of the year. By making such a commitment to the process of educating children, every family activity takes on meaning as part of the teaching. Vacations become field trips where new skills can be applied and developed. Hobbies and leisure activities become elements of the academic program. There is no such thing as a day off. Everything that happens to a child is seen as educational.

The traits that make a parent suited to the task of homeschooling have more to do with temperament than background or education. Planning and carrying out a good educational program for a child requires patience, courage, creativity, determination, persistence, energy, enthusiasm, optimism and more patience.

Parental Pitfalls

Some people are not cut out to be teachers. They have the wrong temperament for the day-to-day supervision of those who are struggling to master a new skill. They want to be helpful, flexible, encouraging, inspiring and kind, but some part of their makeup prevents them from doing so.

Perfectionist parents make terrible teachers. They fail to allow beginners to make the mistakes necessary for the gradual development of skills and understanding. Students don’t learn everything all at once. It takes practice and experience. When there is no tolerance for errors, learning becomes a slow and painful process. Those who can’t bear to let up on the pupil until an exercise is letter-perfect are best advised to leave the teaching to someone else.

A homeschooling mom and her twelve-year-old LD/ADD daughter were at each other’s throats constantly. The girl had been in and out of several schools. Her lack of social skills made her classroom experiences a horror story of humiliation and rejection. She was also hyperactive, extremely distractible, poorly co-ordinated

turn a child into a “loner”. Yet for some children, particularly those with poor social skills, it is a kindness to remove them from the constant burden of having to interact with their peers.

Children who have trouble paying attention cannot tune out the activity going on around them. They notice everything. Only a handful of teachers present their lessons with such dynamic energy that all the students in the class keep their minds riveted on their schoolwork. Thus, in most classrooms, children with an attention deficit disorder spend most of their time with their eyes on their classmates rather than their teacher. If there’s any horsing around going on, they are likely to be in the middle of it. Sometimes they are the ringleaders. Often they are mindless followers. All too frequently they are the victims.

When families switch to homeschooling, this entire social problem is eliminated. The distractions caused by the presence of other children no longer pull attention away from schoolwork. By placing LD and ADD youngsters in an environment where they cannot be influenced by the actions of other children, their tendency toward impulsive behavior can no longer get them classified as lazy students, stupid kids, troublemakers, outcasts or nerds.

For children with a learning disability or an attention deficit disorder, that’s one of the biggest advantages of homeschooling. By not forcing them to blend into the general mix, parents get control over who will have the opportunity to influence their children. During their formative years, children learn by emulating the behavior of those around them. The little kids copy the big kids. Those who wish to be sure that their youngsters are not exposed to role models who will lead them toward violence, drugs, foul language, sexual promiscuity and other undesirable behaviors see homeschooling as an affordable option. Homeschooling allows parents to be selective about the company their children keep.

LD and ADD youngsters are notorious for daydreaming or piddling around when left to study alone. Yet when they are given assignments they can successfully complete without assistance, and when they are placed in an environment where they are free from interruptions and distractions, some of them blossom into contented independent learners.

[From: *The LD Child and the ADHD Child: Ways Parents & Professionals Can Help*, by Suzanne H. Stevens, 1996, John F. Blair, Publisher, Chapter 10, (pps. 216-231). ISBN 0-89587-142-4.]

Bits of Books



The Duties of Parents (Part 5)

John Charles Ryle
of Liverpool, 1816-1900

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

XIV. Train them remembering continually the influence of your own example.

Instruction and advice and commands will profit little unless they are backed up by the pattern of your own life. Your children will never believe you are in earnest, and really wish them to obey you, so long as your actions contradict your counsel. Archbishop Tillotson made a wise remark when he said, “To give children good instruction and a bad example is but beckoning to them with the head to show them the way to heaven, while we take them by the hand and lead them in the way to hell.”

We little know the force and power of example. No one of us can live to himself in this world; we are always influencing those around us, in one way or another, either for good or for evil, either for God or for sin. They see our ways, they mark our conduct, they observe our behaviour, and what they see us practise, that they may fairly suppose we think right. And never, I believe, does example tell so powerfully as it does in the case of parents and children.

Fathers and mothers, do not forget that children learn more by the eye than they do by the ear. No school will make such deep marks on character as home. The best of schoolmasters will not imprint on their minds as much as they will pick up at your fireside. Imitation is a far stronger principle with children than memory. What they see has a much stronger effect on their minds than what they are told.

Take care, then, what you do before a child. It is a true proverb, “Who sins before a child, sins double.” Strive rather to be a living epistle of Christ, such as your families can read, and that plainly too. Be an example of reverence for the Word of God, reverence in prayer, reverence for means of grace, reverence for the Lord’s day. Be an example in words, in temper, in diligence, in temperance, in faith, in charity, in kindness, in humility. Think not your children will practise what they do not see you do. You are their model picture, and they will copy what you are. Your reasoning and your lecturing, your wise commands and your good advice; all this they may not understand, but they can understand your life.

Children are very quick observers; very quick in seeing through some kinds of hypocrisy, very quick in finding out what you really think and feel, very quick in adopting all your ways and opinions. You will often find as the father is, so is the son.

Remember the word that the conqueror Caesar always used to his soldiers in a battle. He did not say “Go forward”, but “Come”. So it must be with you in training your children. They will seldom learn habits which they see you despise, or walk in paths in which you do not walk yourself. He that preaches to his children what he does not practise is working a work that never goes forward. It is like the fabled web of Penelope, who wove all day and unwove all night. Even so, the parent who tries to train without setting a good example is building with one hand and pulling down with the other.

XV. Train them, remembering continually the power of sin.

I name this shortly, in order to guard you against unscriptural expectations. You must not expect to find your children’s minds a sheet of pure white paper and to have no trouble if you only use right means. I warn you plainly you will find no such thing. It is painful to see how much corruption and evil there is in a young child’s heart, and how soon it begins to bear fruit. Violent tempers, self-will, pride, envy, sullenness, passion, idleness, selfishness, deceit, cunning, falsehood, hypocrisy, a terrible aptness to learn what is bad, a painful slowness to learn what is good, a readiness to pretend anything in order to gain their own ends — all these things, or some of them, you must be prepared to see even in your own flesh and blood. In little ways they will creep out at a very early age; it is almost startling to observe how naturally they seem to spring up. Children require no schooling to learn to sin.

But you must not be discouraged and cast down by what you see. You must not think it a strange and unusual thing that little hearts can be so full of sin. It is the only portion which our father Adam left us; it is that fallen nature with which we come into the world; it is that inheritance which belongs to us all. Let it rather make you more diligent in using every means which seem most likely, by God’s blessing, to counteract the mischief. Let it make you more and more careful, so far as in you lies, to keep your children out of the way of temptation.

Never listen to those who tell you your children are good and well brought up and can be trusted. Think rather that their hearts are always inflammable as tinder. At their very best, they only want a spark to set their corruptions alight. Parents are seldom too cautious. Remember the natural depravity of your children, and take care.

XVI. Train them remembering continually the promises of Scripture.

I name this also shortly, in order to guard you against discouragement. You have a plain promise on your side, “Train up your child in the way he should go, and

when he is old he shall not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6). Think what it is to have a promise like this. Promises were the only lamp of hope which cheered the hearts of the patriarchs before the Bible was written. Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph — all lived on a few promises and prospered in their souls. Promises are the cordials which in every age have supported and strengthened the believer. He that has got a plain text upon his side need never be cast down. Fathers and mothers, when your hearts are failing and ready to halt, look at the word of this text and take comfort.

Think who it is that promises. It is not the word of a man who may lie or repent; it is the word of the King of kings who never changes. Hath He said a thing, and shall He not do it? Or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good? Neither is anything too hard for Him to perform. The things that are impossible with men are possible with God. Reader, if we get not the benefit of the promise we are dwelling upon, the fault is not in Him but in ourselves.

Think, too, what the promise contains before you refuse to take comfort from it. It speaks of a certain time when good training shall especially bear fruit — “when a child is old”. Surely there is comfort in this. You may not see with your own eyes the result of careful training, but you know not what blessed fruits may not spring from it long after you are dead and gone. It is not God’s way to give everything at once. “Afterwards” is the time when He often chooses to work, both in the things of nature and in the things of grace. “Afterward” is the season when affliction bears the peaceable fruit of righteousness (Hebrews 12:11). “Afterward” was the time when the son who refused to work in his father’s vineyard repented and went (Matthew 21:29). And “afterward” is the time to which parents must look forward if they see not success at once — you must sow in hope and plant in hope.

“Cast thy bread upon the waters,” saith the Spirit, “for thou shalt find it after many days” (Ecclesiastes 11:1). Many children, I doubt not, shall rise up in the day of judgment and bless their parents for good training who never gave any signs of having profited by it during their parents’ lives. Go forward then in faith and be sure that your labour shall not be altogether thrown away. Three times did Elijah stretch himself upon the widow’s child before it revived. Take example from him and persevere.

XVII. Train them, lastly, with continual prayer for a blessing on all you do.

Without the blessing of the Lord, your best endeavours will do no good. He has the hearts of all men in His hands, and except He touch the hearts of your children by His Spirit, you will weary yourself to no purpose. Water, therefore, the seed you sow on their minds with unceasing prayer. The Lord is far more willing to hear than we to pray; far more ready to give blessings than we to ask them; but He loves to be entreated for them. And I set this matter of prayer before you as the topstone and seal of all you do. I suspect the child of many

prayers is seldom cast away.

Look upon your children as Jacob did on his; he tells Esau they are “the children which God hath graciously given thy servant” (Genesis 33:5). Look on them as Joseph did on his; he told his father, “They are the sons whom God hath given me” (Genesis 48:9). Count them with the Psalmist to be “an heritage and reward from the Lord” (Psalm 127:3). And then ask the Lord, with a holy boldness, to be gracious and merciful to His own gifts. Mark how Abraham intercedes for Ishmael because he loved him, “Oh that Ishmael might live before thee” (Genesis 17:18). See how Manoah speaks to the angel about Samson, “How shall we order the child, and how shall we do unto him?” (Judges 13:12). Observe how tenderly Job cared for his children’s souls, “He offered burnt-offerings according to the number of them all, for he said, It may be my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually” (Job 1:5). Parents, if you love your children, go and do likewise. You cannot name their names before the mercy-seat too often.

And now, reader, in conclusion, let me once more press upon you the necessity and importance of using every single means in your power if you would train children for heaven.

I know well that God is a sovereign God and doeth all things according to the counsel of His own will. I know that Rehoboam was the son of Solomon, and Manasseh the son of Hezekiah, and that you do not always see godly parents having a godly seed. But I know also that God is a God who works by means, and sure am I, if you make light of such means as I have mentioned, your children are not likely to turn out well.

Fathers and mothers, you may take your children to be baptized and have them enrolled in the ranks of Christ’s Church; you may get godly sponsors to answer for them and help you by their prayers; you may send them to the best of schools, and give them Bibles and Prayer Books, and fill them with head knowledge; but if all this time there is no regular training at home, I tell you plainly, I fear it will go hard in the end with your children’s souls. Home is the place where habits are formed; home is the place where the foundations of character are laid; home gives the bias to our tastes and likings and opinions. See then, I pray you, that there be careful training at home. Happy indeed is the man who can say, as Bolton did upon his dying bed to his children, “I do believe not one of you will dare to meet me before the tribunal of Christ in an unregenerate state.”

Fathers and mothers, I charge you solemnly before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, take every pains to train your children in the way they should go. I charge you not merely for the sake of your children’s souls; I charge you for the sake of your own future comfort and peace. Truly it is your interest so to do. Truly your own happiness in great measure depends on it. Children have ever been the bow from which the sharpest arrows have pierced man’s heart. Children have mixed the bitterest cups that man has ever had to drink. Children have caused the saddest tears that man has ever had to

shed. Adam could tell you so; Jacob could tell you so; David could tell you so. There are no sorrows on earth like those which children have brought upon their parents. Oh! take heed, lest your own neglect should lay up misery for you in your old age. Take heed, lest you weep under the ill-treatment of a thankless child, in the days when your eye is dim and your natural force abated.

If ever you wish your children to be the restorers of your life and the nourishers of your old age; if you would have them blessings and not curses, joys and not sorrows, Judahs and not Reubens, Ruths and not Orpahs; if you would not, like Noah, be ashamed of their deeds, and, like Rebekah, be made weary of your life by them; if this be your wish, remember my advice betimes: train them while young in the right way.

And as for me, I will conclude by putting up my prayer to God for all who read this paper, that you may all be taught of God to feel the value of your own souls. This is one reason why baptism is too often a mere form and Christian training despised and disregarded. Too often parents feel not for themselves, and so they feel not for their children. They do not realize the tremendous difference between a state of nature and a state of grace, and therefore they are content to let them alone.

Now the Lord teach you all that sin is that abominable thing which God hateth. Then I know you will mourn over the sins of your children and strive to pluck them out as brands from the fire.

The Lord teach you all how precious Christ is and what a mighty and complete work He hath done for our salvation. Then I feel confident you will use every means to bring your children to Jesus, that they may live through Him.

The Lord teach you all your need of the Holy Spirit to renew, sanctify and quicken your souls. Then I feel sure you will urge your children to pray for Him without ceasing and never rest till He has come down into their hearts with power and made them new creatures.

The Lord grant this, and then I have a good hope that you will indeed train up your children well: train well for this life and train well for the life to come; train well for earth and train well for heaven; train them for God, for Christ and for eternity.

Home Education Research



Homeschooling and the Redefinition of Citizenship (Part 5)

by A. Bruce Arai
Wilfrid Laurier University
Waterloo, Ontario Canada

Homeschooling and Citizenship

Moving beyond homeschoolers' responses to criticisms levelled at them to the larger body of research on homeschooling, there is evidence to suggest that homeschoolers appear to be involved in a process of constructing an alternative vision of citizenship for them and their children, albeit largely implicitly. Consistent with the notion of multidimensional citizenship, homeschoolers are involved in combining a different mix of attributes to become good citizens. In particular, they emphasize participation and the importance of family as the basis of a different definition of citizenship.

In school, citizenship education emphasizes history, geography and social studies lessons, with some limited participation in extra-curricular activities both inside and outside the school. However, as Fogelman (1991) shows, the amount of extra-curricular participation is limited. For homeschoolers, participation in the public sphere is a more important component of their education. They are much more involved in things like volunteer work than schooled children, which also further offsets socialization criticisms. For example, Ray (1994: 1999) found that over 30% of homeschooled kids 5 years old or older in both the US and Canada were actively involved in volunteer work, compared to the 6 to 12% found by Fogelman for schooled kids.

In other activities homeschooled kids also exhibit high participation levels, although perhaps not any higher than schooled children. In the same surveys noted above, Ray found that 98% of homeschooled kids in the US were involved in 2 or more regular activities outside the home (Ray, 1999) and that Canadian homeschoolers had an average of almost 9 hours per week of contact with non-family adults and over 12 hours per week of contact with non-sibling children (Ray, 1994). And while the generalizability of these results must be treated with some caution, there is some evidence to substantiate the claim that homeschooled kids are very involved in activities outside the home. This suggests that homeschooled kids and their parents are keen to integrate into the wider society rather than pulling back from it, as is commonly presumed.

Mayberry and Knowles (1989), Knowles (1991) and Mayberry (1988) have also shown that "family unity" is a major factor in many parents' decisions to educate

their kids at home. They feel that homeschooling promotes or at least allows them to have much stronger relationships with their children than would be possible if they went to school. Such parents feel these strong relationships are important not just for them but for two important characteristics in their children as well.

First, children with strong family relationships have the confidence to explore the world in challenging and sometimes unconventional ways. For instance, Thomas (1998) suggests that strong family bonds allow children to learn at their own pace, to maintain a heightened level of curiosity and to be involved in intense learning processes. As he says, "At home, on the other hand, children spend most of their time at the frontiers of their learning. Their parents are fully aware of what they already know and of the next step to be learned. Learning is therefore more demanding and intensive" (Thomas, 1998, p. 46).

Homeschooling parents also feel that a strong family will give their children the ability and the confidence to be more independent and to think for themselves. Indeed, raising kids who are willing and able to think for themselves is a primary goal of many homeschooling parents (Knowles, 1991; Thomas, 1998). There is also some evidence to suggest that homeschooled kids see their relationships with their families as crucial to their own independence (Sheffer, 1997). It may be the case then that some homeschoolers would fall under Callan's "freedom of association" exemption from mandatory great sphere schooling. That is, strong family bonds, whether they are the motivation for or an effect of homeschooling could be jeopardized by not allowing parents the right to homeschool.

The strong bonds in homeschooling families are also thought to be the basis of deliberate and informed participation in the larger society, especially later in life (Sheffer, 1997). Many homeschooling parents find the level of consumerism and/or materialism in the "dominant society" to be too high and they want their kids to be able to resist these intense pressures. Some homeschooling parents have pulled their kids out of school because of the peer pressure and the availability of drugs and alcohol, while others mentioned that the pressure to be part of the "in crowd" was antithetical to the way they wished to raise their children (Marshall and Valle, 1996). Homeschooling then, is a way to live out a lifestyle which is somewhat different from the norm and to raise their children to make their own decisions about how they wish to live. In other words, these parents share Callan's vision of raising and educating children to make informed and reasonable choices about their lives.

Policy Implications

While the form and content of citizenship education among homeschoolers is clearly different from what children receive in school, it is not an inferior experience. Homeschoolers, in other words, can be good citizens. Here I have argued that homeschoolers, despite being accused of not being good citizens, are actually engaged in a process of defining their own vision of what it means to be a citizen. They clearly do not believe that compulsory schooling is a necessary

prere-quisite of adequate citizenship, and they prefer to stress the importance of family and participation in public activities as the basis of their understanding of the good citizen. The key issue now is what this implies for educational policies about homeschooling and compulsory schooling.

The major implication for compulsory schooling in this paper is that schools cannot be the only, or even the primary, agent of citizenship education for all children. Homeschooled kids can be good citizens, even if their vision of citizenship is somewhat different than that taught in schools. This undermines the arguments that schooling should be compulsory for all children in order to preserve “democracy”, and that wanting a right to not send children to a common school is necessarily to want to keep them ethically servile. Most homeschooled children and their parents, just like most schooled children and their parents, are fervent supporters of democracy and have no interest in ethical servility.

Schooling is not an antidote to ethical servility, and policies surrounding the compulsory nature of school should be re-examined in light of this. Specifically, the need to educate all children to be good citizens has always been a cornerstone of mandatory schooling policies, so if these policies are to be retained, they need to account for the fact that children can become good citizens without going to school. This is not to suggest that a rationale for compulsory schooling is impossible, but only that it cannot be based primarily on constructing good citizens.

As for the content of citizenship education which is taught in schools, the argument in this paper is consistent with policies which would continue to build on the importance of participation as a crucial element of citizenship education. This would not only help to legitimate the definition of citizenship being modelled by homeschoolers, but would also close the gap between what is taught in school and what is taught by home educators.

Further, schools should continue to pursue policy initiatives which promote multidimensional citizenship. Schools need to recognize that there is no one best version of being a good citizen, but that there are many valid interpretations of an ideal member of society. Moreover, multidimensional citizenship suggests that becoming a citizen is a constant process and that people’s ideas about good citizenship can change. Perhaps all educators, including home educators, need to consider multidimensional citizenship as an important component of helping children become citizens.

Finally, it is clear that there are no guarantees for creating good citizens. Homeschoolers have an alternative and very powerful understanding of citizenship, but this does not mean that we should relinquish all citizenship education in schools or that schools should adopt the vision of citizenship shared by many homeschoolers. This is no more a cure for poor citizenship than is forcing everyone to take civics classes. Rather we need to recognize and evaluate the validity of alternative definitions of citizenship and to

recognize that it does not have to be taught at school.

For homeschoolers, the policy implications are a little less clear because they are much less likely to have a “policy” on citizenship education than are schools. However, homeschoolers should recognize that there are good elements to citizenship education in schools as well. For example, basic facts of national history and governance are often very important for informed participation in a democracy. Most of the people that homeschooled kids will encounter later in life will have this understanding, and those people will presume that homeschoolers have it as well. Homeschoolers need to be prepared to deal with these expectations, either by acquiring the relevant knowledge or convincing others of the validity of their experiences.

In addition, homeschooling parents and children must recognize that they are not just keeping their kids at home and that they are not just making a statement about parental rights in education. Rather, they are also helping to define and shape what it means to be a citizen of their country. They must be prepared to think in these broader terms and to recognize that what they are doing has some good elements and some bad elements, just as citizenship education in schools has strengths and weaknesses. In other words, homeschooling is not just about where kids will learn their ABCs; it affects the very definition of what it means to be a member of a society.

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In Line with Scripture



Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have; for He has said, "I will never fail you nor forsake you." -- Hebrews 13:5

The Rich Family in Church by Eddie Ogan

I'll never forget Easter 1946. I was 14, my little sister Ocy was 12, and my older sister Darlene 16. We lived at home with our mother, and the four of us knew what it was to do without many things. My dad had died five years before, leaving Mom with seven school kids to raise and no money.

By 1946 my older sisters were married and my brothers had left home. A month before Easter the pastor of our church announced that a special Easter offering would be taken to help a poor family. He asked everyone to save and give sacrificially.

When we got home, we talked about what we could do. We decided to buy 50 pounds of potatoes and live on them for a month. This would allow us to save \$20 of our grocery money for the offering. When we thought that if we kept our electric lights turned out as much as possible and didn't listen to the radio, we'd save money on that month's electric bill. Darlene got as many house and yard cleaning jobs as possible, and both of us babysat for everyone we could. For 15 cents we could buy enough cotton loops to make three pot holders to sell for \$1.

We made \$20 on pot holders. That month was one of the best of our lives.

Every day we counted the money to see how much we had saved. At night we'd sit in the dark and talk about how the poor family was going to enjoy having the money the church would give them. We had about 80 people in church, so figured that whatever amount of money we had to give, the offering would surely be 20 times that much. After all, every Sunday the pastor had reminded everyone to save for the sacrificial offering.

The day before Easter, Ocy and I walked to the grocery store and got the manager to give us three crisp \$20 bills and one \$10 bill for all our change.

We ran all the way home to show Mom and Darlene. We had never had so much money before.

That night we were so excited we could hardly sleep. We didn't care that we wouldn't have new clothes for Easter; we had \$70 for the sacrificial offering.

We could hardly wait to get to church! On Sunday morning, rain was pouring. We didn't own an umbrella, and the church was over a mile from our home, but it didn't seem to matter how wet we got. Darlene had cardboard in her shoes to fill the holes. The cardboard came apart, and her feet got wet.

But we sat in church proudly. I heard some teenagers talking about the Smith girls having on their old dresses. I looked at them in their new clothes, and I felt rich.

When the sacrificial offering was taken, we were sitting on the second row from the front. Mom put in the \$10 bill, and each of us kids put in a \$20.

As we walked home after church, we sang all the way. At lunch Mom had a surprise for us. She had bought a dozen eggs, and we had boiled Easter eggs with our fried potatoes! Late that afternoon the minister drove up in his car. Mom went to the door, talked with him for a moment, and then came back with an envelope in her hand. We asked what it was, but she didn't say a word. She opened the envelope and out fell a bunch of money. There were three crisp \$20 bills, one \$10 and seventeen \$1 bills.

Mom put the money back in the envelope. We didn't talk, just sat and stared at the floor. We had gone from feeling like millionaires to feeling like poor white trash. We kids had such a happy life that we felt sorry for anyone who didn't have our Mom and Dad for parents and a house full of brothers and sisters and other kids visiting constantly. We thought it was fun to share silverware and see whether we got the spoon or the fork that night.

We had two knives that we passed around to whoever needed them. I knew we didn't have a lot of things that other people had, but I'd never thought we were poor.

That Easter day I found out we were. The minister had brought us the money for the poor family, so we must be poor. I didn't like being poor. I looked at my dress and worn-out shoes and felt so ashamed -- I didn't even want to go back to church. Everyone there probably already knew we were poor!

I thought about school. I was in the ninth grade and at the top of my class of over 100 students. I wondered if the kids at school knew that we were poor. I decided that I could quit school since I had finished the eighth grade. That was all the law required at that time. We sat in silence for a long time. Then it got dark, and we went to bed. All that week, we girls went to school and came home, and no one talked much. Finally on Saturday, Mom asked us what we wanted to do with the money. What did poor people do with money? We didn't know. We'd never known we were poor. We didn't want to go to church on Sunday, but Mom said we had to. Although it was a sunny day, we didn't talk on the way.

Mom started to sing, but no one joined in and she only

(Continued on page 26: Rich Family)

Theologically Speaking

Just Let God Do It

by Gregory Koukl



I have been increasingly concerned at the way Christians take a very one dimensional approach to problems. This one dimensional approach can be summed up with the phrase, “Just trust God” or “The Bible says it, I believe it and that settles it.” Now, obviously there’s nothing whatsoever wrong with trusting God. And there’s nothing whatsoever wrong with believing the Bible because it happens to say it and that would settle it. The problem is that those aren’t usually the only factors involved. The concept of trusting God may be a little bit vague in some circumstances. But what it actually means to trust God and what the relationship is of our trust to God and our own personal responsibility to behave and make decisions in the Christian life has to be worked out more carefully.

When I first became a Christian this was something that absolutely drove me nuts. As I was seeking to try and walk the Christian life and to do the things that I was supposed to do, I would frequently get comments from other people who said, “Don’t try to live the Christian life, just trust God. Let Jesus do it through you.” It drove me nuts because I’m the kind of person who likes to sink my teeth into something. If I’m going to get directions, I want them to be clear and do-able. To me those kinds of comments were simply too broad and general. They were just like cotton candy or candy floss. You go for a big bite of this huge fluff and you snap your teeth on your teeth because that which was there dissolves into nothing in your mouth. This kind of advice was that way for me.

“Let Jesus do it.” What does that mean? When my alarm goes off, do I get out of bed? Do I stand up, brush my teeth or do I say, “Okay, Jesus, do it for me.” Do I get up and pray or does Jesus pray for me? Sometimes that very one dimensional kind of response, which ultimately tells us nothing and teaches us nothing and equips us in no way, is something that Christians often fall back on when faced with difficult ethical decisions. Though I understand the motivation in many cases is to honor God, I think that often substitutes not only for clear thinking but also for genuine Christian thinking and a genuine Biblical response.

Our church recently heard a very interesting lecture about reproductive technologies. It was more of a discussion format than a lecture. The Doctor posed a question to the audience: “If you were my pastor, and my wife and I could not have a child through the normal processes, how would you counsel me?” I was really surprised by the number of people who responded simply by saying things like, “God is the one who opens the womb.” “Trust in the Lord and spend time praying on your knees.” It was suggested that if

you appeal to some kind of reproductive technology, then you are taking matters into your own hands. You’re getting ahead of God. One person said, “Barrenness was a disgrace in the Old Testament. Back then they ran to God, but now we run to technology.” See the contrast there? The contrast is whether we run to God or to technology. The suggestion there is that we ought not run to technology because that would be a failure of faith, and what we ought to do is get back to God. Another person quoted Philipppans 4:5-6 which says, “Be anxious for nothing, but through prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God.” That may have been an admonition that we not be anxious, but I had the feeling like this was the answer to the whole problem. Pray about it and let God do what He wants. But don’t take the matter into your own hands.

I see that approach not only in this issue but on many other situations. I’m a member of a Christian dating agency. Some people are offended by the notion of a dating service because, they say, it’s doing things just like the world. In the Old Testament people trusted God and their parents for finding a spouse. We see that dichotomy again between trusting totally in the Lord and waiting on Him and being somewhat more personally proactive. Is this dichotomy valid; are these two positions the only two, and are they really mutually exclusive?

One might well ask me, given their response that the Bible says it, I believe it and that settles it, that we should just trust God. Why take it further? Am I suggesting that trusting God isn’t good enough? Isn’t the Bible adequate? We have to add to the Bible? We have to do things man’s way? My answer is maybe.

The reason that we ought to take it further than simply trust God and pray about it is this: the Bible doesn’t just say that one verse. The Bible says many other things as well. The assertion that we ought to just trust God doesn’t answer the question: just precisely what does it mean to trust God? Does Biblical trust in God relegate me to inactivity in dealing with other areas of my life? Other ways of trying to conceive, for example? Other ways of finding a mate?

In Matthew Jesus talks about prayer and says, “Ask and it shall be given to you.” But Jesus didn’t stop there. He went on to say, “Ask and it shall be given to you. Seek and you shall find. Knock and the door will be opened.” So it’s not just asking; there’s seeking and knocking as well. In the same passage Jesus gives us this famous promise. He tells us not to worry about food and clothing because food and clothing will be provided by Him. He says, Look at the lilies of the field, they don’t toil or weave. Look at the birds in the field, they don’t plant and harvest. The Father takes care of them. He’ll take care of you as well.

Now, are we going to read that verse and conclude that God doesn’t expect us to weave or till the soil? Paul says in 2 Thessalonians 3, “Anyone who does not work ought not eat.” It seems to me we could say to Paul, “Why should we work? Jesus has promised to take care

of us.” We all understand that in a verse like this there is a corporate effort. God has promised to take care of us, but we have to couple that command with other commands that God has given us to toil and weave as well. And, I would say, to try and find ways to get pregnant that are morally acceptable. The same thing with dating and getting married. We have the liberty to find a mate, and given the circumstances of some single Christians, I don’t see that a Christian dating service is, by definition, not trusting God.

Now, in any of these things there may be a sense of franticness in getting a job or getting pregnant or getting a mate that represents an attitude that’s wrong. It can be taken to extremes, but then our Christian ethic would inform our attitudes. The very act of taking the initiative in itself is not unbiblical.

In fact, the way I would put it is that it’s 100% God and 100% man. What does that mean? It means that God, even though He is in control and we must look to Him, still delegates a portion of active responsibility to us so that He can see to it that we’re fed and clothed, but it’s our responsibility to go out and look. You can do the act of looking with confidence that God will provide. I think that that obtains in all of these other circumstances as well.

So there is not this sharp dichotomy between God working and our working. They go hand in hand. If God expects our initiative in the area of food and clothing, though He has promised to provide, by what standard do we disqualify taking initiative in the areas of reproductive technology and dating? It appears that He’s in control here too.

I was troubled by the comments because the people acted like there was no relationship between science and faith, like there was no relationship between our trust in God and our seeking and knocking and finding. Until we work out that relationship fairly precisely, we are going to be stuck in this one dimensional thinking. I wanted to see more hard work taken to figure out just how God uses our wills and our actions to accomplish His ends and do real Biblical analysis.

100% God and 100% man is one way of putting it. Lee Ezell said, “Pray toward Heaven. Row toward shore.” I like that.

(This is an edited transcript of a commentary from the radio show “Stand to Reason,” with Gregory Koukl ©1994. Used with permission. Stand to Reason, 1438 East 33rd St., Signal Hill, CA 90807, U.S.A., (800) 2-REASON • (562) 595-7333 • info@str.org • www.str.org.)

Tough Questions People Throw Your Way



How can you cope with so many children, let alone teach them anything?

by Janet Sedy

[Recently I “met” your editor through an e-mail loop (www.triviumpursuit.com) pertaining to Classical Homeschooling. Craig said he liked my ideas (which are not all mine alone, but a part of the accumulation of good advice I have received over the years) and the “stream of consciousness” mode of the letter. Well, “stream of consciousness” is how I think. My husband likens my rambliness to a plate of spaghetti, with one thought snaking around and leading into another. So how ‘bout joining me for a plate of spaghetti, and maybe you’ll find a few meatballs along the way!]

We are blessed with seven beautiful children. They range in age from two to 12 years old. Yes! We have a very busy household. With seven of them, my kids do chores, otherwise I would never have time to teach them school! I tried to convince my children that chores aren’t chores, but service opportunities. As with most euphemisms, it didn’t work. The kids were not convinced. Nonetheless, they grow up doing chores. I’ve noticed that around the age of 18 months, kids love to help. Usually, it’s more help than I really need or want, because it seems to create more work. When I was still new at this mother business, I made the mistake of discouraging them from helping, sending them off to play instead. I’ve since learned that a good attitude towards chores begins with a toddler who wants to be “big” and helpful to Mommy and Daddy. He is capable of doing quite a bit, if it’s made easy for him. Our little Jon can empty the dishwasher. I have placed all of our dinnerware in the cabinets below the counter so even the littlest family members can help with unloading the dishwasher or setting the table. We also have a set of plastic plates and bowls that we frequently use to help cut down on the possibility of breaking our everyday stoneware. To help little children set the table correctly, make place mats illustrated with a place setting. The children can then simply match the plate and the silverware to the proper outline on the mat. You can laminate the mat for durability.

A two-year old can also begin learning laundry basics. By the time he is four, he will be able to handle the whole process. I discovered that four-year olds are capable of doing the laundry when my oldest son Joe was four. He was so interested in machinery that he begged me to teach him how to make the washing

of rulers of ancient dynasties. I feel that our “memory time” is better spent with filling our minds with the best of literature. One can always look up the facts in an encyclopedia. Our children begin memorizing Bible passages once they are fluent speakers. We have found that our children have an easier time memorizing and retaining whole passages rather than isolated verses. Young children also enjoy reciting poetry from memory. It’s just as easy for a four-year-old to recite Rachel Field’s lovely verses as it is to learn nursery rhymes.

Children also enjoy memorizing the colorful dialogue found in Charles Dickens’ writings. Our children are involved with a children’s theatre company. This season our five older children all have leads in a musical production of “A Christmas Carol.” The director told me they won their roles partly because they demonstrated an ability to memorize lines quickly. As the children practise their lines, they are memorizing whole passages of “A Christmas Carol.” Even without involvement in the theatre, a family with several children could memorize dialog and then dramatize it. This might be a fun project to do for Christmas and then present it to church or extended family at Christmas-time.

Additionally, our children enjoy memorizing speeches. American Patriot Patrick Henry’s “Give Me Liberty, or Give Me Death!” speech is quite dramatic. The story is that Patrick Henry himself became exceedingly dramatic during his speech. When he came to his famous line, “I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death!” he used a letter opener and pretended to stab himself in the heart, then fell over as if dead much to the astonishment of his hearers. Joe once memorized this speech right down to the dramatics for presentation to our homeschool group. As you can imagine, it was a hit with all the young boys! Every age has had its great orators; children can memorize speeches from whatever period of history they happen to be studying.

Well, this plate of spaghetti is nearly finished. I hope you’ve enjoyed “noodling” with me. Parenting and homeschooling are topics near and dear to my heart, and I’ve enjoyed sharing my thoughts with you. Gotta go and serve up another plate!

[The Sedy crew, from Washington state in the US Northwest: Gene, Commanding; Janet, Executive Officer; with mates Leah Marie (12), Joseph Ryan (11), Catherine Grace (9), Michael Blair (7), Maren Christine (5), Lydia June (4), and Jonathan Daniel (2). All in service to the Captain of our Salvation, Jesus Christ our Lord.]

What Others Are Doing



(The following statement was formulated by the National Homeschool Association’s Roundtable Conference held at Becket, Massachusetts, October, 1996. The NHA has since dissolved, effective 15 Sept 2000, as they perceived their major objectives to have been accomplished. <<http://n-h-a.org/>> I see some very sound, very important ideas set forth in this statement and would like to see them widely disseminated and discussed among home educators. I will add some comments at the end, noted like this: [1], and I invite readers to make further comments for inclusion in later issues of *Keystone*. — Ed.)

Homeschooling Families: Ready for the Next Decade

A Foundation for Ongoing Conversations

Homeschooling Works!

* People are born ready to learn. Learning involves everyone everyday. Living and learning are not separate activities. Learning cannot be contained in a place or time. Learning is too wonderful and powerful to limit it by turning it over to conventional schools. [1]

* Children need the love and support of their families and communities, just as adults do. Throughout time, families have raised their children to be knowledgeable and competent adults. Having a sincere desire to homeschool qualifies a parent to homeschool. A homeschool is a good place for people to heal from the inaccuracies and injustices that accompany labels such as ADD and LD.

* People gain social experience and skills by interacting with a diverse group of people of all ages. Homeschooling provides opportunities for such interaction easily and naturally.

Regulations

* Hundreds of thousands of families are showing that homeschoolers do not need to be regulated by the state. There is no evidence that any regulations foster better homeschooling. [2]

* To maintain homeschooling freedoms, homeschoolers learn what rights and responsibilities they have, refuse to do more than the minimum required by law, and avoid setting precedents that exceed the law and cause difficulty for homeschoolers. Laws and court cases cannot protect our freedoms. Any law, even one that is viewed as good, can do damage. No law, no matter how good, is enough. Exercising our rights and responsibilities daily and consistently, even on seemingly small points, is essential. [3]

* We oppose special regulations or requirements for small groups of homeschoolers, such as those who

want to play sports; those who have been labeled “at risk,” “ADD,” “LD,” etc.; and those who have been accused of truancy. Increased regulation of any homeschooler can easily lead to increased regulation of other or all homeschoolers. Homeschoolers are not joining the bandwagon to beat up on those for whom conventional schools do not work.

* Attempts of homeschoolers to regulate each other are unnecessary, complicated, divisive, and dangerous. [4]

Federal and State Goals and Standards

We are concerned about the way state and federal standards in education, standardized tests and assessments, and school-to-work programs are moving conventional schools toward “compulsory education” (different from the currently required “compulsory attendance”) which will undermine the basic freedoms needed to maintain a free society. We are committed to resisting the homeschooling movement being drawn into this web of compulsory education.

Not Mixing Causes

For homeschooling to remain about homeschooling, we must resist being used by others for their agendas.

Diversity

There are many approaches to homeschooling that work. A major strength of homeschooling is the diversity of people, methods and philosophies involved. Having close connections across diversity lines is a radical act.

Homeschoolers foster diversity by:

- * Respecting and celebrating diversity.
- * Respecting anyone’s desire to homeschool while remaining true to principles that make homeschooling freedoms possible.
- * Understanding that what supports one family’s homeschool might not be right for another’s.
- * Working to maintain the rights of families to make their own decisions regarding the education of their members.
- * Developing and maintaining inclusive organizations across cultural and religious diversity lines.
- * Describing to others the diversity within the homeschooling community.
- * Refusing to speak for homeschoolers; rather, providing forums for individuals’ voices to be heard. [5]

Support

The knowledge and effective support homeschoolers offer one another are major strengths of the homeschooling movement. Homeschoolers who create and participate in support groups, share resources, and gather for activities and discussions are making an important contribution to the growth and stability of the homeschooling movement. Grassroots organizing and networking have been a source of the homeschooling community’s strength. [6]

Vouchers

We would not expect the government to give away tax money with no strings attached and no accountability.

Government programs to supplement homeschoolers’ educational resources (by providing services or funding) would have accountability strings attached. We realize that vouchers given to families would lead to increased government presence in our homeschools. Vouchers inevitably lead to increased government regulation and unacceptable reductions in our homeschooling freedoms.

Conclusion

Homeschooling strengthens families and communities. Strong homeschools are an asset to our communities and our nation. They provide alternatives to conventional schools, save taxpayers’ money, and provide valuable perspectives on learning and education.

This statement was written to stimulate discussion, not to speak for all homeschoolers.

You are encouraged to reproduce this and distribute it widely.

Notes (Comments by *Keystone* Editor):

[1] Learning is the *object* of schooling/compulsory attendance. The logistics of compulsory schooling, however, work against efficient learning. Home education enables efficient learning.

[2] Neither do regulations foster better learning within compulsory schooling.

[3] Home educators need to be informed about rights and responsibilities. Government bureaucracies will often assume more powers than they have, and only informed home educators are able to (very nicely, but firmly) challenge them. Doing only the minimum the state requires is not a reference to your curriculum or learning objectives, but to how much you conform to the desires of the MoE. I say desires rather than requirements, for there are virtually no requirements — truly objective, measureable requirements — in NZ’s Education Act regarding home education. Beware of precedents which we may set — future generations of home educators may pay a heavy price in terms of state oppression because we today acquiesce to what at present seems a harmless practice: i.e., ERO reviews in private homes.

[4] To protect our diversities and the freedom of future home educators to likewise be so richly diverse, we need to learn to represent ourselves at the local and national level. This is not hard to do in New Zealand. National home education organisations, which make much of their democratically elected officers, can only be said to represent a majority of their members, meaning only a fraction of all home educators. Let them not claim more than this.

[5] The Home Education Foundation’s annual TEACH Forums have worked on this one since 1996.

[6] Establishing local support groups, allowing them to multiply in numbers, being able to join several at once and developing and using the networks that exist among the groups and individual home educators are together far more effective for lobbying, encouraging one another, information dissemination and all-round communications because of their horizontal networking than are national organisations which rely on vertical lines of communication from executive to officers to members and back.

Strengthening Support Groups

Manukau Homeschool Group

by Kay Christensen



Our Group began in earnest in about 1991, thanks largely to the efforts of Diane Gray (now in Pukekohe), Rosalind Peterson (still with us thankfully!) and other homeschoolers in the area. At the time all the members were Christian, but at some point, and before I started, it had been decided that the group's Christian foundations did not preclude any homeschoolers who might wish to join for the purpose of supporting and encouraging one another.

Well, back in 1994 yours truly and a friend were beneficiaries of that openheartedness, becoming the first non-Christians to join the group.

Numerically we were heavily outnumbered by something like 50 to 2; but as far as I was concerned, the welcome we received really impressed itself upon me. These homeschoolers lived and breathed their faith without apology, but in doing so they accepted me, a non-Christian, for who I was. How precious a gift it is to be offered friendship on this basis — and how rare it is. It was the first time in my adult life that Christians, and their faith, had become visible to me.

As it turned out (and much to my own amazement, but that's another story!) I later became a Christian myself, and my husband followed suit. This happened independently and certainly not from any expectation or pressure from the group to fit in, although afterwards their support was very important.

My friend is proof of what I say. She joined the group with all the security of a moving target waiting to be pounced on by the ravenous hordes. However, it was not long before she was participating fully in the group and taking on responsibilities. She eventually moved on to a different part of the country, as happily a non-Christian when she left as when she had arrived. But with one big difference — an enduring tie of friendship with many of the Christian homeschoolers in the group.

The majority in our group remains Christian in probably much the same proportions as are reflected overall throughout the country. Consequently the flavour of our group won't suit every homeschooler, but then it's not designed to be everything to everybody until there's no flavour left at all. My hope is that, whether you are Christian or non-Christian, you too will enjoy the gifts that everyone brings to our group — the gift of themselves and of friendship. It's the language that we can all understand.

(Used with Permission. Originally in Manukau Homeschool Support Group newsletter, Issue 4, November 2000.)

Teaching Tips



How to Mentor, Part 1

by Dr. Oliver DeMille

Find a great leader in history and you will find two central elements of their education — classics and mentors. From Lincoln, Jefferson and Washington to Gandhi, from Newton to John Locke to Abigail Adams and Joan of Arc — great men and women of history studied other great men and women. Whatever your culture, look at its greatest leaders and you will find that they were guided by at least one mentor and made a lifetime study of classic works.

A good mentor is someone of high moral character who is more advanced than you and can guide your learning. Parents are the natural mentors of youth, and they can be very effective in getting the student started on a lifetime plan for success, especially if they use some of the key techniques perfected by the great mentors of history.

My favorite model of how to mentor is George Wythe, the mentor of Thomas Jefferson. George Wythe was a signer of the Declaration of Independence and a delegate to the Constitutional Convention. He was the first law professor in America, a famous judge and Chancellor of the State of Virginia. Perhaps his most lasting contribution was as mentor to two future U.S. Presidents, two Supreme Court Justices and over 50 senators, representatives, governors and judges. Let's consider how the methods he used can be applied in our home schools in order to train leaders for the future.

Mentoring

Seven years ago I helped found George Wythe College, and one of my first responsibilities was researching just how Wythe mentored Jefferson. From that intensive research, and seven years of additional reading and studying, I have found six major things which form the core of Wythe's mentoring. I have been involved in implementing all six into the College's curriculum, and my wife Rachel and I have built our own home school around them. I have also taught these principles in many home school settings, and I have seen them successfully implemented by numerous parents. My feeling as a father is that if they were good enough for Jefferson, they are worth adopting in our home school. And in the College we have seen them repeatedly change "normal" students into excellent scholars and effective leaders. Here are George Wythe's six keys to effective mentoring:

1. Use the Classics

As one biographer put it, Thomas Jefferson's studies with George Wythe were four "years of virtually uninterrupted reading, not only in the law but also in the ancient classics, English Literature and general political philosophy. It wasn't so much an

apprenticeship for law as it was an apprenticeship for greatness.” And as Allan Bloom said in *The Closing of the American Mind*, “When a youngster like Lincoln sought to educate himself, the immediately obvious things for him to learn were the Bible, Shakespeare and Euclid. Was he really worse off than those who try to find their way through the technical smorgasbord of the current school system, with its utter inability to distinguish between important and unimportant? . . . I do not believe that my generation, my cousins who have been educated in the American way, all of whom are M.D.s or Ph.D.s, have any comparable learning.”

A classic may be defined as a work which is worth studying many times, and which proffers you more each time. Particularly about the really important things — right and wrong, good and bad, true and false, human nature and history. There are classics in every field. For example, in science study Copernicus, Galileo, and Einstein; in math, Euclid, Nichomachus, Newton; in history, Plutarch, Gibbon, Durant; in foreign language, a classic from that language like Don Quixote in Spanish or War and Peace in Russian. And classics aren’t just books, but include art, sculpture, music, and so on. Of course, this is just a teaser list; there are many great works in each field.

As students become familiar with and eventually conversant with the great ideas of humanity, they will learn how to think, how to lead and how to become great. The classics, by introducing the young mind to the greatest achievements of mankind and the teachings of God, prepare children to become successful human beings, parents and leaders in their own time. They also ensure the future of freedom, as Lord Brougham said: “Education makes a people easy to lead, but difficult to drive; easy to govern, but impossible to enslave.” And he was clearly talking about true liberal arts education, not conveyer belt job training.

2. Personalize

George Wythe built his student’s learning around the classics, but each student had a personalized study program designed to fit his individual goals. Someone who goes to 20 students and says, “You all need the same thing” is not a mentor. A mentor takes each student where he or she is and says, “Okay, let’s develop a program for you. What do you want to become? What do you want to create? What do you want to learn?” Once you get the answer from the student, help them develop a personal plan to achieve it. You can’t train leaders on a conveyer belt; if you want to teach them how to think, their studies must be personalized.

Consider the American Founding generation. From ages 5-12 they were typically home schooled. Some started earlier, others later, according to their interests and talents and the direction from their parents. Of course, the parents really starting teaching them from birth, but it was typically around age five that they began reading classics and discussing them with their mentors. Their curriculum was the three R’s — reading, writing and arithmetic — all based around morality and

(Continued on page 26: **Mentoring**)

Letters



Pass It On

I thoroughly enjoy reading your magazine and pass it on to others to read (non-homeschoolers)! It would be interesting to see an article where a variety of homeschoolers are interviewed on their different homeschooling methods, and what they thought of different programmes.

Suzanne Berry
Auckland

Always Look Forward

Hope you are all well and refreshed after your trip to the South Island. I read all about it in the *TEACH Bulletin* and it sounds like you had a great time. I always look forward to the *TEACH* and *Keystone* as there is always a lot to think about after reading them, and it is also a good source of encouragement, especially if you don’t have much contact with other homeschoolers. I heard that the ERO is busy there in Palmerston North at the moment. My review is next week, but it doesn’t worry me too much. Two years ago I would probably have freaked out.

Ilse Boessenkool
Wellington

Glory to God!

Enclosed is our *Keystone* and *TEACH Bulletin* renewal. It is to me vital that we retain such an important and informative life-line. Thank you for your ministry and you and Barbara’s willingness to help “newbies” like me!! Great to know due to reading your publications that we’re not obligated to teach the subjects the National Curriculum set out for schools. This encouraged me to “challenge” what I was told by MoE on the phone and advise them I’d confirm with you and get back to them. They soon backed down. Glory to God! And the exemption was granted! Glad to know I can access your expertise/support if necessary as I’ll soon start our daughter’s application for exemption. Keep up the great work, & may the Lord strengthen and bless you.

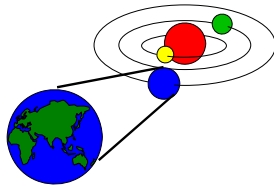
Elizabeth Hing
Masterton

Much Discussion Generated

Hope things are going well with you and your family. There is still much discussion generated by your visit in Marlborough amongst homeschoolers, and we all appreciate your efforts there thanks. We were hoping you could send us some of the *Keystone* pamphlets with your photo on the front and subscription prices, etc., on the back if available. They are very handy for passing out to people starting out, and we have now run out. It is amazing the amount of people inquiring in our area about wanting to start homeschooling, which is great; and groups for art, craft, sport and field trips are all being well supported.

Robyn Thwaites
Blenheim

World Views in Focus



When Christians Aren't

(The following makes grim reading: sadly we don't know the sample size or where it was taken. The date was probably last year, judging from point #9. Christians really do need to wake up and read up. — Ed.)

Some startling statistics, based on International Census Data, Barna Research, and other research data have emerged on the beliefs and behaviour of born again Christians.

Born again Christians -- defined in the surveys as people who say they have made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ and that He is still important in their life today and who also say they know they will go to Heaven after they die because they have confessed their sins and accepted Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

- 1) Nearly half of born again Christians (47%) agree that Satan is "not a living being but is a symbol of evil."
- 2) 31% of born agains also believe that if a person is good enough they can earn a place in Heaven.
- 3) 24% of born agains agree that "while He lived on earth, Jesus committed sins, like other people."
- 4) 15% of born again Christians claim that "after He was crucified and died, Jesus Christ did not return to life physically."
- 5) About one out of four (26%) born again Christians believe that it doesn't matter what faith you follow because they all teach the same lessons. (e.g. Hindu, Buddhism, Islam, etc.)
- 6) Roughly 95% of all Christians never lead *one* person to Christ.
- 7) Although most believers say that serving the needy is important, just 34% gave any time and/or money to serve the poor in the last year.
- 8) Born agains are more likely than are non-Christians to have experienced divorce (27% versus 24%)
- 9) One out of every six born again Christians (16%) gave no money to his/her church during 1999. The proportion who tithed to their church was just 8%.
- 10) Christians spend seven times as much time on entertainment as they do on spiritual activities.
- 11) In a nationwide survey among born-again adults, none of the individuals interviewed said that the single, most important goal in their life was to be a committed follower of Jesus Christ.

12) 30% of born agains have watched an "R" rated movie in the last seven days compared to 40% of non-born again people.

The Great Commission has become the great omission for a majority of believers. Only one out of every three adults attending a Protestant church in the USA shared their faith with a nonbeliever last year.

The study found that Pentecostal, Assemblies of God and Mormon church attendees are the most active in a variety of religious endeavours, such as prayer, Bible reading, witnessing and church attendance, while individuals who attend Catholic and Episcopal churches are generally the least involved.

Barna Research Group (BRG) president George Barna said: "The groups whose adherents are most likely to possess biblical perspectives are also those whose adherents are most actively pursuing spiritual experiences. The churches where people's beliefs have strayed farthest from the Bible tend to be those in which the people are least involved in religious and spiritual pursuits."

BRG found that the most common religious practice among adults is prayer. Participation was highest among those who attend a Pentecostal church -- 97 percent of whom said they had prayed in the last week. The lowest was among those who attended an Adventist church (79 percent).

When it came to Bible reading, Pentecostals (75 percent) were the most likely to study Scripture. The least likely Bible readers were Catholics (23 percent), Episcopalians (30 percent) and Lutherans (32 percent). Although they are not considered to be a Christian church, Mormons (67 percent) were more likely to read the Bible during a typical week than were Protestants overall. Barna said the figure was surprising because most Mormons do not believe that the Bible is the authoritative word of God.

Another surprise was the discovery that most Baptists had not witnessed to a nonbeliever in the last year. Baptist churches are often known for their evangelistic focus, yet only four out of every 10 adults who attend a Baptist church said they had verbalised their faith to a non-Christian.

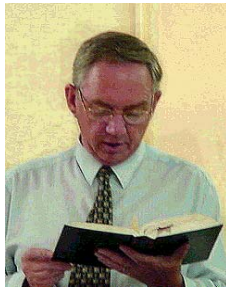
Overall, Barna said the survey revealed "a nation that is comfortable with religion but not particularly committed to spiritual growth." He commented: "Most people who are aligned with a Christian church really make a rather minimal investment in religious activity. Most people describe themselves as religious, describe their faith as being very important in their daily life, but make only a half-hearted effort to truly master the foundations of their chosen faith and live a life that is determined by that faith."

(Source: Barna Research Group and others.)

Over a Cuppa

Contra Television

by Rev. Chris Kavanagh



It was when the Commonwealth Games were on in Auckland. We had been lent an old black and white television set by a kind neighbour especially so that a relative of ours who was visiting could watch the games and the ceremonies with us. We had been out one night and got back fairly late and turned the TV on. There we sat, watching the boxing matches of the day being replayed. My wife and I, sitting alone, glued to the screen, suddenly turned to each other and said, "What are we watching this for?" Neither of us was the slightest bit interested in boxing, it was late at night and I had to go to work the day after; but the Telly had got us; we were fixed in front of it.

Another time, when we were in Australia, we hired a TV for when someone came to stay with us. There are more channels in Australia, and each of them carries a news programme. So starting at 5.00 pm you could watch the news through till 7.30 pm by switching channels. But the trouble was, it was all the same news, and we were sitting in front of the TV for two and a half hours a day getting the same information we could have got from the radio and the newspapers in a fraction of the time. The Telly had got us again.

Television seems to have this power to make you sit in front of it and watch it. It is not usually that what you are watching is vital and full of content; usually it is entertainment of some sort. The very medium compels our attention; it absorbs people and dictates to them not to allow interference from anyone else who might want your attention.

Is Television Educational?

But what are we learning when we sit in front of our TV sets? Neil Postman makes the point that Television is principally a medium of entertainment. He did a survey after the Iranian hostage crisis in America some years ago, asking a sample of people some factual questions about Iran. Although Iran had been in the TV news nearly everyday for a year, few could come up with anything concrete about the country.

Nearer home, the *Manawatu Evening Standard* of 6th January, 1998, ran a story headed "Kids Flunk Current Affairs Quiz" which tells of how a teacher in Blenheim had run a current affairs quiz for his 13 and 14 year old students. He thought the average score would be about 12 out of 20, but it ended up as being only seven. But the day after he ran a similar test on TV programmes and characters, and the results revealed an "encyclopaedic knowledge of the small screen". Evidently the only thing the students were learning from TV was TV itself.

All this is consistent with Postman's idea that TV is a medium of entertainment. It communicates entertainment. Entertainment is not wrong in itself, of course, but it has content like any other form of communication.

What Does Television Communicate?

As Christians we must take a long, hard, serious look at the content of Television. We must realise that it is a medium that is completely enmeshed in the society it is a part of. So different TV programming content reflects its surrounding culture; and what may be true of the content of, say Japanese TV, may not be true of New Zealand; and what is true of our TV today, could not be said of it twenty or thirty years ago, because our cultures and societies are different. Whether TV shapes society or follows it is not relevant to this observation. It is simply enmeshed with its values and behaviour.

This being the case, an average night's viewing in modern New Zealand will certainly include scenes of violence, sexual activity (hetero and homo) and other vices. It will hold some of these vices up as being a normal and even desirable part of life. It will put down and ridicule some of the things we hold dear in our faith. The advertising will tell you, repeatedly, that you can only be happy if you consume, and it will employ sexual themes often enough to lift the base level of awareness higher than it should or need be.

Someone might say, "Why only blame TV for this? What about pulp fiction or glossy magazines?" But no one would recommend reading them either. Or what about Shakespeare? Aren't his plays full of sex and violence? Violence maybe, but sexual themes are muted -- and anyway, I don't see 90%+ of the population glued to a William Shakespeare play every night. Television is a hypnotic medium that presents the good with the bad, without differentiating or separating them.

Selective Viewing?

An obvious solution would be selective viewing, so that the viewer separates the good from the bad. This is a must for all Christian families, but they will also tell you how hard it really is to be selective. You often cannot tell what a programme is going to turn out like. You can't avoid the adverts, unless you go to extreme lengths like recording the programme, then editing them out later.

But the most serious problem with selective viewing is that for families with children. Even if adults have developed the faculty of discerning what programmes to watch, it is impossible to impart this to younger children who are fascinated by the colours and movement of the screen and will watch indiscriminately for themselves. When they watch with parents, who may have grown a thick skin to the things they see, the children are affected even more.

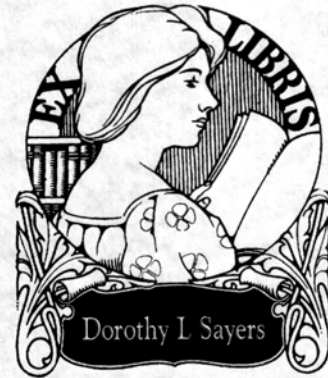
(Continued on page 26: **Television**)

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(Continued from page 15: **Rich Family**)

sang one verse. At church we had a missionary speaker. He talked about how churches in Africa made buildings out of sun dried bricks, but they needed money to buy roofs. He said \$100 would put a roof on a church. The minister said, "Can't we all sacrifice to help these poor people?" We looked at each other and smiled for the first time in a week.

Mom reached into her purse and pulled out the envelope. She passed it to Darlene. Darlene gave it to me, and I handed it to Ocy. Ocy put it in the offering.

When the offering was counted, the minister announced that it was a little over \$100. The missionary was excited. He hadn't expected such a large offering from our small church. He said, "You must have some rich people in this church."

Suddenly it struck us! We had given \$87 of that "little over \$100."

We were the rich family in the church! Hadn't the missionary said so? From that day on I've never been poor again. I've always remembered how rich I am because I have Jesus!

(Continued from page 22: **Mentoring**)

the classics. They even got their arithmetic from the classics, the Bible being the central classic.

From ages 13-17, most of the Founders went to college. In the time of Jefferson and Madison, the average graduation age of college was 16 or 17. At college, students took on the classics and went in depth. Then from 18-21 students went to work or to a professional school. The key point here is that in all these studies, learning was individualized. First by parents at home, then by other mentors at boarding school or college. If they went into law or medicine or a trade, they worked with yet another set of mentors who assessed their strengths and weaknesses and set out to help them achieve success. And the system was successful enough that the typical 1789 farmer could read and understand the *Federalist Papers*, something most Ph.D. students would struggle with today.

The public school conveyer belt has made us more highly trained as a generation, but less educated. And leadership therefore is lacking. The records we have of many of George Wythe's students show that no curriculum was quite the same, each student had a personalized program designed to fit his/her needs and interests. Our home schools can do the same by simply taking each student as an individual. This is one of the great advantages of home school; we

should personalize each student's program instead of just bringing the public school conveyer belt home with us.

(This article is from a lecture Dr. DeMille delivered at the Link Homeschool Conference at Westlake Village, California on June 13, 1998. Dr. Oliver DeMille is the founder and Provost of George Wythe College, an American college specifically designed to train statesmen. From THE LINK Home School News Online, hompaper@gte.net)

(Continued from page 24: **Television**)

From a year of research in the 1970s into television and the under-fives, one author argued for a responsible use of television and, a bit naively, for Government control of children's television to ensure good standards of programmes. (She does not write from an overtly Christian view point). She ends her study by saying: Television is a marvellous but limited tool in an experimental workshop. It can be valuable: a little stretch, a little grasp and probably, since we are human, a good deal of passivity. Like many other tools, it can also be used as a blunt instrument, and the most vulnerable heads in any society, tough though heads are, are those of the very young. Twenty years on, very young heads are in even more need of protection from blunt instruments.

A New Sin?

Television has only been around for about 50 years, and common for a lot less; so are we inventing a new sin by watching it? Is it sinful to watch television? The answer must be: No. But it is sinful to watch in such a way that one enters in to the violence or sex or other vice, is enticed, excited by it, hardened by it and eventually likes it; we should not underestimate the hypnotic ability of television. Nor should we overestimate it as an educational tool, since it functions primarily as a medium of entertainment; and we should be very selective in our viewing, not only for the children's sake, but our own too. If you are feeling brave and want to do an experiment, try going cold turkey on television for a period of time, say a month or six months even. Keep an eye on your reactions; keep a diary for the time. How did you fare? What were the benefits or the draw-backs? If I was a betting man, which I am not, I wouldn't mind betting that you would find it very hard at first, but that in the end the benefits would outweigh the draw-backs.

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