

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

Featured Family

**Ian & Alison MacFadgen**

Leslie (13), Heather (15),  
Daniel (7), David (3), Jeannie (10)

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

## KEYSTONE

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**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.

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

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

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

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

Amen!

# Editorial



Our family has really been doing some hard, hard thinking, soul-searching, praying over situations we are facing. We have been reading and meditating through Proverbs in our devotions. This book is loaded! The Lord has used this, other reading we're doing and the recent World Views Conference to cause us to re-evaluate our standards, what we allow to pass through our lives, what we expose ourselves to, what we expose our children to and how we should respond to our godless society.

We all know things in our society are going downhill, seemingly picking up pace and accelerating. I've been saying for years now how I reckon things are going to get a lot worse yet before they'll get any better. Most Christians still don't even seem to recognise any problems with sending their children to the state schools. Well, I am convinced the devil has used these compulsory, secular institutions to seduce more children away from the faith than any other factor apart from rank hypocrisy in parents. We have come to terms with the secular society around us and are now comfortable — way too comfortable — in this state of compromise. (Which is why I have included "The Christian Mind" article on page 25.)

*Seven* of Taradale's finest young men have been sent to jail for the gross violation of a fellow student. A Cambridge kid writes a sexually offensive "essay" and not only do fellow students and parents say "It's nothing", but even the Office of the Commissioner for Children says it cannot see anything wrong with it! The fact that violence and rape (as in *Once Were Warriors*) are required reading at Cambridge High is evidence that, in the state school context, an essay based on a guy leering & perverting at a girl in his class to the point of sexual arousal probably is nothing by comparison. New Zealand's own TheSchoolDaily e-letter is so full of reports of bullying, drug use, vandalism, suspensions and political power struggles by teachers on strike, you wonder how the whole thing still holds together. Our oldest daughter once had to break up two (state-schooled) lesbians at a function of what one might consider a conservative and safe youth organisation: the Air Training Corps, for crying out loud! A conversation I had with an NZQA employee indicated that the whole qualifications structure in this country is going to collapse before long. Almost every day I field phone calls from parents fed up with their children being abused by the system and the people in it and having the schools simply hushing it all up. And yet recent discussions I've had with MoE personnel reveal they are very concerned about home educated students not getting the socialisation offered by the state schools! When I compare what we as Christian parents want for our children and what most of the rest of society seems to think they should be getting....man, we're from two different planets!

As I say, things are going to get a lot worse before they're going to get any better. The state-schooled kids in the neighbourhood and, sadly, sometimes even at

# Contents

## Feature Family

Ian & Alison MacFadgen.....p. 5

## The Faith of Us Fathers

Schedule Kid Time.....p. 6  
21 Ways to Impart the Faith.....p. 7

## Home Educators Did It

Jordan & Courtney Wilson, Wainuiomata..p. 8  
Sarah Belmont, Hunterville.....p. 9

## Exploring God's Creation

How Could Metamorphosis Evolve?.....p. 9

## Learning Disabilities

A Matter of Grace.....p. 10

## Bits of Books

The Politics of (HE) Survival  
by Scott Somerville.....p. 11

## Home Education Research

Computer Assisted Learning.....p. 14

Letters.....p. 16

## In Line with Scripture

Proverbs 22:1.....p. 17

## Tough Questions People Ask

I never got a good education, so how can I train my children's minds to be learners?.....p. 19

## CHomeS Roundup

World Views Conference Report.....p. 22  
TV Needs Health Warning.....p. 22

## Teaching Tips

Learning Gaps.....p. 23  
The Basics Are Always Basic.....p. 23

## World Views in Focus

Feminism Collapsing.....p.25  
The Christian Mind.....p. 25

church, are becoming so perverted by what they get in the classroom, on the playground, at friend's houses, on the TV, from the internet that we feel that to allow our younger children to be unaccompanied or unsupervised by another family member may be taking a big risk. Sadly it means our youngest daughter (not the one mentioned earlier — she's already left), who is also in ATC is pulling out. Our son, 18, a leader there, is staying on to help raise the standards, just as ATC would want, and just as the Lord would also call him to do — and all the rest of us, too, by the way — in any area where we might wield any influence.

**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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times you are being watched more than you realise!

We usually cover our schooling in the morning (which doesn't mean the learning stops there), then mostly spend the afternoon together: going for a walk, swimming, playing a game of baseball, occasionally flying kites, visiting with another family or just catching up on some extra work around home. On Wednesdays we do less book work and cover art or music.

Heather, 15, works in the five main A.C.E. subjects plus a series of work books called "Successful Living" which are very relevant and include many questions a young Christian needs to face. Heather has an interest in Asian people, is learning conversational Japanese and is working (baby sitting and in a souvenir shop) for a Chinese family, picking up some of the Mandarin language. She also enjoys corresponding with some other home schooling girls, one in the North Island and three in the U.S.A.

Leslie, 13, also works in the main subjects, plus he really enjoys the Bible Reading workbooks. When his work for the day is finished, his favourite thing to do is go with Dad in the truck, picking up lots of practical experience (he doesn't know this is work!) When at home, Leslie is very much into creating things, mainly with wood, and always seems to have a new project on the go. He enjoys reading factual books on animals, hunting or whatever else comes his way. Leslie also cuts lawns and looks after gardens for a couple of people.

Jeannie, 10, has been quite different to teach in that she has taken a lot longer to get a good hold on her phonics and reading. She is much easier to teach as she gains more confidence. This is where I need to be mindful of my methods and attitudes so as to build confidence, not squash it! Jeannie loves anything to do with homemaking, baking and babies. She loves to share her baking with others.

Daniel, 7, is a ball of energy, always on the go and some days needs lots of help to channel his energies into the right places. He is picking up his reading well and asks lots of questions.

David, 3, is a barrel of fun for everyone and keeps us all laughing! He loves to do his "school work" and is learning to count, the shapes, the colours and much more. David enjoys most to be involved in whatever everyone else is doing.

Most of the time our schooling is spent with each child working at his own level, but everyone seems to enjoy the change when we do music or art and are all working together. There is a lot of interaction going on between us all throughout the day and plenty of lessons to be learned by all.

As our children are growing and changing all the time, I think it is important to be flexible from day to day. We are most thankful to our Lord for the opportunity to be and to learn together.

# The Faith of Us Fathers



## Schedule Kid Time

by Karl Anderson

I recently noticed a dramatic increase in my six-year-old daughter's self confidence when I scheduled an hour each day to "kid time" and let my six- and four-year-old daughters take control of that time.

Two years ago, at age 40, I left my position as Controller/Office Manager of a small chain of lumberyards in a rural area. We moved to a major metropolitan area where I began preparing for the ministry at a small seminary. My weekly schedule now includes 20 hours in class, 20 - 30 hours of study, 20 hours spread between three part time jobs, and preaching someplace every other Sunday, usually 100 miles away in some small country church.

Whenever the girls would ask me to play, my standard response soon became, "I'm busy". I finally figured out that if I didn't schedule time for the girls, I would always be "busy". So I set up a one-page schedule on a spreadsheet, earmarking an activity for every hour of the day. For example: Tuesday has class from 8 to 12; I work at the office of one of my computer networking clients from 1 to 3:30; I work out at the YMCA and get home at 5. I originally tried to do Kid Time from then until supper, but they were usually playing outside with the neighborhood kids when I got home, and I needed time to unwind, read the mail and have a conversation with my wife. It worked out better to schedule the hour after supper as Kid Time. Then from 8 - 11 is my study time with a short break when the girls go to bed so I can pray with them.

I printed my new schedule out and posted it on the wall above my desk. I then showed it to my daughters, pointing out the Kid Time. They choose what to do with this time. I have to guide them occasionally since my older daughter will invariably choose activities and games that are too complex for her younger sister, effectively shutting her out and getting me all to herself. So some time is spent playing Battleship or Operation with my older daughter, and some playing

## 21 Practical Ways Dads Can Impart the Faith

Chutes and Ladders with the younger one, and a lot of time playing Hide and Seek with both of them. They enjoy the anticipation of Daddy Time and planning what we will do. I'm enjoying building a stronger relationship with them. My wife likes to take advantage of that hour of relative solitude to do some reading or work on her lesson plans.

One major effect I noticed a few weeks after implementing this plan was that my older daughter's confidence began increasing. The most striking example of this was her sudden willingness to jump off the diving board at the swimming pool. The girls started taking swimming lessons about eight months ago. Until a few weeks ago, whenever the class was instructed to go off the diving board, my daughter would freeze up from fear. About a month after I instituted Kid Time into my schedule, she suddenly decided she was going to go off the diving board the next week at swimming lessons. Of course, they didn't do diving board that week, so I took the girls swimming a few nights later. My daughter marched straight out to the end of the board, hung her toes over the edge and jumped. After swimming to the edge, she climbed out of the pool and got back in line to do it again and again and again. The next week, we went to a different pool, one with a water slide. She went down the water slide by herself for the first time ever followed by her second, third, tenth and twentieth times, leaving me free to play the role of human flotation device for her little sister.

The correlation between my six-year-old's increased confidence and my spending more time with her may be coincidental. Maybe she just hit a new phase in her personal growth and development. But even so, Daddy Time is important. I recently heard of a study that found the average American father spends twelve seconds a day with his children. If we want to provide our children with better than that, we need to plan ahead and budget our time. A financial budget is used to plan our spending, so we don't fritter dollars away on unimportant things. I use a schedule to plan my time, so I don't fritter hours away on unimportant things.

(In the fall of 2000, after nearly 20 years of experience in small business, Karl enrolled at Free Lutheran Seminary ([www.aflc.org/aflts](http://www.aflc.org/aflts)) in Plymouth, Minnesota, USA, to prepare for pastoral ministry. He is now half way through a three year program. Karl married Debbie in 1993. They have two daughters, Kaelyn (6) and Sarah (5), whom they homeschool.)

These are ideas for Dads who are very busy, almost too busy. Feel free to increase the suggested frequencies of some activities.

1. Do your best to have a piece of every day given to the reading of Scripture, prayer and singing together. Buy a copy of the same hymnbook for each of you. Dad reads the Bible and asks questions or introduces discussion. Take turns as to who will choose the hymns and lead in prayer, with Dad finishing off the prayer every time. Dad, this is your privilege and duty, to clearly lead in family worship, to show that for you and your household, the Lord holds pre-eminence in all things.

2. Love their mother, your wife, intensely.

3. At least a couple of times a week, you give your children their spelling tests and go through the flash card drill for their math facts. This not only keeps you informed as to some of their progress, it impresses on the children the fact that, if Dad thinks this is important, it must be important.

4. As a special fun project with all the children, search out a book of science experiments that can be done at home and plan to do one with them once a week or once a fortnight. Sometimes gathering all the items can take time, so plan ahead: collect the items with the children as part of your time together, or see that they get collected during the week before the scheduled time together.

5. Read your children a story. You can do this at bedtime or while they are doing the dishes or tidying up the lounge or cuddling up with you or playing with blocks. Be attentive to opportunities to launch into stories of your youth which they'll love, or to explain concepts or answers questions they may bring up....or especially to use something in the story as a springboard for a discussion about one of those lessons on life that can be awkward to just bring up out of the blue.

6. Occasionally do the children's chores with them. It sets again the example that if Dad thinks it's important and worthy of doing, it must be worth doing. Never underestimate the impact your attitude toward things is having on your children's attitudes. Doing such chores also gives you that golden opportunity to tell all those stories of your deprived childhood before they invented CDs, VCRs, computers or calculators (or am I just showing my age here!)

7. If the budget can stand it, **you** take the children and do the grocery shopping (I will not be held accountable for all your impulse purchases of items not on the list!)

8. Once a month or every 6 weeks plan an outing, just you and the children: a bicycle ride, a trip to a museum or historical site, a hike in the hills. Mention it whenever you can in the weeks/days before...the anticipation of it will be as good as or better than the actual outing. But once you make such a plan and start reminding them of it, don't break your appointment unless you're on your deathbed.

9. Discuss current events at the dinner table or read and discuss with them a great newspaper/magazine article you just came across.

10. Be honest when you take them to a restaurant or movie that charges a different rate for children under twelve. Your children are looking straight into your heart on these occasions.

11. Show affection toward your wife. Make this a daily priority.

12. Show affection toward your sons and daughters. Hug them all. Wrestle with the boys on the floor. Give the girls an extra hug.

13. Read their essays. What a view you get into their thought processes. Offer praise and constructive Biblical suggestions as appropriate.

14. Turn off the television.....permanently.

15. Let your children see you react against public swearing, blasphemy and immorality including girlie magazines. Ask the guy in the movie queue whose every second word is a cuss word to please clean up his act. Tell the dairy owner or petrol station manager that neither you nor your children will be back until those girlie magazines are moved out. Our children are already having to deal with things the media presents as everyday life that we parents probably never encountered until adulthood. Men, we must be vigilant, proactive guardians.

16. Be sure to talk through your children's wrongdoing both before and after spanking or other discipline. This is essential for proper training; all their receptors are fully open at such times; concepts of right and wrong, obedience and disobedience, respect and disrespect, honesty and dishonesty are staring you in the face; so don't miss these opportunities to train your children by precept and admonition and some plain old straight talking.

17. Let your children hear you apologize to friends, neighbours, relations.....and especially to your wife and to them for even trivial things. Ask their forgiveness when you actually do them wrong.

18. Introduce them to your hobby and do it together.

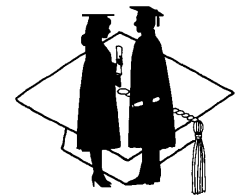
19. Watch your boys play soccer and your daughters perform Highland dancing with equal enthusiasm.

20. Boys like games involving fights and war. Rather than forbid playing with guns or giving them total licence to do as they please, consider giving them a vision for situations when it *would be* acceptable to strike another — in defence of their mother or sisters for example — and perhaps consider giving them proper lessons in gun safety and self-defence.

21. Express words of endearment and total commitment to your wife which the children hear and understand to mean your heart is hers and hers alone.

The objective is partly to show that you love them. But more importantly it is to demonstrate that true manhood, true masculinity, comes from humility, self-discipline, obedience to what the Scriptures say is right and submission to the Lord Jesus Christ.

# Home Educators Did It



Jordan and Courtney Wilson  
of Wainuiomata

Jordan, 19: I was home schooled from Form 1 to Form 7, whereupon I enrolled with the Correspondence School to sit Bursary. I had used up to this point an eclectic blend of Saxon Math, Abeka and ACE. I was successful in all five Bursary subjects and was accepted to Victoria University to do a degree in Computer Science. I am about to start my second year of studies at Uni, having passed all seven papers last year.

I found home schooling had prepared me well academically and had instilled in me a high degree of self-discipline and initiative. Socially, I have had no trouble at all. Being grounded in the Christian faith has given me a strong sense of who I am and a set of standards to live by, and I have found that the majority of people respect that. I believe my part-time job at the local vet prior to taking up my studies helped me mature and relate to people from all walks of life. It was a valuable experience and one which was possible due to the flexibility of home schooling.

My parents insisted on music instruction as part of our curriculum, and I passed my Grade 8 piano exam through Trinity. I sometimes used to balk at the practice needed but am grateful now as it has opened up many opportunities for me, such as part-time work teaching music at Music Technics in Wellington and at Wellesley School in Eastbourne (all worked around my lectures, of course!) In addition, I pick up any sort of holiday work I can, working with moving firms and at conference centres, cafés, etc. I have had comments made about my reliability, honesty and industriousness, and consequently I often have people ringing me now and offering work rather than having to go out and pursue it.

My mother instilled it into us that all the academic ability in the world means nothing if a person is lazy and dishonest in their work habits and that what employers are really looking for is character, and I have found that to be true. I think that being part of the chore roster at home and part of a large family where everyone had to pull their weight has stood me in good stead. Employers like to see someone who is not afraid to get his hands dirty.

My sister has also been accepted to Victoria this year to do a Music degree, majoring in composition, having graduated from ACE. She has also passed Grade 8 piano exam through Trinity and now has four pupils of her own that she teaches privately, in addition to part-time work at a local stationery shop, where she has worked since 15 years of age. She has also found that most people seem to be impressed with homeschoolers for their resourcefulness, initiative and reliability. The more home schoolers take their place in the workforce and tertiary institutions, the more accepting people are



becoming of it as a viable option that produces excellence in all things. (With permission. First in WHSA newsletter.)

## Sarah Belmont

of Hunterville

Between the 11th and 20th of February this year I was sailing on the *Spirit of New Zealand*, sister ship to the *Spirit of Adventure*. I am 17 years old and have had a variety of schooling during the last 12 years; 7 years in state schools, 2 years home schooling, and I am now studying selected subjects on the Correspondence School. It was through the Correspondence School that I was nominated to go on the *Spirit of NZ*.

The 10-day voyages like the one I went on are for young people aged from 15 to 19 years who are in full time education and are looking for excitement, friendship, personal development and a great time!

On the voyage there were 40 trainees plus the crew. The crew was made up of 4 volunteer watch leaders, a volunteer cook and volunteer engineer, 2 volunteer leading hands, 2 mates, 2 cadets and a captain. The trainees were divided into four watches, and with their watch leaders manned the four sail stations, which are: Foredeck, Midships, Main and Mizzen. Each watch had 2 turns at each station during the voyage. This means everyone has a go at all the different sails and duties. There were different duties that went with each sail station. The watch on foredeck had to clean the trainee accommodation and bathroom area. If you were on midships you had to scrub the deck and clean the wheelhouse. Main had the job of vege prep, which varied in difficulty, depending on what we were having to eat that day. Mizzen was voted the worst station as the duties were scrubbing the cooks dishes and galley and helping set up for the meals.

The normal day for us started with wake up at 6am. We then got out of our bunks, into our togs, and up on deck for a jog and short warm up session before jumping in for a quick swim. Breakfast was at 6:45am and if you were on mizzen you had to be down in the galley straight after your dip to help get it ready. After breakfast there was cleaning until colours at 8am, then more cleaning afterwards. Usually the mornings were spent in lectures on boating and boat safety. The afternoons were spent in practical experience on the boat. We had to learn all we could for trainee day, which is when the trainees run the ship. The night before trainee day we elected a captain, first and second mates, 2 navigators, 2 cooks, 2 helmsmen and 4 watch leaders. Then we just ran the ship. I think we did a pretty good job, too.

Everyone also had a day or half a day of being team leader in his/her watch. This meant that you had to organise the people in your watch for putting up and taking down the sail, at cleaning time and anything else that happened. For me, being the leader was the hardest thing on the whole voyage! However, with a lot of patience from Kelly (my watch leader) I finally got putting up and taking down the sail figured out.

On the voyage I learnt a lot more than how to help run a ship. We learned or improved some skills, such as teamwork, co-operation, leadership and communication. And of course, we had fun doing it!

Interested? Visit [www.spiritofadventure.org.nz](http://www.spiritofadventure.org.nz)

# Exploring God's Creation



## How Could Metamorphosis Evolve?

Dr. Walt Brown

Most insects (87%) undergo complete metamorphosis; that is, a larva (such as a caterpillar) builds a cocoon or chrysalis around itself. Its body inside then disintegrates into a thick, pulplike liquid. Days, weeks, or months later, the adult insect emerges — one that is dramatically different (as shown in Table 1), amazingly capable and often beautiful, such as a butterfly. Food, habitat and behaviour of the larva also differ drastically from the adult.

Evolution claims that:

*Mutations slightly alter an organism's genetic material which later generations inherit. On rare occasions the alterations are beneficial, enabling the offspring to reproduce more of themselves and the improved genetic material. [Supposedly] after many generations, dramatic changes, even new organs, accumulate.*

If this were true, each organism must be able to reproduce and must be superior, in some sense, to its ancestors. How then could metamorphosis evolve in many stages?<sup>a</sup>

**Table 1** Contrast between a Typical Larva and Adult

Larva	Adult Insect
A chewing mouth	A suckling tube
A few simple eyes	Two compound eyes (often with thousands of lenses capable of seeing all colours and ultraviolet light in almost all directions)
No true legs	Six segmented legs
Can't reproduce	Reproduces
A crawler	A capable flyer

What mutations could improve a larva? Certainly none that destroyed its nerves, muscles, eyes, brain, and most other organs, as occurs within a cocoon. So, even if a larva improved, it later ends up as "mush." From an evolutionary standpoint, liquefying complex organs is a giant step backwards. As Pitman wryly noted, "Maggots will more or less dissolve themselves when developing into a fly. Was the process pre-programmed from the first 'production run'? Or was the ancestral fly a dissolved maggot?"<sup>b</sup>

(Continued on page 16: *Metamorphosis*)



# Learning Disabilities



## A Matter of Grace

By Tyler & Jeanne Anderson

When Sammy was diagnosed, nearly twelve years ago, I felt as if I'd been kicked in the gut. When, seven years later, we were told that little Max had cerebral palsy too, I hung my head. And when Charlie was born on Valentines Day, 1998, showing all the characteristics of Down's Syndrome, well, I just started to cry. In fact, on the night of Charlie's birth, we all cried. My wife Jeanne, our 11-year-old daughter Maggie, my mom who was baby-sitting, and Pastor Tom and his wife; we all cried.

Our sadness has, in part, to do with the loss of dreams. Mommy's boys won't be receiving high-fives and athletic achievement awards, and Dad's little guys won't turn into paratroopers or jazz drummers. And, as Registered Nurses who know what life is like for the handicapped, we have a rough idea of what their futures may look like. It hurts to think just how difficult the ordinary things will be for them. The other day I found Sammy in his wheelchair crying. He'd been looking out the window, watching Maggie playing basketball. I walked over, knelt down and asked, "What's wrong, Sam?" He asked, "How come my legs don't work?" I picked him up, took him to the couch and sat there holding him; the both of us with tears in our eyes, staring off into space, saying nothing. Max, at four, is too young to know, and Charlie may never know why it is so hard to do the normal things, like walking and talking. But Mommy and Daddy know, and they also know the deep aching in their hearts will not quietly go away, at least, not in this world.

Jesus called His followers out of this world and set them on the narrow path. You remember His teaching. We are to "Seek first His kingdom...." Scrapping our flight plan and going in His way has not come easily. Leaving the shelters of the comfortable systems of schools, churches and even our families has been a trial often filled with great anguish.

We used to take advantage of government assistance through the public school system. Someone else paid for diapers, respite care, co-pays on wheelchairs, leg braces, etc. Our philosophical view has been changed, and we no longer think it appropriate to compel others, by way of taxation, to provide for our needs. This decision has narrowed our economic and social options. We still go through a lot of diapers which never seem to go on sale, and out here in the country it is fairly difficult to get a baby-sitter.

We used to have the kids in public school, but for reasons familiar to all home educators, we've chosen to forsake travelling down that road. It is a labour of love (and it is labour as well as love) I see in Jeanne, as she

devotes herself to teaching Maggie and Sam. It is also an unspoken source of contention with her family, most of whom are professional educators.

We used to be satisfied with what we saw and heard in the "church" here in America. We were tuned in to the cultural gospel of "do this, do that ... get this and that". Rarely did we hear, nor did we want to hear, what Jesus anticipated for His followers. Today, in many circles and in our experience, the ideas of brokenness, suffering and bearing the reproach of the Gospel are not held in high esteem, not a real seeker-friendly sermon topic. However, the experience of the vast majority of those in the early church was that of persecution, deprivation, estrangement and very often being killed by the ecclesiastical powers. What horrors these brothers and sisters in Christ knew as their common experience for the sake of the Gospel.

Having left the tradition of the weekly sacrifice, our trials for the sake of the Gospel cuts to the heart with our families. We try to be Bereans in searching out the Scriptures. We want to know what is true, and in finding the truth we've also come to understand some of the implications of what Jesus meant in Luke 12:51-53, "I have not come to bring peace but division...father against son...mother against daughter." A great theological divide separates us from those we love dearly. If I may borrow from John Bunyan when he describes his prison experience of being estranged from his family, it is "like the tearing of flesh from the bone."

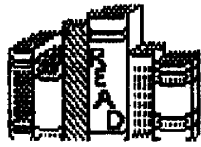
The apostle Paul in Romans 8 tells us that the "sufferings of this present age are not to be compared to the glory that will be revealed in us." All suffering in the believer is used by the Lord to refine His creation, conforming them to His image. Whether it is suffering the reproach of the Gospel in living out your spiritual life in Christ or enduring heartache for those you love, all is done to the glory of God. And it is His glory which He promises to share with us in the age to come. It is a glory that cannot abide pain and suffering, tears or sadness, or any type of infirmity, including cerebral palsy and Down's Syndrome. The promises of God are sure, and our hope is certain.

It is the matter of God's grace that continues to amaze me, even daily, as I consider the mercies and gifts He has lavished on my family and I. Through the sacrifice of Christ He has vanquished my sins and set His seal on my heart. He has been faithful, never leaving or forsaking us. And in striking us three times, deep into our hearts, He has spoken to us through our pain and sadness. The words of hope are today more real than I could have known all those years ago before Sam, Max and Charlie came along.

As we move through this world with our sight set on the things above, we "see through a glass darkly." I can almost make out the sight now, though. Charlie's mind will be clear and his eyes will be steady as he beholds the beauty of the face of Jesus. Max will speak clearly words of praise and no longer fall and hit his head in the city of his Saviour. Sammy will enjoy his new legs and think back on all those tears which have been forever wiped away. We will walk together in the presence of the Lord. We will talk forever of His goodness and mercy. We will understand the meaning of the trials He set before us in this life, and with perfect clarity we will thank Him for them.

(With permission from Tyler & Jeanne Anderson, 19405 Fisher Ave., Hastings, MN 55033, U.S.A., ph. (651) 480-8580, email: tyjean@prodigy.net)

# Bits of Books



## The Politics of Survival: Home Schoolers and the Law, Part 1

by Scott W. Somerville, Esq.<sup>1</sup>

This paper traces the legal and sociological history of the modern home school movement, and then suggests factors that led to this movement's remarkable success.

### Why Home Schooling Should Have Failed

#### Limited Resources

Home schooling never should have succeeded in the modern era. It may have been adequate for the agricultural setting of our colonial ancestors, but who would have thought that untrained parents could throw together a homemade curriculum that would actually prepare a child for life in the twenty-first century? In the early days of the modern home schooling movement (c. 1965), there were no support groups or newsletters for parents who taught their children at home. Many parents who taught their children at home never knew that there were any other people doing the same thing. Every family had to invent home education from scratch. They did not even have a name for what they were doing.

#### Legal Penalties

The school officials had a name for what they were doing, however — criminal truancy. Each time parents pulled a child out of public school, the unexcused absences began to accumulate. Some open-minded school officials were willing to look the other way, but others insisted on enforcing the law. The only safe way to start home schooling was to start before the child reached school age or to move to a new school district where no one knew the child existed. When parents got caught, they had no legal excuses, no useful precedents, and usually, no money to hire the kind of lawyer who would fight for an unwritten freedom. Parents were arrested, jailed or fined until they put their children back in school. The only sure way to avoid legal trouble was to hide. This kept the authorities from finding out about home schooling, but it

kept everyone else from finding out about it, too.

#### Powerful Opponents

The school officials who prosecuted home schoolers strongly believed that they were protecting innocent children from serious harm. Certified teachers and highly trained school administrators had no reason to believe that parents could cover the basic academic subjects, much less provide the social interactions that were offered in the public schools. To many public school teachers, home education seemed to be child neglect, at best.

The public school officials who were charged with enforcing the truancy laws had every reason to be thorough. Their professional training was founded on the assumption that teaching was not a job for laymen or amateurs. School officials had powerful and selfless reasons to oppose home education. They were not merely motivated by the fact that school budgets were based upon a certain number of dollars for every child in attendance. (In the early days of home education, few school officials ever imagined that home education could ever have a real financial impact on the schools.) But each home schooler did undoubtedly cost the district some small amount in lost revenues. All these factors added up to a solid wall of opposition to home schooling within the public school establishment.

#### Social Disapproval

Home schoolers also faced a wall of opposition from their neighbors. The general public believed that children need a rich set of interactions with other children if they are ever to succeed in later life. Whenever a home schooler tried to explain what he was doing to some other person, he could always count on two questions: Is that legal? And what about socialization?

## A History of Home Schooling

Home schoolers started out as scattered individuals with little or no resources who faced powerful enemies as they violated the law in a climate of social disapproval. How did these people get from where they were then to where they are now? The history of modern home schooling shows that this journey took wave after wave of different kinds of people educating their children at home for very different reasons. Without this diversity, home schooling would still be a marginal movement.

### Left-Wing Intellectuals

Patrick Farenga is the president of Holt Associates and the publisher of the magazine *Growing Without Schooling*. He worked with the late John Holt from 1981 until Holt's death in 1985. Farenga writes:

“The sixties and seventies were times of great ferment for new ideas about education. Some education and social critics, like John Holt, became popular writers by questioning methods of schooling. The battles over look-say reading methods versus phonics, training teachers to be gentle facilitators or drill instructors, whether to encourage hands-on learning or test-taking skills, were well-worn battles to these writers even in the sixties. Many school reformers, such as Herbert Kohl, noted that it is a wide variety of methods, materials, schedules and techniques that help children learn, and that the teacher should have the freedom to use any combinations of things and ideas to help students. Further, some writers, such as A.S. Neill and Holt, suggested that the student should have complete freedom to choose how, when and from whom they wanted to learn. In the early sixties, Paul Goodman, in *Compulsory Miseducation and Growing Up Absurd*, argued that compelling children to attend school is not the best use of their youth, and that education is more a community function than an institutional one. This idea was developed and amplified over the years by many authors, but most forcefully by John Holt.” (Farenga, 1999, p. 34)

John Holt began his career as a fifth grade teacher in a private school. He thought deeply about what worked and what didn't in modern American education and recorded his observations in *How Children Fail* in 1964. *How Children Learn* soon followed in 1967. The two books, which are still in print, have sold a total of one and one half million copies and have been translated into 14 languages. Other educational thinkers were working on similar issues during the same time period. According to Farenga, none influenced Holt as much as Ivan Illich, who published *Deschooling Society* in 1971.

“After *Deschooling Society* appeared, Holt studied and corresponded with Illich at length and was deeply influenced by Illich's analysis, particularly with his analysis that school serves a deep social function by firmly maintaining the status quo of social class for the majority of students. Further, schools view education as a commodity they sell, rather than as a life-long process they can aid, and this, according to Illich, cre-

ates a substance that is not equally distributed, is used to judge people unfairly and -- based on their lack of school credentials — prevents people from assuming roles they are otherwise qualified for.

“By the late seventies Holt had given up on the possibility that schools would welcome and assist the sorts of changes he and others were suggesting. He sought ways to make these changes as individuals and communities, thus bypassing, rather than confronting, school resistance to these ideas.” (Farenga, 1999, p. 35)

Holt's thinking led him to an ever-deeper critique of modern compulsory education. In *Instead of Education*, he wound up suggesting a new “Underground Railroad” to help children escape from traditional schools. In Holt's own words:

“Some may say that such a railroad would be unfair, since only a few children could get on it. But most slaves could not escape from slavery, either, yet no one suggested or would suggest that because all the slaves could not be freed, none should be. Besides, we have to blaze a new trail if only so that others may follow. The Children's Underground Railroad, like all movements of social protest and change, must begin small: it will grow larger as more children ride it.” (Holt, 1976, p. 218)

*Instead of Education* is one of the landmarks of the modern home school movement. Pat Farenga explains:

“In this book, Holt proposed removing children from school legally or as an act of civil disobedience. While the education establishment barely recognized this particular book of Holt's, it struck a chord with some parents. Some wrote to Holt explaining that they were teaching their children at home legally, others that they were doing so underground. Some were rural families, some city dwellers, others were in communes. Intrigued, Holt corresponded with them all and decided to create a newsletter that would help put these like-minded people in touch with one another. In August of 1977, the first issue of *Growing Without Schooling* (GWS) was published, and the nation's, and probably the world's, first periodical about homeschooling was born.” (Farenga, 1999, p. 36)

*Growing Without Schooling* finally made it possible for like-minded but widely-scattered people to communicate with one another. This included people like Dr. Pat Montgomery, a Catholic educator who had no children of her own but soon became a strong supporter of unschooling. She formed the Home Based Education Program at the Clonlara School in Michigan. Michigan law, at that time, required every child to be taught by a certified teacher, but the law did not specify how much time that teacher had to spend with each child. Clonlara made it possible to comply with the letter of the law while keeping the spirit of unschooling.<sup>2</sup>

### Organic Education

The unschoolers of the late '60s were as political as their era, but the next wave of home educators had a

different set of priorities. The '70s saw the rise of "delayed schooling" as an alternative to "unschooling." Dr. Raymond Moore, the spokesman for this new movement, was more concerned with children's health than social change. His book, *Better Late Than Early* suggested that parents should keep children out of formal education for the first few grades. His research indicated that a healthy child could start formal schooling at fourth grade (about 10 years old) without any harm.

Dr. Moore's educational and medical conclusions were shaped, to some degree, by religious concerns. Like other Seventh-Day Adventists, Dr. Moore believed that health, nutrition and exercise are important to a person's overall spiritual well-being. The Moores had taught their own children at home as far back as 1944. This holistic emphasis found ready acceptance within the existing home school community, and soon broadened its appeal to less politically-oriented families. The second wave of modern home education was underway.

Dr. Moore's holistic approach to education made home schooling acceptable to some conservative religious families who would have been repelled by the left-leaning politics of most unschoolers. Dr. Moore began to attract attention in evangelical circles. He appeared on *Focus on the Family*, an evangelical radio show with a huge national audience. Many of the early Christian home schoolers date their exposure to home schooling to that interview, including J. Michael Smith, the current President of the Home School Legal Defense Association.

As a developmental psychologist with extensive experience in traditional education, Dr. Moore soon proved to be a credible expert witness in home school cases. He had been a public school teacher, a principal, a superintendent, a college dean and a college president. He was a prolific writer and speaker who wrote or contributed to more than 60 books. Dr. Moore's tireless efforts advanced home education far beyond its original left-wing base, and his frequent appearances in court helped the fledgling movement survive. According to Dr. Moore's newsletter, he and his wife interceded with school officials on behalf of hundreds of parents over the years. (Moore, 1986)

### **Evangelical Objectors**

One evangelical Christian in particular was attracted by Dr. Moore's message on *Focus on the Family*. This was Gregg Harris, who soon took a job working for Dr. Moore. Harris viewed home education as an effective means to a specific religious end. He believed home schooling could lead to a renewal of traditional Christian family living. Harris's desire to present an explicitly Christian message to Christian audiences soon led to tensions with his employer and an eventual split.

Harris began promoting home education to explicitly evangelical audiences through his "Christian Life Workshops." His message came at an opportune time. "The Christian Schools Movement"<sup>3</sup> of the 1970s was running out of churches that were willing and able to start schools, but individual families were still looking for alternatives to the secular public schools. Harris's

evangelical message made sense to parents who could not afford or could not find a local Christian school. It energized a new wave of Christian home schoolers who left the schools for religious rather than pedagogical reasons.

Harris's "Christian Life Workshops" were complemented by a new magazine devoted to evangelical home schooling called *The Teaching Home*, which began publication in 1983. Just as *Growing Without Schooling* had created an unschooling movement, *The Teaching Home* sparked a visible Christian home school movement. The number of home schoolers surged as one church after another discovered home education.

The new wave of evangelical home schoolers created friction with many local school districts. The first wave of unschoolers were convinced that they had a better educational alternative, and many of them were usually willing to work to persuade skeptical school officials that they had a better mousetrap. Open-minded superintendents were usually willing to let them try. The evangelicals had a whole different reason for leaving the public schools. Some rejected public education as "godless" and thought of school officials as secular humanists who were bent on godless mind-control. Parents like these asserted that the Bible required them, not the school system, to raise their own children. They were often not willing to seek "permission" from the schools.

The Christian home schoolers brought new legal problems to the home school movement, but they also brought some Christian attorneys who were willing to dedicate their time to protecting home schoolers. These included Michael P. Farris and J. Michael Smith, who founded the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) in 1983. Membership in HSLDA was open to any home schooler regardless of religious affiliation or lack thereof, but HSLDA employees were required to sign a Christian statement of faith. Home schooling had become legal for some families in some states; but HSLDA shouldered the task of making home education legal for every family in every state. By 1989 there were only three states (Michigan, North Dakota, and Iowa) that still outlawed home education. By 1993 home education was legal in all 50 states.

HSLDA was open to all home schoolers, but the rising tide of evangelical home schoolers began to change the face of home education. The original state home school organizations had always been willing to accept any home schooler, regardless of his reason for teaching a child at home. Christian parents who fled the public schools to escape secular humanism were understandably shocked by the lifestyles of some of their fellow home schoolers. As home education began to spread through local churches, explicitly Christian support groups began to spring up at the local level.

In one state after another, Christian home schoolers formed statewide organizations. *The Teaching Home* was a national magazine for Christian home schoolers that "co-published" newsletters for state home school

organizations. At first, *The Teaching Home* published anything a state organization put out, but as some of the larger states began to produce rival home school organizations, *The Teaching Home* had to choose which newsletter to publish. This caused friction in states where older organizations that included all home schoolers saw no need for the explicitly Christian startups. The new organizations grew quickly, however, and by the early 1990s evangelicals so dominated the visible face of home schooling that many of the original home schoolers feared the movement would be “written off” as a fundamentalist phenomenon.

#### Notes:

1. Adjunct Assistant Professor of Government, Patrick Henry College and Staff Attorney, Home School Legal Defense Association, One Patrick Henry Circle, Purcellville, VA 20134. The author would like to thank Patrick Farenga, President of Holt Associates and Editor of *Growing Without Schooling Magazine*, for his assistance and information on the work of John Holt and the early days of the modern home school movement. Christopher Klicka, Senior Counsel of the Home School Legal Defense Association, graciously gave permission to incorporate substantial amounts of materials he has written for HSLDA.
2. It would be 15 years before the courts finally ruled that Clonlara’s program satisfied Michigan law, in *Clonlara, Inc. v. State Bd. of Educ.*, 442 Mich. 230 (Mich. 1993).
3. The School Prayer cases of the ‘60s were initially met with stunned disbelief among believers, followed by “massive resistance” to the secularization of what had traditionally been generically Protestant public schools. At first Evangelicals just fought to get prayer back in the classrooms. As alienated Evangelicals began to critique the public schools, however, they concluded that the problems went deeper than that. Evangelicals decided that schools were actively promoting an alternative religion that they identified as “secular humanism.”

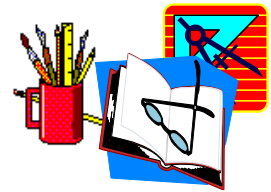
The resulting “Christian Schools Movement” spawned thousands of church schools in the 1970s, often meeting in Sunday School rooms. These church schools routinely operated without State approval, and were the subject of much litigation. Some of the more influential leaders of the Christian Schools Movement became prominent in the Christian home school movement, including Dr. R. J. Rushdoony, a prominent Reconstructionist, and Dr. Paul Lindstrom, the founder of Christian Liberty Academy. The Christian Liberty Academy Satellite Schools program (CLASS) later became an “umbrella school” similar to Clonlara.

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(Used with permission from the Home School Legal Defense Association, [www.HSLDA.org](http://www.HSLDA.org).)

# Home Education Research



## Computer-Assisted Learning (CAL)

Report to the Ministry of Education  
Prepared by Judy M. Parr  
(with assistance from Irene Fung)  
School of Education  
The University of Auckland

### Executive Summary

Overall, the effectiveness of computer-assisted learning *has not been conclusively demonstrated*. To date, it has been shown to be less effective, on average, than other forms of intervention in education. In considering the results of evaluative research in computer assisted learning, one has to avoid confounding the *medium* [computers in this case] with the *method* [how the computer programme teaches, including its underlying philosophy]. Generally, computer-assisted learning software is under-pinned by an older, neo-behaviourist<sup>1</sup> theory of learning, one that has been displaced in the classroom by more social constructivist<sup>2</sup> views of learning. Particularly in New Zealand primary classrooms, the approach of the software may differ considerably from widely accepted classroom pedagogy. (Emphases added.)

Computer-assisted learning programs, especially integrated learning systems, are generally costly. Their efficacy and cost effectiveness relative to alternative programs, particularly with respect to reading, is questionable. While comparative research exists with respect to effectiveness, good comparative research in relation to cost effectiveness is lacking.

Results from evaluations of integrated learning systems show highly variable results, with independent evaluations tending to be less favourable. The best results appear to be for basic maths skills; there is little evidence of gains in reading. Integrated learning systems, in their current form of neo-behaviourist, mastery learning<sup>1</sup>, support the gaining of basic procedural knowledge. There is evidence that students may not be able to apply such knowledge without teacher intervention and that such knowledge may not generalise to school or system curriculum assessment tasks.

(The report’s recommendations stated that CAL is a costly option, not particularly effective overall except in maths where there was yet evidence of student difficulty in applying skills to the real world. And it cautioned that the behaviourist<sup>1</sup> pedagogy of the software may not be compatible with the constructivist<sup>2</sup> pedagogy of the classroom! — Ed.)

### Notes:

1. Behaviourism, according to its primary proponent,

B.F. Skinner, is the belief that all human actions are merely responses to external stimuli. Put another way, the environment around us provides all kinds of feedback to us, both to our actions and to our inaction. This feedback one can call a stimulus or, for plural, stimuli. According to this behaviourist belief, because we are only acting and reacting according to the stimuli around us, and because we have no independent personality which actually initiates anything on its own, each of us is nothing more than a living organism whose movements and actions and thoughts and motivations are products of the environment. Some "social scientists" and government policy makers really go for this idea, for they reckon that if they could just control the entire environment, manipulate every aspect of our surroundings, they could then produce predictable, pre-determined and neurologically conditioned responses in all persons in a society. Just think: a society where the planners at the top could produce all those things an ideal society should have: low crime, full employment, non-sexism, non-racism, tolerance, altruism, compliant workers, etc.

Well, the former Soviet communist regimes are examples of such controlled societies, the so-called "workers' paradise". One can also see the effects of this thinking in compulsory schooling, a curriculum controlled by the Ministry of Education, the push to see compulsory schooling start at earlier ages and finish at older ages, and unthinking computer programmes and "mastery learning" techniques (such as are used in Unit Standards, Achievement Standards and the worktexts of some popular home education curriculum) that train one to simply come back with the desired approved response to each separate stimulus.

J. Richard Fugate, Chief Executive Officer and President of Alpha and Omega Publications which uses such a technique, has said, "The fact that mastery learning is utilized by some educators with evil intent to program humanistic sociopolitical conditioning in the public classroom does not mean that the concept of mastery learning is intrinsically evil." In addition, the present writer used a variation called "programmed learning" to teach himself German, French and Organic Chemistry with great success. The point to be made here is that this behaviourist concept is, according to the authors of this report, the philosophy behind most computer learning programmes.

"The technology for controlling others exists and it will be used, given the persistence of power-seeking motives. Furthermore, we will need to use it, since the necessary social changes cannot come about if the affected people do not understand and desire them.... How do we educate "run-of-the-mill" citizens for membership in a democratic society?... How do we teach people to understand their relationship to long range planning?... And how do we teach people to be comfortable with the process of change? Should we educate for this? We shall probably have to. But how?..."

"The need for educating to embrace change is not limited to youngsters... Education for tomorrow's world will involve more than pro-

gramming students by a computer; it will equally involve the ways in which we program parents to *respond* to the education children get for this kind of world. To the extent we succeed with the youngsters but not with the parents, we will have a very serious consequence: an increasing separation of the young from their parents. It will have psychological repercussions, probably producing in the children both guilt and hostility (arising from their rejection of their parents' views and values in lifestyles)."

[From *The Computer in American Education*, edited by Don D. Bushnell and Dwight W. Allen (John Wiley & Sons: New York, 1967), p. 7.]

2. The term "constructivist" is applied both to learning theory (how people learn) and to epistemology (the nature of knowledge). It refers to the idea that learners, both individually and as part of a group, construct knowledge and meaning for themselves as they learn. Constructing one's own meaning *is* learning; there is no other kind of learning (say the constructivists). There are two dramatic consequences of holding this view:

First: There is no independently existing body of knowledge out there. Old ideas of a fixed reality outside of and independent of the student must be tossed out. Instead, each student fabricates<sup>3</sup> his own explanations of reality, constructing his own personal order and meaning out of the array of sensations encountered throughout life. "Reality" is not independent of the learner, but rather fully dependent upon each learner or community of learners for its content and meaning.

Second: Learning rather than teaching is the focal point. The learning of the learner is at the center of the enterprise not the subject/lesson to be taught. We no longer expect the student to sit at the feet of one who has previously gained the correct knowledge and understanding of the world and to be taught by this teacher. Instead the learner is encouraged to construct his own knowledge and understanding as he interacts with and experiences the surrounding environment, either individually or in community with others.

Of course this constructivist idea is thoroughly anti-Christian for it does not recognize a single coherent *universe*, one reality, created by one God, to which all persons must learn to relate. Instead it posits a *multiverse*, that is, multiple realities, created by many individuals and/or groups who determine their own ways and means of relating. In a teaching situation it means that a constructivist teacher has no "right" answers or explanations, but only personally favoured ones. This introduces the danger that the teacher may be tempted to channel the students into creating realities closely resembling her own favoured view. But her job is actually to facilitate or coach students in creating their own personal and unique understandings and meanings for the world around them. And according to this report, constructivism is the accepted philosophy of learning in NZ state schools!

3. This is the very word the constructivist himself uses to explain the concept at <http://www.artsined.com/teachingarts/Pedag/Dewey.html>



(Continued from page 9: *Metamorphosis*)

The millions of changes inside the thick liquid never produce something survivable or advantageous in the outside world until the adult completely forms. How did the genetic material for both larva and adult develop? Which came first, larva or adult? What mutations could transform a crawling larva into a flying monarch butterfly that can accurately navigate 3,000 miles using a brain the size of a pin head?<sup>c</sup> Indeed, why should a larva evolve in the first place, because it cannot reproduce?<sup>d</sup>

Charles Darwin wrote, "If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down."<sup>e</sup> Based on metamorphosis alone, evolution "breaks down."

Obviously, the vast information that directs every stage of a larva's and an adult's development, including metamorphosis, must reside in its genetic material at the beginning. This fits only creation.

### Notes:

a . "Certainly it [metamorphosis] demonstrates the absurdity of invoking natural selection by successive mutation to explain such an obviously, yet subtly programmed, process. Why on that basis, should the ancestral insect have survived the mutations that projected it into the chrysalid stage, from which it could not yet develop into an adult? Where was natural selection then? How could pre-programmed metamorphosis, in insect, amphibian or crustacean, ever have evolved by chance? Indeed, how could development have evolved piecemeal? The ball is in the evolutionist's court, tangled in a net of inexplicability." Michael Pitman, *Adam and Evolution* (London: Rider & Company, 1984), p. 71.

"Apart from the many difficulties in understanding how such a radical change [as metamorphosis] comes about, there is the larger question of why it should happen? Can there really be an evolutionary advantage in constructing one sort of organism and then throwing it away and starting again?" Gordon Rattray Taylor (former Chief Science Advisor, BBC Television), *The Great Evolution Mystery* (New York: Harper & Row, 1983), p. 177.

Finding how metamorphosis evolved in one species, genus, family, order, or class is just the first question. Because many different larva-to-adult patterns exist, many other explanations are also needed.

b . Pitman, pp. 193–194.

c . Jules H. Poirier, *From Darkness to Light to Flight: Monarch—the Miracle Butterfly* (El Cajon, California: Institute for Creation Research, 1995).

d . An evolutionist might claim that larvae once reproduced, but then lost that capability. If so, why is there no sign of any remnant reproductive equipment in any of the hundreds of thousands of larva types?

e . Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species*, 6th edition (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1927), p. 179.

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# Letters



## Radio Rhema

You were great on Radio Rhema! I heard you when it happened the first time and felt you did a terrific job of responding to some fairly tough questions. We are proud of your representation of our homeschoolers nationwide!

Marsha Fellet  
Auckland

## On Our Way

This is a rather belated thank you for the wonderful Wellington homeschooling workshop in February. Thank you Jocelyn and Peter for your time and organisation and for making your home available! Thank you, Craig and Barbara for your words of wisdom; I was really inspired by the experiences you shared. (Barbara, we now have a memorisation card file. There's even a divider with my name on it; I'm memorising some verses, too! My daughter loves "testing" me on them.)

We have been sort of homeschooling our four year old for the last two terms. I drove home from the WHSA workshop convinced that this homeschooling thing is not just a stopgap for until Tessa reaches school age but is a way of life that suits our family and that has great advantages for both our children. A couple of days later, after some prayer and discussion, we decided we would pull our nearly-7-year-old son out of school too. Josiah was very happy at school, so we agreed we would wait for some sign in him that the time was right. Almost from that day, Josiah started asking questions about homeschooling and saying that he wanted to be at home, too! We applied for the exemption a couple of weeks ago and got the certificate in the mail last week, so we're on our way.

Lisia Grocott  
Wellington

## Tenfold Return

Thanks very much for the article you sent. I appreciate good reading and information resources, among which *Keystone* is still top of the list. I don't know how to express how valuable your publication has been to us personally over the last few years. I give the same bit of favorite advice to anyone combing through our homeschooling resources, being that if they want to spend money anywhere that will give a tenfold return, then get subscribed to *Keystone* material!

Carol Magee  
Te Kauwhata



## Tribulations not unique

Many thanks for the Keystone magazine. We have read and digested it thoroughly and found it most relevant and encouraging. Indeed the Lord's Word reaches out to us, and it is a support to read in Keystone of the situations of other families, and we understand that many of the tribulations of home schooling are not unique to us. For us it is a time of isolation in Brunei, as we are the only home schooling family (and Christian to boot) so we are obviously the lepers in this very materialistic section of Asia.

David & Christine Heswall  
Brunei

## Buoyancy Shots

We continue to be enriched and edified by *Keystone*. Thank you so much for providing something so affirming and challenging for ordinary home educators like us. Life can become so busy and overwhelming, and the solid advice and counsel offered by your magazine has a wonderful way of helping to refocus perspective and recharge the batteries. Thank you for giving our enthusiasm regular buoyancy shots.

Stephen & Andrea Thierry  
Victoria, Australia

# In Line with Scripture



**“A good name is to be chosen  
rather than great riches.”**

— Proverbs 22:1

(We read this verse only this morning, but it touched off quite a little discussion among us: mum & dad and the three at home aged 15, 10 and 4. — Ed.)

What is a good name? It is one's reputation. It is the sum of your track record to date, the overall impression people have of you and your character and what you are like to deal with. A good name is something one works hard to build up. It takes years of faithful service, consistent practice in dealing honestly, always being at your best.

You get a good name when people like dealing with you because of your friendliness: you are friendly, respectful, take the time to talk with them.

You get it because of your honesty: people know they can trust you; you do what you promise, even if it ends up being totally inconvenient or uneconomical for you; you give a fair day's work for a day's pay; you don't stretch lunch and tea breaks for an extra 5 minutes; you show up for work early and leave after quitting time.

You get a good name because of your compassion; you keep others informed of your progress on a project you know they're depending on; you lift others' loads from them, either by taking it on yourself or organising others to take it; you are always looking out for the interests of others. (You know, once the word gets out that you are genuinely interested in the welfare of others and that you will put their interests ahead of your own and actually spend your valuable time talking to them about their concerns....people will beat a path to your door.)

A good name is attached to those who are dependable: there are many players, but a lot fewer are real stayers; you will stick with a project or commitment you begin until its completion, no matter how much of a pain and hassle it turns out to be; when you say, "I'll pray about it," or "I'll see what I can come up with," people know that you will, and that you'll be getting back to them soon. A good name comes when people know you may not be quick to take on projects or commitments, not because you don't want to, but

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because you are committed to a high standard of excellence; once you sign on to a project, people will relax and be confident, knowing the job is in good hands. A good name inspires confidence in others.

A good name goes before you. As soon as others ascertain who you are, they are well disposed towards you as a person and towards everything you say. You may be offered gifts, favours, honours, opportunities to speak or positions of authority and responsibility that you haven't sought. Although you enjoy this very much, and it is a blessing from the Lord to you and your family, you are actually a little uneasy with it all. Why? Because you know your own weaknesses, you are

aware of your frailties, you are embarrassed at how far below Christ's standards you really are. That is, you are humble. It has been a foundational part of your character all along and was the key ingredient that enabled you

to gain a good name in the first place. And now, because of this humility, you realise that a good name also carries responsibility. If people are too quick to accept your suggestions or recommendations and don't check out other options, they may follow your lead. If it turns out to be an unsuitable choice for them, not only does it disappoint them and waste their time and resources, but there is also the danger that *you* may get the blame – and the back-chat – for *their* lack of investigation and evaluation.

A good name goes before your spouse and your children. It will open doors of opportunity you would never dream of! Such offers are not only always a totally unexpected surprise, but you also find it really difficult to accept these opportunities for they seem far too generous. No wonder the Proverb says a good name is to be chosen rather than even *great* riches! Money cannot buy your way into people's hearts, and this is what has taken place by way of your good name: it has endeared you to people's affections to the extent that they are willing to open up their lives and businesses....and yes, even put *their* good names at risk....by taking on your children. Who needs an A-pass Bursary when you have a good name?

A good name is something that takes many years to build up; we're talking decades here, not a mere five or six. It is that depth of experience that people can sense when they meet you for the first time, even when your good name has not preceded you and you are a total stranger to them. A good name is therefore, almost by definition, the original preserve of middle aged and older folks. Young people can and do have a good name in a more limited sense, a good name in progress as it were, which is valuable and obviously essential for a good name later on. This is part of what older folks talk about when they say life *begins* at 40. You will certainly be over 40 when others begin offering your children high-paying jobs and responsible positions on the strength of your good name.

As valuable and long-lasting and hard-won as a good

name is, it is also rather fragile and brittle. A large enough act of indiscretion can shatter your reputation in a moment and may even put you into a position from which your once good name will never recover. And now it becomes scary when you consider, on the one hand, the good name you have been building up and, on the other hand, your children. Younger children can do a lot of foolish things, even downright stupid, mean and ugly things, and "get away with it"... not with you as parents, I trust. You will deal with them in the strongest terms with loving godly discipline. And other people outside your family will generally cut little children plenty of slack. But somewhere along the line, your children reach an age where people do expect a lot

more from them and their behaviour, when they most certainly do see your children's behaviour as a reflection of your character....or lack of it. This is sometimes very difficult for you to see, for only the closest of

friends will dare raise such issues with you as what they perceive to be chronic disrespect or dishonesty or just a perpetual case of D.R.A. in your child (DRA = dirty rotten attitude).

Here is where home education is such a blessing. Both Mum and Dad can be down on little junior like a ton of bricks whenever a DRA or actual offensive behaviour is manifested and can nip it in the bud. But it requires Mum and Dad to have both eyes opened to the many faults of their children which they as parents must discipline *out*. At the same time Mum and Dad must be training *in* to their children those qualities that are needed to build up a good name, the qualities Mum and Dad must be displaying and working on in themselves.

*Your* good name is actually, in fact, *for* your children just as much as it is for you, maybe even more so. Yet before they can inherit all its benefits, they must be trained to respect it, desire it and realise the terrible potential they have of shattering it in a moment by some wild act of indiscretion. Tell your children of the power they have, by committing unthinking actions, to inflict on you almost total destruction: the pain of a totally crushed heart; the trampling of your most cherished dreams; the ruin of your reputation within the wider community, the name you have been painstakingly building up, preserving, polishing and otherwise working on for years before they were even born. Some may object, that this is laying a guilt-trip on your children. But it is nothing more than revealing to them the facts. And the facts demand that they, for your sakes as well as for their own, *be responsible*. Be done with idiocy passing itself off as the wisdom of the age in sayings such as "boys will be boys", "children must be allowed to find themselves" or "beware of harming their self-esteem". Because you want the best for your children, because you want them to have every advantage in this life, because you want them to have a proper Biblical self image, you will train them to have the utmost respect for this most valuable of commodities that you can pass on to them: a good name, which is to be chosen rather than great riches.

People will beat a path to your door.

# Tough Questions People Ask

## I never got a good education, so how can I train my children's minds to be learners?

by Barbara Smith

For the first 10 years of our home education, Craig did all the academic stuff. My education was very poor: the NZ state school system, including an expensive girls' boarding school, did not cater to my kinesthetic learning style. So when our situation changed and demanded that I do the teaching, I thought I had to be ahead of them all the time and was frantically trying to study up on every subject. Then I worked out that I probably only needed to be one night ahead. But praise the Lord, I discovered that if I just get in there and learn along side of them, which was the usual situation anyway, my excitement about learning things was contagious! We all enjoy our time a lot more when there is excitement in the air.

I am convinced that, if I can do it, then by God's grace anyone can do it, and do it well. Ask the Lord to give you a **conviction** that your unmatched commitment to your children will cause your tutoring/mentoring home education situation to produce superior results. Your home education programme, almost regardless of what it is, has vast advantages over even the most gifted of teachers in a classroom simply because it is you, their mum, doing one-on-one for as long as you like, any way you like, any where you like, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. With such a conviction you will be *spilling over* with the kind of confidence that stirs up not only your own children but nearly everyone else you engage in conversation to want to know more! (Excitement, enthusiasm, conviction and lastly confidence...those who have heard me speak know I am developing some of these things at least, even if my formal education was no good. And don't be fooled by this essay: much of the grammar and punctuation are a result of my husband's editing skills!)

Keep it simple and set yourself up to succeed. Big ambitions and big plans are great, but if they are unrealistic, you will burn yourself out and set yourself up to fail. I'm currently teaching a 15-year-old, a hyperactive 10-year-old and a typical talkative 4-year-old (while the 18-year-old is at polytech fulltime and the two eldest are travelling overseas, all 6 totally home educated). I know this is a piece of cake compared to some of you, so just apply the principles. We always begin with our Number One goal: reading the Bible together and discussing it as a family around the meal table. We also pray and sing Psalms and hymns together. Being the number one priority, Craig takes the

lead. We believe that whatever the Dad does with the children is considered by the children to be a bit more important than usual, especially if it is done at the beginning of the day. Since Craig's office is here at home, we read the Bible and pray after nearly every meal. Sometimes this takes 10 - 15 minutes and other times we have long discussions. (We know of Dads who start work so early each morning that they structure their day the Hebrew way, beginning it at dusk! In that way the Father is still able to lead family worship at the beginning of their day!) If this is all we manage to get done in the day, we don't worry, for we have at least achieved our Number One goal. Our day was a success!

Next I set out to train the children's minds in capacity. At school and with some curriculum, children are taught facts for a test. The test comes and goes, and they immediately forget most of what they learned. We need to train our children's minds to remember important facts long term. One of the most effective ways of doing this is Scripture memory. Now I am not talking about the way Scripture is usually taught at Sunday School, learned in order to get the lollie or the sticker and then forgotten. In fact, I am not talking so much about Scripture memory as I am about Scripture review. We want every Scripture our children have ever learned to be firmly remembered, imbedded in their minds forever. It is hard work to learn verses by heart, so why learn them to forget them next week? The key to remembering verses for the rest of their lives is **review, review** and more **review**. So this is how we begin nearly every morning after breakfast and chores: reviewing, that is, me hearing them recite their newest verses nearly every day for at least 7 weeks. Then I review those verses only weekly for a few weeks and finally they end up being heard only once a month.

Review goes like this: the child always says the reference, then the verse, then the reference again. The standard is word perfect...near enough is not good enough, especially when we are handling God's Word. Either the verses or just the references are written on file cards. To keep track of where we are, I have a box with different sections in it. In the front I have two separator cards for the daily review: behind the first are the ones I need to do that day, and behind the second go the review cards once we've done them. The next section has 12 separator cards with the months on them, January to December. In the first three monthly sections I have five separator cards: one each for the four weeks of the month behind which I put the verses for once-a-week review and a "monthly" one behind which go the verses for review only once a month. There are several ways this can be set up. The important thing is to set up a system that suits you and works for you. I have a friend who has a system set up under each child's name, and that works well for her.

Nearly every day we do the daily review. As soon as possible in the week we do the weekly review so that it doesn't all fall on a Friday or Saturday. Once the weekly review is completed we work on the monthly

review and try to do this from the beginning of the month so that the monthly review does not all have to be done during the last couple of days in the month. Today is 18 May and I have just finished Charmagne's monthly review items for May. Charmagne is 15. But I only finished Alanson's monthly review items for April last week! Alanson is 18 and a lot harder to catch between his study, work and social commitments.

Children from quite a young age can learn surprisingly large portions of the Bible. When Charmagne was 4 & 5, we were teaching the older children James chapter 1. One day Charmagne began to prompt the older children as they recited it. We asked her if she knew James chapter 1 and got a real surprise when she could say most of the 26 verses with just a little prompting. We had not been working with her on it at all. She had picked it up from listening to the older children every single morning. Ten years on Charmagne can still quote James 1 to me faster than I can read it.

As part of this review I have other things that we are committing to memory. So these things slot in with the verses. We are learning a simplified catechism for children as well as the Heidelberg Catechism. (A catechism is a summary of Christian doctrine in question and answer form. For a huge list of creeds, confessions and catechisms see <http://www.gty.org/~phil/creeds.htm>) The boys are learning their math facts which I have written out as flash cards for review during this time. Jedediah (4) has done the "+ 0" facts and is up to  $5 + 1 = 6$  in the "+ 1" facts. He just loves going through them. Both the boys are learning Latin words and the verb conjugation chants. Jedediah knows that "I love" is "Amo" and can do the "Amo" chant: amo, amas, amat, amamus, amatis, amant. I have a card for Jedediah's alphabet and another for his numbers. Charmagne and Jedediah made up cards with each letter of the alphabet plus a picture or drawing of something beginning with the letter on that card. Now Jedediah also knows most of the sounds because we go over them most days like flash cards. Jeremiah (10) is learning the books of the Bible and the Apostles' Creed.

For something a little less formal, I try to read to the boys for about two hours a day. I read to them while they do the dishes (we don't have a dishwasher), play with Lego, colour in, brush my hair, massage my feet and any other time that is suitable for us. I like to read a series of books or to have a pile of books always handy. If I don't and I finish a book before they've finished the job, I am likely to tell them to carry on with the dishes just this time while I go do something that is really pressing. Next thing I know, a whole week has gone by and I still haven't gotten around to selecting a new book to read because there just seemed to be all these "really pressing" things come up all the time.

I try to read a wide range of books: biographies, autobiographies, historical fiction, Church history, books on science, nature, musicians, artists, etc. We have a published timeline close by plus others each child is constructing to which we can add dates and events as we read about them. Having these timelines, a globe and maps nearby helps to bring alive the things we are

reading about. Craig also tries to read to the children most nights.

The next two most important things for training the children's minds are the two kinds of narration. I'll read a passage to the children, and they have to repeat to me everything they heard. I'll do easy pieces with Jedediah and more difficult ones with Jeremiah. They often try to begin telling me from half way through the story, especially if it is a longer piece. But I make them go back to the beginning, and it is amazing how much they remember when pressed to remember it. This is training them to listen and at least remember and perhaps even comprehend whatever is read to them. We want them to listen attentively whenever the Bible is read, whenever a sermon is preached, and I dare say the skill will come in handy during lectures at university, should they ever go there.

Next I get Jeremiah to read to me, then to narrate back to me what he has just read. This is training him to focus and concentrate on what he reads as he reads it. It will save him countless hours of frustration in the future. I know what it's like...I have to read and re-read passages over and over, for my mind wanders all over as I was never taught to focus.

All these things are priorities for me, and I work at doing them first on most days. If this is all that I end up doing in a day, I'm really not worried, for I have achieved the important things with the children. But I do like to get more done.

So, if it is a good day, I do some more work with Jeremiah on his phonics. He can read but is not reading for pleasure yet. His mind works faster than his lips, and so he does a fair bit of guessing when he is reading. I am trying to slow him down a little and getting him to work on reading accurately. This year I have begun writing with him. This is the 3rd or 4th time we have started to learn this skill. The previous starts were all disasters, so I simply assumed he was not ready yet. He will do a couple of pages in a hand-writing guide book and has also begun to copy the Bible into a notebook. (Charmagne has also been copying out the Bible for a while, and says it is a really different and interesting way of getting familiar with the Scriptures.) At the moment we are also working on a project covering North American geography, history, music, art, etc.

Dr Moore's formula has impressed us, so along with the academics we like to focus on work (chores, work ethic) and service to others. With our older children we concentrated mostly on the academics, and the standards around our home suffered because of it. I was swayed by the poem "I'm rocking my baby, the cobwebs can keep". This is fine if you just have very young children, but I let my older children get away with not doing many chores so that they could focus on the academics. Now I believe that training the young children to do the jobs around the house to a high standard is training them to do their studies later in life to a high standard.

Most chores are considered duties, their proper service

to the rest of the family as part of the Smith Family Corporation. They aren't paid for these, nor do they get pocket money. There are occasional and regular bigger jobs around the house where they can earn money. So when your children want to begin helping around the home at age two or three or four, exploit the opportunity: get them to do a job, any job, and train them to do it always right. If we are sticklers for quality and faithfulness with the older ones, they will often be great teachers of and far more exacting on their younger siblings than we would be! Service outside the family can be part of multi-tasking: if the children bake a cake and take it to some older house-bound person, they can then ask the person what it was like growing up way back then. This is work and service and history all in one.

We have been influenced by the thinking of:

**Harvey and Laurie Bluedorn** - [www.triviumpursuit.com](http://www.triviumpursuit.com). Have a good look at this one, especially at "Ten Things to Do with Your Child Before Age Ten".

**Roland Meighan** (University of Nottingham School of Education) in **Home-Based Education - not "Does it Work?" but "Why Does it Work so Well?"** quotes Alan Thomas's research: "Families starting out on home-based education who at first adopted formal methods of learning found themselves drawn more and more into less formal learning. Families who started out with informal learning at the outset found themselves drawn into even more informal learning. The methods that both groups grew into had much more in common with the methods of younger children. The sequencing of learning material, the bedrock of learning in school, was seen increasingly as unnecessary and unhelpful.

"Learning to read was a central concern, but parents showed less anxiety when their children showed no inclination to learn at the usual age. Curiously, these children who learned to read relatively late still went on very quickly to read material suitable for their age. Most of the children were voracious readers.

"Thomas stresses that his work is in the early stages and should not be regarded as the last word on the matter. Nevertheless, he is already aware that his research challenges one of the fundamental assumptions of schooling: the almost universally held view that children of school age need to be formally taught if they are to learn. In school this may be the case but at home they can learn just by living."

**Jeff Richardson**, Monash University, Melbourne says, "The evidence shows overwhelmingly that these children perform extremely well, above average, when they re-enter formal education. That appears to be across the board, whether they sat at home and had formal lessons...or whether they were up-a-tree hippies who had no formal learning pattern. On any measure you like, socially or academically, they will do better."

**Diana Waring** <http://www.dianawaring.com/>

**Jonothan Lindvall** <http://www.boldchristianliving.com/>

**Dr Raymond and Dorothy Moore** in *Better Late Than Early*

You may have noticed that I have mentioned no text book learning above. This is because we don't use text books until around 10 or older. Some children, especially girls, may want to begin text-book learning before 10. If so, go for it. Charmagne went straight into Saxon 65, a grade six text, at age 11 with no earlier exposure to any math textbook.

Life is a great teacher. I begin teaching shapes when I am cutting the toast for the toddler. Once the toddler knows the shapes we get started on fractions. Sometimes they know 1, 1/2, 1/4, 1/8 before they can count to 25 because of cutting the toddler's toast into 1/8ths. As they get a bit older and can handle baking, they learn more about fractions as they double or halve recipes. The clock or a watch is the best way to teach the time. The toddler quickly learns 7am, 12 noon and 6pm as the meal times. Our 4-year-old knows 3pm on the clock as he is not allowed to ride his bike outside the gate after that time because the school children are loose on the streets. We talk to our children as we go through the day so they pick up an incredible amount. We have found that most children do not necessarily learn as they interact with textbooks or workbooks. Just because a child has a lot of written work does not mean that child has learned a lot. But children do learn as they interact with their parents or with other adults, especially if they are encouraged to ask a lot of questions. When questions are coming thick and fast from the child and adults are giving serious answers, lots of learning is taking place. Now some children learn best from texts and work books. It is the preferred learning style for a significant number of children. If that is your child's style, then go for it. But if your child doesn't appear to be a book person, it may be time to change to something that works for that child.

Some people will be very nervous with the approach I've described above, and will want to follow a systematic scope and sequence to fill in all the gaps. Again, this particular learning style just doesn't suit many children. In addition, learning gaps may be overrated. Do you know everything? Of course not. That is to say, you have learning gaps! Learning to recognise our gaps and knowing how to fill them when required is real education. Naturally as parents and adults who have gained a lot of understanding about the real world and the kind of education that really is needed out there, we will have a good outline of skills our children must master and knowledge our children must know. This will form the core of our curriculum. And as long as the children are asking questions, those interminable "Why?" questions, they are filling in the major gaps according to their own little scope and sequence system which the Lord seems to hot wire into almost all children. Again, here is where reading a wide range of books on a daily basis gives untold opportunities to discuss and explain an incredible number of issues and concepts that just crop up while your several minds are engaged with the passage.

The next step in training our children's minds is to give them The Tools of Learning. These can be mastered in two to four years. I will explore this in a future article.

# CHomeS Roundup



## Christian Home Schoolers of NZ (CHomeS) World View Conference Report

The World View Conference of 7-12 April in Auckland, staged by Christian Home Schoolers of New Zealand, seems to have been more than just successful.... for some it was earth-shaking, revolutionary, consciousness-raising stuff! Barbara and I have staged a few national conferences in our day, but never one where *every day* people came up to us to say how they've never before been so thoroughly challenged, how these days rate among the best days of their lives, how we need to make it two weeks long, how it really should be required for every Christian in the country, etc., etc. Clearly the Lord was doing something in people's hearts and minds.....we have a tiger by the tail.

It was such a privilege to rub shoulders with high-profile folks such as the guest speakers from Summit Ministries in the USA, Dr David Noebel and Chuck Edwards. The deputy leader of the Christian Heritage Party, Merepeka Raukawa-Tait, was there most of the time, and CHP leader Graham Capill gave one of the addresses. Frank Grover an ex MP attended, as did Bernie Ogilvie of Masters Institute, and many of the students plus local church ministers. The South Island was represented by people from Christchurch, Timaru and even Queenstown!

There were moments of very sobering shocks. As we explored the thinking of Marxists, Secular Humanists and New Agers, we were stunned to be shown statistics revealing that children of evangelical Christians in the public schools *as well as in most Christian schools* are rapidly losing every last shred of Biblical thinking in many areas such as economics, politics, psychology, law, sociology and even theology! Many of us realised that we too held nonChristian beliefs in these areas without realising it. Contributing factors to this sad situation are that many Christians believe in a gospel that only has relevance for the life hereafter and that most Christians don't appear to study the Scriptures much.

We also watched like stunned mullets as highly-qualified and articulate non-believers attempted to justify on the grounds of compassion the slaughter on demand of 16,000 unborn babies in New Zealand every year. Dr Zoe Doring, a medical doctor, and Dr Bill Cooke of Auckland University were debating "Should abortion be legal?" with Christians Chuck Edwards and Matt Flannigan, a PhD candidate in Philosophy. Though the nonChristians agreed that they could not know when an unborn baby became a person, they were happy to draw an arbitrary line at so many weeks from conception and appeared unconcerned should it be found that they got it wrong: if there is no God out there

to Whom they must ultimately give account, why should they be concerned?

Most of us were pretty fired up to find ways we could bring the word of God to bear more consistently in our own lives so that we would think Christianly rather than secularly on issues with which we have to deal on a daily basis. Some of us went home with a renewed vision and desire to engage the enemy in the public arena: letters to the editor, email discussion groups, talkback radio, etc.

Some comments directly from conferees were:

"A total transformation in my understanding of most subjects discussed. Excellent information and analysis. The Worldview concept was transforming - and this at my age of 62years."

"I think this has been a life-changing conference, opening my eyes to the real situation in our World today, and giving me a strategy to help me and other families in my Church, arise, equip ourselves for the battle for the mind and take the Hope of Christ back into our nation."

"I have been greatly inspired by the conference. I just sense God is so much behind this. The presence of God was there each day. I am so excited and would love to have more of it. Our children need it. The teenagers need it - Christians in New Zealand need it."

Masters Institute in Auckland appears poised to stage two-week world view conferences for youth on the model of those run by Summit Ministries. And the Christian Home Schoolers of NZ committee, Rodger & Christine Whetton, Mark & Carol Munroe and Craig & Barbara Smith are already wondering about another world views conference for families. Stay tuned!

### TV Needs Health Warning

Television should come with a health warning and pre-schools should ban them, says Cathy Wylie, author of a major education study, the "Competent Children at 10" report. Dr Wylie has found major deficiencies in the mathematical and literacy scores of children who watched more than two hours television each day which were not caused by other factors. That is, these lower scores were not due to ethnicity, poverty or solo parenting. And the effects of having the television on as a babysitter were lingering. Children, who as five and six-year-olds, were regularly watching television for long periods of time, were still lagging behind their peers when they were 10, she said.

Home educators can or should see the obvious more readily than others: television takes up time that could be spent with parents or siblings in far more stimulating activities. Dr Wylie said American research showed that children's language use improved and their aggression levels dropped when television watching was reduced. This suggests a simple course of action: lock the tube away or toss it out.

(From the *Dominion*, 27 October 2001, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/inl/index/0,1008,987847a10,FF.html>)

# Teaching Tips



## Learning Gaps by Laurie Bluedorn

I've heard people discuss this topic but could never quite understand what people meant by "gaps". Do they mean that they are worried because their children didn't study rocks in the 3rd grade like most public and private school children do, or that they didn't study the planets in 4th grade?

We're talking here about children not learning the facts in a certain area of study by a certain age level. I think lots of people worry about this. One person I once talked to was quite concerned because her 10 year old child knew nothing about the Depression of the '30s, and another mother felt like a failure because her son couldn't recite all the states and capitals by age 12. These types of worries could drive parents crazy, especially if they stop and think about all the minute facts their child probably doesn't know and the even greater number of facts he learned but immediately forgot.

Now, I have a confession to make. We never studied rocks. Never. In fact, we never studied earth science at all. But that's OK, because I plan on studying the subject with my grandchildren when I have more time. I'm actually looking forward to it.

Classical [home] education is not like the education we parents got in the public school, where we memorized a bunch of facts, took a test and then went on to the next subject. Classical [home] education is about training minds and developing proper appetites. It's developing the imagination and creativity. It's having time to play and explore in the old fashioned way. It's encouraging a love for learning. It's building a firm foundation in the child's mind with memorization and narration. And it's about learning to obey and serve our heavenly Father. It's a way of life. So, memorization of facts is important, not necessarily for the particular fact that's being put in the memory, but for the work and process of putting that fact in the memory.

But perhaps, the gaps you are worried about are the skill type gaps and foundational knowledge that are important to learn in the early years -- things such as basic formal English (and other language) grammar knowledge which could be started at age 10; the basics of formal mathematics which also could begin at age 10 (and informal math at earlier ages); and intensive phonics instruction which should begin as soon as the child is ready. Other things that are important are allowing plenty of time to read aloud to the child and giving children time to develop their creativity. These all are foundational stones to the building you are constructing, and any gaps here would need to be repaired. Perhaps you could read our article on "Ten Things to Do Before Age Ten" ([www.triviumpursuit.com](http://www.triviumpursuit.com)). We go more into this subject in that article.

(From Homeschooling with the Trivium e-newsletter by Harvey & Laurie Bluedorn. Subscribe at: [www.triviumpursuit.com](http://www.triviumpursuit.com))

## The Basics Are Always Basic

What can we home educators be doing now so that our children will do well on university or polytech courses and exams later on? Pretty much what we are probably already doing: helping our children *master* the basic learning skills

**1. They will need to read** their course texts and other prescribed readings and probably do extra research. So, we ensure they can read all kinds of literature competently and with comprehension. Start by reading all kinds of things to them: poetry, drama, reviews, fact, fiction, ancient classics in "olde English". Have them read and orally explain to you graphs, timetables, charts, diagrams, schematics, plans, technical reports and analyses. Get the librarians to show you how to exploit every research tool they have. Find a university student who will show you the same at a university library, although they usually run such courses for enrolled students.

**2. They will need to listen** and take notes in lectures. So have them do this as you read to them. This presupposes and requires that our children learn how to write quickly and accurately, and most importantly of all, developing the discernment to know the difference between what is important to write down and what is merely interesting. The illustrative stories are usually the most exciting and interesting part of any lecture, but are just as usually a waste of time to write down. Get your children to practise note-taking at least once a week by taking notes of the sermon at church. (Your pastor will be especially impressed as well as soooo encouraged!) At home it is too much to try to get the children to take notes all the time, so usually just have them narrate back to you orally what you just read. Engage in discussions and debates over what you read. Going over the sermon and/or current events as a family at mealtimes is ideal for passing on your values and attitudes as well as for training in logical thought and how to bring a matter to a proper conclusion, be it a solution, a resolution or a stalemate.

**3. They will need to complete assignments on time.** Train them how to budget time, how to break a large assignment down into component parts and completing each part within a specific time frame. They must learn to be responsible for their own chores around home and for the time it takes to do them. You set reasonable deadlines and standards at first and police them until they always perform as per your guidelines.

**4. They must pass exams.** First learn how to read carefully and accurately, as in point number 1. The biggest mistakes come from answering questions that were not asked! Exam markers say they are amazed at how often and consistently this happens. Multiple choice exams are generally a piece of cake to someone



who has at least done the reading assignments and knows how to estimate and can step back from each question a little to eliminate obvious erroneous answers. In my third year at university I took a physics class at 1pm. I had just had an hour of weight-lifting finished off with a mile run and a hot shower followed by lunch. I was always in the lecture theatre, but I always fell fast asleep, just putting my head down on the desk as soon as I sat down. It was hopeless to fight it. In addition the text books arrived late and I never got around to buying one. Mercifully the final exam was multiple choice, or for me at the time, "multiple guess". Each question started off with me having a 25% chance of getting it, for there were always four options. I was usually able to toss out two answers immediately as obviously wrong. I now had a 50/50 chance of getting each one. Then I simply chose the one of the two remaining that seemed to make the most sense or seemed closest to what I could figure from what little I'd picked up in the labs. For me that day, that three hour exam took only 15 minutes! I ended up with a B because the vast majority of students had tied themselves in knots over each question, slipping and sliding their slide-rules back and forth (no calculators back in those days!) until they were totally confused and panicky.

Apart from multiple choice, final exams are usually essay/short answer type or problem solving. The next three points deal with these specifically.

**5. Learn how to write tightly worded and well-argued essays** with impeccable spelling, grammar, punctuation and construction. Good penmanship also helps in exams, unless they somehow provide all students with word processors at exam time. Come to think of it, typing is another extremely useful skill to learn.

Essays are made up of paragraphs. Each paragraph has at least a topical sentence explaining the main idea of the paragraph and maybe other supporting sentences. The paragraphs are arranged into three groups: The first paragraph is the "introduction" where you tell them what you are going to tell them. Then comes the "body", which usually has at least one paragraph per each main point mentioned in the introduction. This is where you tell them what you said you were going to tell them. The final paragraph is the "conclusion" where you wrap it all up. Here you actually just tell them again what you just told them.

**6. Practise solving mathematical, statistical and technical word problems.** Learning how to identify the essential information in a problem from the dross and how to manipulate it to arrive at the required answer involves knowing how the possible variables relate to one another and understanding the concepts involved. Universities usually have on file all of the previous final exams specifically for students to borrow and practise doing final exams.

**7. Commit what you can to memory**, whether doing essays, short answer, maths or other technical written exams. Here is where years of Scripture memory at home will train the mind to memorise large amounts quickly and efficiently. Arrange lists or concepts so that the first letter of each spells a word, even a non-sense word, or stands for the first word of a sentence you compose just for that purpose. For example, I always know how to spell "arithmetic" because the letters stand for "A Red Indian Thought He Might Eat Turkey In Church". My son remembers how trigonometry calculations are done by learning the non-sense word "SOHCAHTOA", which stands for "Sine = Opposite over Hypotenuse; Co-sine = Adjacent over Hypotenuse; Tangent = Opposite over Adjacent".

**Reserve the first 10 minutes of actual exam time for simply writing down all the material you committed to memory: just get it all down on paper.**

When exam time comes, you are usually given 10

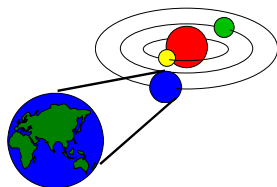
minutes to read it through with no pen in your hand, deciding which of the optional questions you will do, which ones you will do first, which ones are likely to give you trouble. Get plenty of scratch paper to write out ideas and words that come when you are writing about other things. Leave plenty of room at the end of each question for additions you will want to make as answering subsequent questions brings to mind further points to previous questions. Reserve the first 10 minutes of actual exam time for simply writing down all the material you committed to memory: just get it all down on the scratch paper, so you then only have to refer to it, rather than continue to remember it and worry if you actually will remember it when you come to answer the relevant question. Then divide the remaining time among all the parts of the exam, giving proportionately more time to the parts worth more points. When you use up the time for one part, stop wherever you are, leave a few blank pages and move on to the next part. Go back to the unfinished answer only if and when you have some spare time at the end.

**8. They will need to work steadily** through each subject all during the semester and not leave the bulk of reading or review until the final two weeks. This is a function of learning how to budget time as in point 3. By spreading the load over time in this way you always feel in control and reduce stress immensely.

**9. Make use of the help that is offered:** university's counselors, tutors, tutorials and learning centers. I was once having real difficulty with principles in an economics paper, for I could not relate them to the real world as I knew it. I happened to mention this to a tutor just a couple weeks before the final exam, and he exclaimed, "Don't do that! These principles are purely theoretical and bear no resemblance to the real world!" So I was able to build a separate little Disneyland of economic principles in my mind, uncomplicated by real-life concerns, and got an A+ on the exam!

(Partly based on an outline by Dr Emmanuel Manalo, director of the student learning centre at Auckland University, NZ Herald 6 March 2002, <http://www.nzherald.co.nz/storyprint.cfm?storyID=1140282>.)

# World Views in Focus



## Feminism, as a Non-Christian World View, Is of Necessity Bankrupt and Destined to Collapse

Goddesses are having a bad day. Their Queen Mother, Gloria Steinem, not only is sleeping with the enemy, she has married one. A man, that is.

At age 66, the big-haired, mini-skirted, erstwhile Playboy Bunny-cum-feminist founder of America's first real women's magazine last weekend [September 2000] exchanged vows and became "partners" with a twice-married man.

The woman who gets credit for one of the century's cleverest phrases -- "A woman without a man is like a fish without a bicycle" - has fallen in love we can't resist saying hook, line and sinker.

Talk about a win-win. Ms. Steinem, the champion of Choice, is merely making another personal selection. The feminists' golden rule: Choice is always good, so long as it's a woman's.

That's what I love about feminism. It's so ... flexible. You want to fall in love and marry the man of your dreams? It's a choice. You hate marriage as the institutionalized patriarchal enslavement of women we know it really is. A choice. You want children; you don't want children. You want men to hold the door; you don't want a man to come within a flagpole's shadow. Choice.

### Feminism means... whatever.

In which spirit, reaction to Ms. Steinem's surrender to the patriarchal trap she historically hates ("I can't mate in captivity," she once said) has provoked mostly huzzahs and "go-girl!"s from the feminist phalange. "Whatever makes her happy," dominated *Ms. Magazine's* bulletin board on the Web.

But a few are "shocked" and "disappointed" that their heroine has caved in. Wasn't it Ms. Steinem, after all, who in 1987 swore she would never marry, because in marriage a woman becomes a "semi-non-person"? Three words, Gloria: Never say never.

As the always-demure Camille Paglia put it: "Gloria Steinem's marriage is proof positive of the emotional desperation of aging feminists who for over 30 years worshiped the steely career woman and callously trashed stay-at-home moms."

One chat-room visitor, "Risotto", returned spin with

spin. She said Ms. Steinem, by marrying past childbearing age at 66, is still breaking the rules, endorsing marriage for companionship, love and respect above marriage for procreation and preserving the sexist status quo.

Translation: If you're a non-feminist in love, marriage is a form of indentured servitude wherein you must produce male offspring and submit to your male, ahem, "superior". If you're a feminist of Ms. Steinem's stature and fall in love, marriage is a political endorsement of higher principles. Got it.

On the other hand, it is entirely possible that Ms. Steinem isn't endorsing or advancing anything other than her age. Brace yourself for this stunning insight, but it's possible Ms. Steinem has grown up, matured, relaxed her ideology.

Her own justification is that marriage now is a choice (there's that word again) rather than an expectation, and that marriage today is more equal under the law. The latter may be true, though one could argue that equality under the law (no-fault divorce) has brought ruin to more women and children than to men. But marriage as we know it has always been a choice. It only became an expectation because so many people -- mostly women -- wanted it.

(By Kathleen Parker, *The Washington Times*, September 11, 2000, p. A 12.)

## The Christian Mind

by Harry Blamires

A prime mark of the Christian mind is that it cultivates the eternal perspective. That is to say, it looks beyond this life to another one. It is supernaturally oriented, and brings to bear upon earthly considerations the fact of Heaven and the fact of Hell. In this respect the religious view of life differs so fundamentally and comprehensively from the secular view of life that it seems scarcely possible for the Christian to communicate intelligibly with the modern secularist. And indeed this is our most acute problem today. It seems virtually impossible to bridge the gap between ourselves and our unbelieving fellow-men so as to present to them, vividly and convincingly, the Christian view of the human condition.

It needs no argument to prove that the supernaturally orientated view of the human situation proper to the Christian mind is remote indeed from the view nourished by secular culture. [Christians] see a world in which angel and demon are locked in conflict; a world packed full of sinners desperately dependent upon the mercy of God; a world fashioned by God, sustained by God, worried over by God, died for by God.

Is that the world represented by our Press, radio, T.V., journalists and politicians? No. The secular mind has a totally conflicting view of our world and our situation in it. It [sees] a world run by men, possessed by men, dominated by men, its course determined by men.

Secularism is so rooted in this world that it does not allow for the existence of any other. Therefore whenever secularism encounters the Christian mind, either the Christian mind will momentarily shake that rootedness, or secularism will seduce the Christian mind to a temporary mode of conversation which overlooks the supernatural.

[The secular mind should indeed be shaken for the] Christian mind's realization that all is not over when you die is something which affects not only the future but the present. To believe that men will be called to account for each wrong committed and each good committed is itself enough to give an urgency to human deliberations and decisions which the secular mind cannot sense. When one weighs the full momentousness of this particular distinction between the Christian mind and the secular mind, one is awestruck. What price are we paying, in terms of intellectual clarity and integrity, for the continuance of easy co-existence of the Christian mind with the secular mind? Ponder the violence of the concealed collision. On the one hand is the assumption that all is over when you die; that after sixty or seventy years, sheltered and cushioned by the Welfare State, you can sign off for good; that eating, sleeping, growing, learning, breeding, and the rest, constitute the total sum of things; that in worldly prosperity and well-being lies the source of all meaning and value. On the other hand is the almost crushing awareness of a spiritual war tearing at the heart of the universe; the belief that the thoughts and actions of every hour are moulding a soul which is on its way to eternity; that we are choosing every moment of our lives in obedience or disobedience to the God who created and sustains all that is; that we are always responsible [to God]; that we are committing ourselves with every breath to salvation or damnation.

Do we as Christians mentally inhabit [such] a world with a Heaven above it and a Hell beneath it; a world in which man is called to live daily, hourly, in contact with the God whom neither time nor space can limit? Do we, as Christians, mentally inhabit an order of being which is superior to decay and death? Do we think Christianly? The truth is that, mostly, we don't.

The collision between the Christian mind and a solidly earthbound culture ought to be a violent one. In fact the impact does not occur; for the Christian lays aside the presuppositions proper to a supernaturally orientated personality when he steps outside the sphere of specifically religious activity or of personal morality. He speaks the language of secularism. [Let us examine four ways this has come about.]

[One] reason we have nothing to say to the contemporary situation is that we have not been thinking about the contemporary situation. We stopped thinking about these things years ago. We got into the habit of stepping out of our Christian garments whenever we stepped mentally into the field of social and political life. Because the subject was social or political, we left all our well-tryed and well-grounded Christian concepts behind us and adopted the vocabulary of secularism. We put aside talk of vocation, or God's Providence, or

man's spiritual destiny and instead chattered with the rest about productivity, assembly-line psychology and deployment of personnel. Most ironical of all, we thought we were really being down-to-earth practical Christians when we went in for this kind of thing. We threw off our theology, dived into the factories and solemnly announced that at last we were bringing the Church to the people.

We twentieth-century Christians have chosen the way of compromise. We withdraw our Christian consciousness from the fields of public, commercial and social life. When we [now] enter these fields, we are compelled to accept for purposes of discussion the secular frame of reference established there. We have no alternative — except that of silence. We have to use the only language spoken in these areas. Our own Christian language is no longer understood by the people there. Moreover we ourselves have so long ceased to use it except for discussion of the moral, the liturgical or the spiritual, that it is rusty and out of date. We have no Christian vocabulary to match the complexities of contemporary political, social and industrial life. How should we have? A language is nurtured on usage, not on silence. But we long ago ceased to bring Christian [thought] to bear upon the secular public world.

The Christian mind has allowed itself to be subtly secularized by giving a purely *chronological* status to the eternal. That is to say, the Christian has relegated the significance of the eternal to the life that succeeds this one. In doing so, it has enabled itself to come to terms with the secular mind on a false basis. The basis is that here and now Christians and secularists can share the same conceptions, attitudes, and modes of action within the temporal sphere, since the essential difference between them — i.e. the dispute whether or not there is God's eternity beyond this world — is one which begins to be applicable only when this life is ended.

[Finally, we have adopted] a misguided conception of Christian charity. It has been assumed that the charitable man suppresses his views in the same way that he subordinates personal interest. A wild fantasy has taken hold of many Christians. They have come to imagine that just as the unselfish man restrains himself from snatching another piece of cake, so too he restrains himself from putting forward his point of view. And just as it is bad form to boast about your private possessions, so too it is bad form to announce what your convictions are. By analogy with that charity of the spirit which never asks or claims but always gives and gives again, we have manufactured a false "charity" of the mind, which never takes a stand but continually yields ground. It is proper to give way to other people's interests: therefore it is proper to give way to other people's ideas. [Most Christians now even give their children over to be indoctrinated into the secular mind in the public schools six hours a day, five days a week. The victory has been complete.... except for a tiny remnant of Christian home educators.]

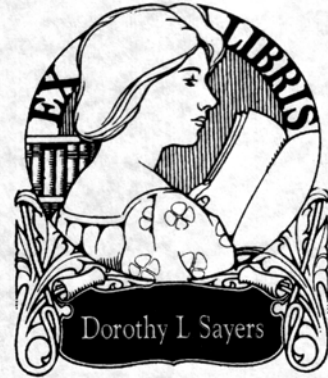
(Extracted from: Blamires, Harry; *The Christian Mind*, SPCK: London, 1963, pp. 27, 37-40, 67-69, 75-77.)

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by Craig S. Smith

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# CHomes Roundup

Craig & Barbara Smith, founders and trustees of the Home Education Foundation and editor of *Keystone Journal* had a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, with all six of our children, to do some ambassadorial work for Home Educators (HE), visit family and friends, and do some serious sight-seeing in Japan, Canada, Mexico and the USA over the Christmas / New Year period of 2001/2002. When a close relative gifted us some money at Christmas 2000, we began planning a trip which ended up covering over 9,000 land miles, including 13 states in the USA.

Part of the planning was communicating with HEs over there by email. The Japanese HE I located was American Brian Covert in Osaka who had married a Japanese and writes for English language publications there. Amazingly he was also for a time the editor of the paper in my little home town of Sanger, California! Osaka was too far from our stopover point of Narita / Tokyo, which actually set us free for something more exciting.

A native Japanese Christian (of which there aren't many) and lecturer at a Tokyo University, Dr Takeyuki Ozawa, did a sabbatical year at Massey University here in Palmerston North and began attending our church. There he and wife Kayoko and children Naho & Mino met so many other HEs that he declared his intention to institute daily devotions and coming home from work early so as to get time with the family.....and yes, they'll look into HE as well. When we arrived at Marita airport, Take and family taught us a lot about Japanese culture and even more about generous and gracious hospitality. We were escorted all over town to see the sights, guided through the subway system, given a running commentary on the Buddhist and Shinto ceremonies we watched, taught the proper way to slurp noodles and soup, and introduced to raw foods such as squid and horse meat (both very nice, I must add)! A highlight was going to church with the Ozawa family and talking with one or two other young families about HE which so far is very small movement in Japan. They'll be receiving some copies of New Zealand's own Christian HE journal *Keystone* thanks to NZers' gifts to the Home Education Foundation.

We helped to host veteran HEs and convention speakers Bill & Diana Waring and family all over NZ back in 1999/2000 and had the pleasure of taking Diana's mum, Joyce Bell, around for part of that tour. When Mrs Bell heard we were coming over she immediately offered her 27-foot Rockwood motor home for us to use while in the USA! Wow! Talk about blessings being poured out from heaven! She also picked us up from Vancouver airport and housed and fed all 8 of us at her home on Lake Stevens (just north of Seattle, Washington), where we saw rare American bald eagles flying around. We travelled many miles and shared not a few adventures with Mrs Bell, and we all became very fond of her....she is pretty special to us.

It took us two days to drive from Lake Stevens to Great Falls, Montana, where we had a big reunion with the Waring's in the middle of a two-day HE conference! Barbara and our eldest (Genevieve, 21) and #3 (Alanson, 17) spent all of the next day fellowshipping with HEs there while Mrs Bell and I took our other children (Zach 19, Charmagne 14, Jeremiah 9 & Jedediah 3) to the Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center (famous early American explorers) and to the Charlie Russell Museum (outstanding artistic recorder of Old West images). Staff and security guards in both places heard all about HE

and NZ for two reasons: Jedediah Smith is the name of another early American explorer, a Bible-toting Christian, well known in this area. And Jeremiah would strike up a long-winded conversation with anyone, especially those wearing badges and utility belts with pistols! He finally talked one police man into slapping the handcuffs on him.!

We also met a Lakota Sioux Indian Chief, Paul J. Never-Miss-A-Shot, pastor at the Lighthouse Church, who demonstrated to my satisfaction why he has his name: he spoke on cultural issues at the Lewis & Clark Center, liberally interspersing Christian testimony throughout! He'll also be receiving some copies of *Keystone* for his people.

Another full day's drive got us to the Waring home in Spearfish, South Dakota, where the older Smith and Waring (Isaac, Michael & Melody) offspring immediately shot through to Rapid City to see the latest Dino flick. This Black Hills region contains the huge monument of Mount Rushmore with the carved heads of four Presidents, and an even larger carving of Chief Crazy Horse. Nearby is Deadwood where Wild Bill Hickock took a bullet while holding Aces and Eights, and Little Big Horn, where Custer made his last stand against Sitting Bull and many others. We hand fed a herd of buffalo from the back of a pickup and later got to eat genuine buffalo burgers!

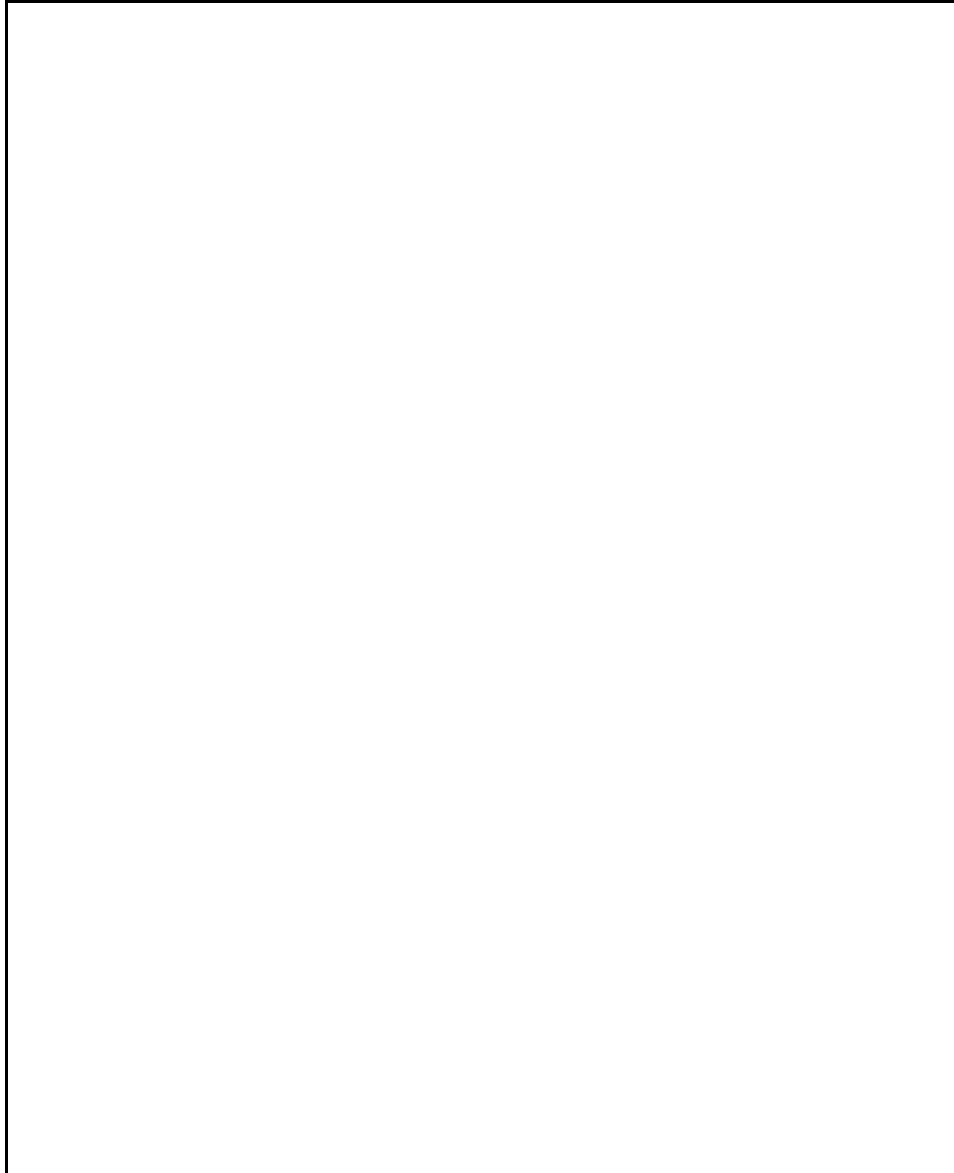
NZ HEs Jesika and Catriona Shand from the Marlborough Sounds arrived in time for a typical American HE landmark: Michael Waring's Graduation from Home School (that is, finishing the state's compulsory attendance years), at which I was honoured by being official guest speaker from overseas!

After driving through the night dodging dozens of live -- and dead -- deer on the highway, we got to visit with Dr David Noebel, author of *Understanding the Times*, and President of Summit Ministries near Colorado Springs. He gave us a couple of his other books and is looking forward to speaking to NZ HEs at the World Views Conference in Auckland next month (7-12 April).

When we were way out in the desert near the Mexican border, on the old Pony Express route, out there where Billy the Kid used to hand out, the Rockwood ground to a halt. The catalytic converter (smog control device) just burned out. Never did figure out why. Anyway, we were stranded there in Las Cruces, New Mexico, for the next five days. The phone book listed one church similar to ours, and the Lord used that phone call to channel much blessing and instruction our way.

Kim & Carol Watne picked us up and took us to University Presbyterian Church where we were welcomed by folks non-stop before and after the service. Pastor John Pickett not only fed our parched souls with strong, authoritative preaching, he also made sure we joined several new members at his home for lunch. People gave us keys to their cars and we had keys to two private homes pressed into our hands so we could shower, do washing and use the computer while they were at work! The Watne's were especially generous to us in this regard and also instructed us in their simple yet effective evangelistic methods: prayer, face-to-face contact and service.

University Presbyterian Church is also pro-home schooling! They too will be seeing some *Keystones*. In fact, Pastor John and others are investigating ways to make Christian secondary and university level education and qualifications a reality for anyone in the church. We spent a couple of days with HEs Eric & Laurel Tessier and family eating Mexican food and checking out second hand book shops!



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(Continued from page 29)

While we were in the neighbourhood, we rented a van and dashed down to El Paso, Texas, and walked over the Rio Grande into Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, on what turned out to be Revolution Day. We joined thousands of Mexicans -- from well-dressed ex-pats from north of the border to grubby Juarez slum-dwellers to country peasants in brightly-coloured costumes -- all celebrating the 1910 victory of a notorious bandito over Government forces: Poncho Villa who was himself home educated!

We did the 500 mile distance from Las Cruces to Fresno, California, three times in three different vehicles, once in an 18-hour non-stop over-night marathon and two other times making extensive detours to visit places like Tombstone, Arizona (home of Wyatt Earp, Boothill and the OK Corral), Monument Valley, Indian cliff dwellings and to marvel at the varieties and characteristics of different cat-cus species.

The overnight drive got us to California in time for our first ever Thanksgiving holiday with my Mom and all of my sisters and their families, 22 of us in all: first time many of the cousins had ever seen their NZ relatives. As Christian HEs we tended to swamp them, as Christian HEs tend to do we noticed -- we had six children while their families exactly reflected the national average of 2.3 each. While I married a Kiwi, my sisters also married out-of-state: Susan married Ron from Florida; Sally married Nick from American Samoa; and Stacey married Greg from British Columbia.

Near Bakersfield, California, we met up with Jonathan Lindvall of Bold Christian Living, a well-known Christian HE in the USA who thinks and lives well outside the box as he seeks to understand and consistently apply Biblical principles of family living. We joined two other HE families visiting his home that evening and talked state and national HE issues until late. Jonathan loaded us up with taped messages of his, and they'll be reminded of NZ HEs regularly via Keystone.

Then we splurged and took ourselves to Knott's Berry Farm Amusement Park. Gunfights, stunt shows, stage plays, wildlife demos (Jeremiah got to hold a large live Boa constrictor), shopping and horrifying roller coasters kept us going for nine hours solid. While in the LA area we were invited by the CHEA executive (Christian Home Educators Assn. of Calif.) to stop by the office. We spent a few hours with one of the founders, Susan Beattie, and the Executive head, Phillip Trout. We now receive the CHEA magazine and they receive Keystone. While there are many parallels, the political and logistical development of HE in California is very different to that in NZ. Our National HE organisations and most support groups still hold together HEs from all philosophical lines, while it is common for USA groups to have statements of faith. And the perceived commercial / financial / legal pressures on HE organisations and individual HEs from curriculum and legal interests there is something NZ has not yet experienced.

At one point we took a two-day drive up north into the California gold rush area to meet some special HEs we'd encountered on the internet. Andy & Kendra Fletcher of Modesto encouraged us with their Christian fellowship and vision of celebrating "Reformation Day" on 31 October (the day Luther nailed his 95 theses to the church door in Wittenburg in 1517) rather than Halloween. Eric & Lisa Kjeldgaard of Angels Camp had a heart for fostering and adoption as well as a vision for home education. They introduced us to Mark Rushdoony of the Chalcedon Institute,

the crowd I'd have to point to as the one whose publications got me thinking about HE in the first place. Had an hour with him and bought a stack of their books.

North into Oregon where we spent an evening in Portland with the Welch family: Pat & Sue plus Heather, Holly and Brian: pioneer HEs and editors of The Teaching Home magazine for Christian HEs! Production of TTH has taken over several rooms of their house...just like us! We just had a blast together. Over dessert at 9pm we got onto used books. They mentioned that the largest second hand bookshop west of the Mississippi was right there in Portland...and that it was open until 11pm!!! Spoons clattered against bowls as we raced out the door together. We spend so much money in the next 90 minutes, the Welches were still worrying in emails to us a month later that we would be angry at them for taking us there! No way folks....we loved it!

Stan & Pyng Dokupil are HEs on the south end of Seattle, Washington, who I met a couple years ago. Somehow they had rounded up eight sleeping bags for us to take in the Rockwood all over the western USA, and now they loaned us their van to drive into the Canadian Rockies -- in winter -- so we could have Christmas with my sister Stacey and family (as the Rockwood had to stay behind). We had such a great time as we fellowshiped with them and several Christian families Saturday night and then attended their Chinese church, which fortunately for us had their monthly English language sermon that Sunday with an interpreter translating into Mandarin. We hope to see the Dokupils out here for a visit soon. They'll also be keeping up with HE in NZ via Keystone.

Although I'd been in contact with several Christian HEs in British Columbia, Canada, before going there, we never met up with any of them. Why? Because we spent most of our time on the slopes of Apex ski resort on some of the best packed powder snow Barbara and I had ever skied on...the air was dry, sunny and still and measured minus 15° C. That was my first time on skis in 20 years, but the skills -- and the thrills -- all came back to me like it was yesterday! Just on closing time I took Barbara up the lift for her only run outside the bunny hill. Perhaps I chose a route that was a bit too challenging. Our family waited so long for us to appear out of the snow-covered forest ski trails, they finally sent a search party out to find us!

Just before Christmas, during one of our several stays with Mrs Bell at Lake Stevens, here was the entire Waring tribe out from South Dakota! We had such a great time, these are such good friends, it took ages to say goodbye. As we actually started up the van to leave, the Warings broke into the action song of "Kia taha, kia toa". Enough to make a Kiwi homesick, even though it was sung with American accents!

We are more convinced than ever that the legal, political, social and economic environments for HE in NZ have to be among the best in the world. We would also say that the political and social factors *within* the HE movement itself here in NZ are also to be treasured. There no longer appear to be any major divisions into camps, and HEs across the religious / philosophical spectrum as well as across the curriculum spectrum appear to be communicating a lot more freely, are working together quite happily, and cordially respect each other's differences. Kiwi HEs seem far less concerned about staying abreast of the state schooling system or gaining its (now rather questionable) qualifications. This and the very low level of competition among resource suppliers for the dollars HEs are willing to spend keep the stress levels quite low in comparison. Long may the Lord allow these positive qualities to continue.