



THE GIFT OF MUSIC

FAMILY WORKSHOP

A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE ON MUSIC

The Gift of Music (TGOM) family workshop is a unique programme which explores music from a Biblical perspective. This programme has been developed over the last decade by Australian music teacher Wendy Hill. **TGOM** was designed by a home educator, with home educators in mind. It is being used widely by home educators and in classrooms throughout New Zealand, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia and the USA

TOPICS

- ♫ The Scriptural foundations and definitions of music elements
- ♫ How music elements reflect God's character
- ♫ Music composition / Beginner piano course
- ♫ Biblical music appreciation

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

The workshop is designed for families with children eight years and older, however students aged 14 years and older may attend unaccompanied by an adult. It is suitable for both beginner and advanced musicians who wish to develop a Biblical perspective and understanding of music. All participants will learn sufficient music skills to enable them to read and write music. Students who are looking to teach music would benefit greatly from this course and are able to pursue

'THE WHOLE FOCUS ON GOD AND LEARNING OF MUSIC IS WHAT WE HAVE BEEN LONGING FOR. IT TIES IN WITH OUR HOME SCHOOLING PHILOSOPHY OF A CHRIST - CENTRED EDUCATION.'
Sally Tay - Home School Mum

INSTRUCTORS

Wendy Hill - Founder

B.Mus., Dip.Ed., A.Mus.A. (Piano)

Wendy has 28 years of music teaching experience in Australia which includes private piano teaching using the Suzuki and Yamaha methods, serving as a secondary school music director and also home educating her two children.

Matthew Field

A.Mus.A. (Piano), Dip.Mus. High Distinction

Matthew has been teaching **TGOM** workshops for several years and has been involved with music ministry for

WHEN: Tuesday 15th - Friday 18th of April

WHERE: Arahina Training Centre

457 Wellington Road ♦ Marton

Ph: (06) 327 8277 ♦ Fax: (06) 327 8376

Email: ati@iblp.org.nz

HOW TO REGISTER: Please complete and return the enclosed registration form with your payment. For more information, please refer to the enclosed registration brochure.

REGISTRATION DEADLINE:

11th April 2003

Editorial



A thousand pardons....the last two lines of the article “Keeping Going When the Going Gets Tough — Part 2” in the last issue of Key-stone got dropped off the end of the article! This must have been very frustrating to every single reader. We apologise. However, the missing lines now make up the beginning of Part 3 in this issue!

Radio Rhema has got us doing a regular half hour slot at 11:05am every second Friday talking about home education and related issues! This is a very exciting opportunity to speak to a huge chunk of the nation’s Christian population. Please pray that we would be found equal to the task and faithful in how we present the home education option. The next couple of slots, Lord willing, are on Friday 11 April and Friday 25 April 2003. Rhema’s web site is www.rhema.co.nz then click “About Rhema” then click “Frequencies” to find out the station frequency nearest you.

Here is a quote from the Home Education Research article on page 14:

“Although, I believe, all students will face these pressures regardless of where they go to school, I think students who attend public school from kindergarten are exposed to these pressures at a much earlier age than children who are home schooled. In my case, I was at home long enough to establish my belief system, and I was mature enough to stand on those beliefs when I went back to public school.”

The student here being interviewed touches on a very important issue, one few take much note of. The Family Planning Association in NZ, D.A.R.E. and other special interest groups are peddling their secular sex and drug messages to younger and younger audiences, captive audiences, in the public schools. Their basic philosophy is that kids are into these things, so we need to educate them so they can make responsible choices about their drug use and sexual activity. They reckon that the message of abstinence is head-in-the-sand stuff, totally unrealistic for today’s youth.

The ex-home educated youth quoted above says he was older when he faced these issues and had done two key things at home: established his belief system and matured enough to stand on those beliefs when challenged. The youngsters in the public schools, which includes the majority of the children from the country’s Christian homes, are not given this opportunity to establish a consistent belief system or mature enough to stand on it before being immersed in a thoroughly secular and humanistic schooling environment, one dripping with political correctness, atmospherically-charged with stressed-out teachers and haunted with bullies in many disguises. Our fellow Christians are tossing their precious children into these dens of wolves, mostly out of misplaced trust and ignorance. The statistics show they are losing these children to the enemy, at least 50% of them walking away from faith in Christ by the time they finish a year of tertiary study. Those who remain

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in the fold are certainly the “walking wounded”, children who were trained up in antiChristian academic philosophies six hours a day, five days a week, nine months a year for 11 years. I seriously doubt very few if any Christian parents are able to thoroughly debrief, deprogramme, detoxify, etc., their children from these humanistic institutions on a daily or even weekly basis.

These hurting children inhabit church youth groups, Sunday Schools and church camps. And these are the good children, from Christian homes. The rank pagan children are also regularly invited into some church youth groups and camps and of course form the bulk of the ones at secular activities of whatever kind. The implications are that our children really do need to be trained up to discern good from bad, wise from unwise, and know when, where, how and why to flee when things start getting rough. Later, once firmly established in the faith and trained in the spiritual weapons of our warfare, they can go back in boots and all to take every thought captive to obey Christ. How do people expect mere children to do evangelism plus moral and spiritual battle until they have been properly trained?

(Continued from page 5: *Peterson*)

ing, and he wastes too much time surfing the ‘net for jokes and posting to email groups. Like I said, we are very alike! With all my stressing out about him, you (and he) might miss the main point about him ... I am very proud of him. Good at: minding his younger siblings. (He’ll make a great Dad one day.) Hobby: long-distance running.

Matthew (14): David is like Isaac Newton, and Matthew is like Thomas Edison. Matthew has been fiddling with electronic stuff since he was about three years old, and we are fairly certain that he’ll get a Bachelor of Engineering with Honours, like his father. He always has some project going in the garage. (A robot. A burglar alarm. Repairing our video player.) This boy is definitely kinaesthetic! As a preschooler he was high stress! (Aaargh!) ...So to all the Mums reading this who are struggling with a whirlwind of a little boy, I encourage you to “hang in there”. One day, that little fellow will be such a blessing to you because he’ll know how to fix things. Matthew had several achievements last year: completed Form 6 Level Physics at Albany campus of Massey University, had his electronics design of AC lights published in the *Silicon Chip* magazine, and he scored in the top 1% in both the Science and Computer Skills exams for Australian schools ... and you’ve probably already guessed what part of his schoolwork he has difficulty with. Yes, that’s right: English. But I’m proud of him that every day he plugs away at improving it. I like Raymond Moore’s plan for teenagers: a third of their time doing schoolwork, a third of their time helping others and a third of their time in paid work; so Matthew has a job delivering newspapers. Matthew is kind and considerate, and I’m soooo glad that he didn’t have to “toughen up” to survive at school. Good at: anything technical. Hobby: pet chooks.

Sarah (11): Sarah is naturally good at English, which is a nice change from her two older brothers; but she keeps saying that she dislikes Maths! (In our family that is similar to saying that you don’t like chocolate!) Then we put her onto Saxon Maths. (We usually start at Saxon 76.) Wow! What a change in her attitude. She now says that she *loves* Maths. (Yay!) Sarah is usually “the brain” behind our younger children’s games. When they play in the tree-hut, she makes the pulley. When they play “Castles”, she makes the castle, armour and weaponry from old cardboard boxes. This makes life a lot of fun for her little brothers, but every so often she needs to have her own “think time” of reading books. Besides liking chocolate, jokes and maths, another typical Peterson trait is being tall. Sarah is not. A neighbour refers to Sarah and Andrew as “the twins” because they are the same height. Sarah is looking forward to getting a “growth spurt” soon. Good at: getting on with her schoolwork. Hobby: making things from cardboard, string, balsa wood etc.

Andrew (9): Andrew is a *very* bouncy boy. He doesn’t walk up steps: he skips up them. He can “juggle” a soccer ball 18 times (with his feet), and he beats his

Dad every time that he goes running with him. This boy has energy to burn. He’s a great kid to have around if you need the house tidied up or the trees pruned! And the house will seem awfully quiet when he leaves home. Just as Andrew loves to kick a ball around, so he also likes to juggle numbers around in his head. Mental maths is his forte. He has a very enquiring mind too, as shown by a family portrait where he is intently studying the spider on his hand! It has been really great to see his mind going to work, like his muscles always have. Good at: any sport and mental arithmetic. Hobby: soccer skills.

Jamie (6): In true Peterson style, Jamie loves maths, and the easiest way to get him to do *all* of his schoolwork is to leave his maths until last. (That way he is looking forward to doing it!) He is irrepressibly happy and as sharp as a razorblade. A really delightful boy. He has just one “small” problem. His can’t talk very well. This is slowing down his reading of course. (It’s hard to sound out “c-a-t” as “cat”, when you normally refer to that small furry critter as a “gah”.) But we do speech practice every day, and he’s improving at a rate of knots. (And surprisingly, he has taken really well to learning French!) He can’t talk as well as others, but he has a lot of other abilities: for example, he can make fried egg sandwiches for the whole family and that without any supervision. Good at: thinking out how to tackle a problem. Hobby: playing cards.

Timothy (4): Last week Timmy said that he wished that he could read. He’s nowhere near being “ready” yet (he doesn’t even know the alphabet), but he sees everybody else in the family enjoying reading books, and he loves to have books read to him. He also sits for ages studying the pictures in Tintin books. He realises the benefits of being able to read. Good at: smiling, laughing and looking cute. Hobby: following his siblings around and asking questions.

In homeschooling circles there is a lot of talk about “readiness”: eg, “Is this boy ‘ready’ to learn to read yet?” I agree that that is a valid point; but I ask, “What is being done while you’re waiting for this boy to be ‘ready’?” If you are spending time with him, explaining the world to him and reading to him, then he will be more motivated to want to read for himself than if his days are spent passively in front of the TV.

Well, that’s us. We try to balance solid work with solid fun, and we want our children to be prepared for whatever their futures hold.

If you have any questions, please feel free to post them onto Hefnet (hefnetnz-subscribe@yahoogroups.com). If I can, I’ll answer on the list. If not, I’ll email you privately. (teampeterson@xtra.co.nz) Very kind regards to you & your family, Rosalind Peterson. And remember: God gave the angels wings, but He gave humans chocolate.

(The Petersons are expecting another baby in late October/early November!)

Letters



Amen!

Thanks for keeping us updated. The article in the latest *Keystone* in “Tough Questions” by Doug Phillips is excellent. We said “Amen” all the way through. More of the same please! God Bless.

Steve & Lynda Bearsley, Hamilton

So Pleased

I was reading an article by Ken Ham the other day where he was discussing why children leave the church when they leave home. In a nut-shell, he puts it down to the Bible being kept in the realm of “religion” and school teaching is seen as “reality”. Thank you for continuing to provide articles about the Christian world view, creation and other topics where Scripture is applied to “real life”!

Recently a very intelligent, highly educated (Principal of big Uniting Church school, Presbyterian minister) Christian cousin of mine (recently moved here from NZ!) was having a creation/evolution/big bang, etc., discussion with me. He accused “fundamentalist” parents of pushing their children away from the faith by forcing them to choose between the Bible’s description of creation and scientific “fact”. Continuing by explaining that the big bang, evolution, etc., is compatible with Scripture. He also patronisingly said, “I used to be a six-day creationist, but then I began to delve.”

I am so pleased to have my children at home where they are relatively “safe” from such arguments. I am also pleased to teach them that the Bible is completely dependable, in every area, and that there is such a thing as “ultimate truth”. I don’t need to teach them about evolution, they are bombarded with it wherever they go, but I will be countering that with as much sound creation science material as possible....not to prove creation happened, but to strengthen their faith and give them confidence in God’s infallible Word.

Thanks again for your terrific magazine!

Meredyth Rae, Bulahdelah, NSW, Australia

Our First One Is On the Way

Thank you for your great magazine which has been an encouragement to us as a young couple (newly married) and inspired us to pursue homeschooling when our children reach school age. Our first one is on the way – due in September. May the Lord bless you – keep up the great work!

Pedja & Michelle Stanic, Wellington

Thanks for Being so Open

Keystone continues to bless us greatly with its wonderful positive content. Congratulations on your candid and helpful “Over a Cuppa” articles “Keeping Going When the Going Gets Tough”. Your audience, lots of busy homeschool mums and dads, do have to work hard to get the right balance in our relationships with God and each other. So thanks for being so open about things which we all encounter to different degrees, but

which we struggle to articulate to others. That was pretty brave and we love you all the more for it. We pray you’ll be blessed in the coming year, spiritually, personally and in your business endeavours.

Stephen & Andrea Thierry, Lara, VIC, Australia

Positive Refreshing Input

Thanks for all your work on our behalf. I always look forward to the arrival of both the *Keystone* and *TEACH* and sit down with a cuppa – my time for some positive refreshing input.

Ruth Robb, Dunedin

(Continued from page 27: Purity)

Team up to mutually decide to have a marriage that is going to set a benchmark for Biblical conformity, attract attention, make your children the happiest and most secure little ones around — and incidentally, a marriage that is going to thrill you down to your socks as well! It is a simple, fairly well-defined, identifiable goal. And if we don’t get the title of “best”, we will surely greatly improve what we’ve got in the effort!

In Church last night I was challenged by the verses in Hebrews 12:1-3: “Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart.”

I was thinking of this in relation to our marriages. “Let us lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us from keeping our marriages in all purity and keeps us from having good marriages. Let us run with endurance the race (working on our marriages) that is set before us. We need to look unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith (it is only as we seek to please Him that we can do it; we are not pure as He is pure; we do not suffer as He suffered), who for the joy set before Him endured the cross (nothing in our marriages can compare with that), despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (to be there with Him being our goal). For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself (our marriages, no matter how bad, will not be this bad) so that you may not grow weary and lose heart.”

Many of us have grown weary and have lost heart. Let this be a challenge for us not to grow weary and lose heart any longer but to do as we are told in Luke 9:23: “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.” It is dying to ourselves, denying ourselves as we seek the Lord Jesus Christ, as we fix our eyes on Him, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, that we are able to do it. As we fix our eyes on Him, we can look forward to the joys of a fulfilling marriage and the ultimate fulfillment of meeting with Him, in godliness and contentment, at the end of our days.

KEYSTONE

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

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

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(Deadline is 1st Tue of month of publication)

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h 250 x w 95mm (column)

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Three of same size = 10% off third one.

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Home Education Family Cottage Industries

Special rates may apply. Please contact the editor.

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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!

Graham & Rosalind Peterson

of Auckland



Matthew 14, Andrew 9,
Jamie 6, Sarah 11, Timothy 4

We are the Peterson family. Graham, myself (Rosalind) and our six children. If you're on a homeschooling email list, eg Hefnet or Chednet, then you probably already know something about me: that I'm a chocoholic and I like jokes!

How We Started Homeschooling

I can clearly remember the first time that I heard about homeschooling. We had been looking for a Christian school for our eldest son, David, who was soon to turn 5. One school's waiting list was so long that they would not be able to take David by his birthday, and they suggested that we consider homeschooling instead. My response was, "No way! He'd drive me crazy". (Doesn't God have an amazing sense of humour?) So, a standing joke in our family is whether the children *have* driven me crazy yet. (The children like jokes too.)

Well, we did find a Christian school with a vacancy, and I was mighty relieved. The school was very new, so they needed parents to help out half a day a week. (I see this now as God preparing me to homeschool.) The school was as ideal as you could get: small class size, wonderful Christian teacher, strong academic standards and a safe playground. But David was not happy. His handwriting was painfully slow, so he would often have to stay in during lunch to finish off copying down something from the board. And his daydreaming!

Aargh! Most days he wouldn't finish his work because his mind was outside following a butterfly or something. (Much later I read *They're Not Bringing My Brain Out* by Rosemary Cathcart, and I realised that this "think time" was as essential for him, as water is for a fish. He *had* to have time to just sit and think.

The Christian school had a homeschooling unit attached to it, and in the afternoons some homeschooled children would come into the school for sports or music, etc. I think that David looked at those children and realised that they were happier than he was. So a few months after his sixth birthday David asked us to homeschool him. I think that Graham thought that I was being a bit of a neurotic mother, but he loved me and so let me "try" homeschooling.

A few months later we sent David back to school. This time it was a state school. Our reasoning was that I "couldn't" homeschool him because I was often away in hospital (tough pregnancy), and a state school would let him have more "think time" because their academic standards weren't as high as in the Christian school. It was a bad move. The bullying was so bad that within a few days he had changed from a happy six-year-old to a very sullen child. That month was a terrible experience for all of us, but it did make us (and even the relatives!) convinced that homeschooling was the only option — at least for this child. (And the good news is that soon after David left school, he changed back to being a happy child.)

Why We Homeschool

I was interested to find what my children thought was the answer, so I asked them! Matthew (aged 14) said that we homeschool so that they are not exposed to all the bad influences at school. He also said that it keeps the family together. (He intends to homeschool his own children.) Sarah (11) said that we homeschool so that they can learn a lot and have a healthier environment. Andrew (9) said that we homeschool because when they are sick they can still do their schoolwork. Jamie (6) said that he liked homeschooling because he could be with his family more, and at school he would learn bad language. Kids really do say the darndest things!

And the real reason is because Graham and I want their thinking to be in line with God's way of thinking, whereas at school (even a Christian school) they would absorb the worldviews of our culture instead.

There are other reasons too. The other reasons include: The Bible says that we parents are to train up a child in the way that *he* (or she) should go. That implies that each child has *individual* needs. Needs that can't be met in a classroom of 30. At home they can learn more efficiently, and so have plenty of time left to build tents, play cards, read widely etc.

They are more "connected" with their parents. Not just

larly emotional purity. The Bible's standard for our emotional purity is, first, to be so totally committed to our spouses that our marriages each reflect the relationship of Christ to His church. This is a unique union which should be obvious to all onlookers as a one-of-a-kind relationship. Second, the Bible says this about our relation to all others outside our family: "Exhort [older men] as you would a father; treat younger men like brothers, older women like mothers, younger women like sisters, in all purity" (I Timothy 5:1-2). Don't flirt with anyone apart from your spouse in your mind or with your eyelashes or with your words or with physical touch or closeness. We need to be continually working towards purity and emotional purity in our marriages. And that includes how we effect the emotional purity of others.

We as parents need to be working at training our children in purity, emotional as well as sexual. We are training our children in *something*, either in purity in all of their relationships or that flirting to some degree is ok. So how far is ok? Even to ask the question shows we have erred: purity is in the exact opposite direction. We counsel our children, "Pay *attention* to all, show *intention* toward none." Like many of you I (Barbara) was trained to be in the dating scene from an early age – it really did affect me. Consequently I now really struggle to be emotionally pure every day. Most days I get the victory now, but it has been a struggle for me over the years. If we train our children from a young age in purity, then, by God's grace, they should not have the same struggles in their marriages that many of us have. Even though we fail in this area at times, we must see the need to be training our children in all purity. It is worth the struggle to be pure and to train our children to be pure. I know this is not a popular message in these days of excessive freedom in forming relationships, independence in how youth spend their time, the fashions they follow, independence in transport and finance, etc. But as Matthew 7:13 says, "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it." Craig and I want to be found by God to be seeking Him in all areas of our lives, and we want this for our children.

II Corinthians 3:18, Philippians 2:12-13, I Corinthians 9:4-27, Philippians 3:12-16 and other passages mean our sanctification and maturity in Christ, becoming the kind of husbands, wives and parents we want to be, is a constant struggle. The closer we get to Him the more faults we'll see in ourselves, the more impure we will realise we are. This is depressing. Yet here is a proper, a balanced, a Biblical self-image, one that is totally at odds with the popular notion that people need to have positive self-esteem and always feel good about themselves. No, we need to know we are weak and faulty sinners, that it is the grace of God alone that carries us on, allowing us to see that even while we are truly becoming more and more sanctified, and that a part of that sanctification is perceiving that the true gulf between our righteousness and His is getting wider all the time, even so, His grace allows us to see more of the

true extent of His love and commitment toward us in Christ! When we are weak, then we are strong; let him who boasts, boast in the Lord, not in his journey to discover a positive self image!

Another key to having a fulfilling marriage is for us to be content in our marriages. Paul says in Philippians 4:11b "for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am". For some of us it is taking longer than others to learn to be content. Contentment doesn't just happen when we marry. We should have learned to be content in God before we married. If we did not, then we may tend to look towards our spouse as the source of contentment, something our spouses cannot be; only God can be that source of unfailing contentment, one that never lets you down or disappoints.

Norm Wakefield stated in his book, *Equipped to Love*, "Whenever someone looks to anything or anyone rather than God as the source of all things, he commits the sin of idolatry. This may sound strange, but it's true. Here is a good definition of idolatry: looking to any person, object or idea to supply what only God can supply." Heather Paulsen says in her book, *Emotional Purity* (see back cover), "We must examine things in our lives that may be idols. Could it be the idea of marriage? Or could it be the 'friend' you have?.....When discontentment is felt in life, when one does not find true contentment with God alone, problems can easily occur. Ask God to point out areas in your life where you are not content, then ask Him to help you be satisfied with His plan. He will begin to reveal areas where you are not fully in His will. Once this lesson is learned, you may need to lean on God 'the Educator' to continue to keep you reminded of His instructions. If you are married, where do you find your satisfaction? Are you longing for your spouse to fill your empty heart? It will never happen. Only God can fill this hole in your heart. He designed it that way. Your husband has not been created to make you happy. Your wife has not been created to satisfy you always. Look to God to fill this area of your life. Trust Him to take care of your marriage. Be content with where you are in life. As difficult as marriage can be, continue to draw near to God. God can use another person, your mate perhaps, to contribute to your happiness and satisfaction, but remember it ultimately comes from God and He deserves the glory."

I Timothy 4:6b-7: "Train yourself in godliness, for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come." 1 Timothy 6:6: "But godliness actually is a means of great gain, when accompanied by contentment." We need to be *training* ourselves in godliness and *learning* to find contentment in Christ Who will give us contentment in our marriages.

All this training and learning starts to sound like hard work. But look at it from different angles at the same time. Why not decide — the two of you together — that you could have the best marriage anyone around you has ever seen? Why not decide that as a couple?

(Continued on page 28: *Purity*)

Over A Cuppa



Keeping Going When the Going Gets Tough — Part 3

by Craig and Barbara Smith

We were horrified to discover, *after* the last issue of *Keystone* was printed, that the last two lines of Part 2's article were chopped off! The final paragraph should have read:

“And may God richly bless us all as we seek to be obedient to Him in our desire to please Him in our marriages. Let us remember to continue to meet the needs of our spouses we are already meeting well. Then work at improving how we meet other needs. We do these things, as difficult as they sometimes are, for the Lord's sake, for the sake of our marriages, for the sake of our children....but knowing that we personally also benefit by enjoying the fruit of a more peaceful, enjoyable and satisfying marriage partner from now on!”

This is a tall order. This is something that we need to be continually working at. We will never get to the point where we will be able to just coast along: something is always changing, and we can let things change by themselves (the doctrine of original sin and the second law of thermal dynamics both say the change will be downhill) or we can work with the changes in an effort to ensure the overall effect is beneficial. The lists and books that we have mentioned in these and other articles are merely tools for us to use. None can claim to be exhaustive lists, fool-proof formulas for success or items that will necessarily suit our current needs. They are tools for us to use to help get us onto a better track, to help us come to grips with Biblical principles that we need to be applying to our lives. Sometimes people try to use books or lists of ideas as a quick fix for marriage difficulties. It doesn't work like that. There are no quick fix methods (in this quick fix age) for getting our marriages back on track once we get stuck in a briar patch of thorny problems. We also believe that all marriages have difficulties of some sort. Good marriages call for hard work and a need to be doing what we know is right. We two just want to mention again that the most difficult part for us getting on track again with our marriage was the decision we made together to do so.

Craig will now mention what he has been sharing at workshops about the clinical part of getting our marriage on track again. For us this was a key to begin communicating again.....

We'd tried talking about the difficulties, but always went round and round in circles. This is what happens when neither is willing to admit to their failures,

but is more concerned with finding fault with the other. This is especially hard for me (Craig), for in the final analysis I am the one to carry the full responsibility as head of the household, head of the marriage. It was imperative to find someone we could trust, a godly man of Biblical wisdom and maturity, to whom we could bring our difficulties, laying them on the table for him to see and give counsel, a man unafraid of offending us by telling us the truth! The description I used at the time was someone who would use a two-by-four to whack us between the eyes, who would pull out his six-shooters and give us both barrels, who would not handle us with velvet gloves for we are not very good at taking hints, but need it spelled out in no uncertain terms. Our counselor did exactly that: told us what terrible sinners we were against God and each other, how we had been defrauding one another in our attitudes, how we had some serious confessions to make to one another and to God, and how I especially had better start shouldering my responsibilities, taking charge and start working on some solutions with Barbara who had better be a lot more cooperative.

The first challenge was to read a book together. And discuss it. And work out applications, that is, things we were going to start doing that we hadn't been doing. Our initial list has on it signs of affection which I (Craig) needed to start performing, even in public: holding hands, giving a hug, buying flowers. “Give me a break!” I said. These things will now seem cold and clinical because each of us will know I'm doing it only because the book suggested it; these acts won't be “spontaneous” or “from the heart” and therefore not properly valid. They'll be fake tokens of affection, not real ones.

Well, the fact is, just as Naaman's servant in II Kings 5 convinced Naaman that he had nothing to lose from doing something so simple as dipping seven times into the Jordan River to fix his problem, I decided holding hands wasn't so hard to do. The truth is, I really wanted to hold hands like we used to do when courting. But now things were different, I said to myself, and went through the arm-chair psychologist routine for a bit. Look, just forget all the analysis stuff; it's all just an attempt to make excuses anyway. Just hold her hand, you big oaf!

The act of showing such signs of affection, even after they'd long been dropped, even when they'd probably appear to be mere clinical actions, demonstrates a commitment to making things better, a commitment to Barbara, a commitment to changing my habits and routines for her sake. I tell you what, there is more meaning in our holding hands now, more significance, than there ever was 25 years ago in our courting days. And yet, I'm aware that I'm talking about some fairly basic things here, Philippians 2:3 kind of stuff. But it is vital to be on top of this if we are ever to be immersed in the lifestyle of Ephesians 5:21-33 to which we have been called.

There will always be work needed in our marriages, especially if we were not trained in purity, particu-

with me, the one with them all day, but also with their Dad. At any time during the day they can phone him. (“Dad, I finished my Maths book today. Can we go see the Kingz soccer team play tonight?”) And I like being with them! (Maybe they are so likeable *because* they aren't at school!)

How We Homeschool

Last year was definitely *not* how I want to homeschool. I was so busy with outside-of-the-family stuff like committees, email lists and extracurricular activities, that we had little time to “smell the roses” together. So this year I cut back on everything that I could. I still help people in my local support group as Treasurer and with their Exemption letters, etc., but I'm trying to spend a lot more time with my children this year. Not just because I want to, but also because they need it.

We do the biggest chunk of our formal “schoolwork” in the morning. The children have a list of work (that I've written on the back of Weet-bix packets) that they can complete mostly on their own (eg, Bible: read one chapter; Maths: do three pages; English: four pages.) I'm “on call” to help with any problems, but I'm also trying to straighten up the house a little and do some “one-to-one” work with Jamie.

Then we have morning tea. If they've finished their list then they get their biscuits. If not, they don't. (You'd be surprised at how much schoolwork gets done in the last 20 minutes before morning tea time!) During morning tea each child tells the rest of the family what was in their Bible reading today and what they have learnt/understood from it.

They have “free time” from morning tea until lunchtime. After lunch we all do a quick clean up. (Andrew loads the dishwasher, and the rest of us tidy things away or sort out the washing.) The afternoon is less predictable than the morning though. Sometimes Matthew does his afternoon list, which includes reading a science book, while I spend some time helping Andrew “one-to-one”. Other days we do unit studies or I read aloud to everybody. We're presently reading *Amos Fortune, Free Man*. What an uplifting book! I know that I wouldn't have had the time to read it with the children if they were all away at school for six or more hours per day.

We also have French on Tuesdays, Music on Thursdays, Soccer all winter, Tennis during summer ... We balance this extreme busyness with jokes & chocolate!

Our children read *a lot*. We often have more than one hundred (sometimes even two hundred!) library books in our house. This has given our children a good general knowledge. For example, Sarah very rarely “does” Science for “schoolwork”, but the very first time she sat an Australian Schools Science exam, she scored in the top 2% of students. She learnt all that she needed from library books.

Reading Tip: Would you eat a salad when you could have chocolate instead? No. Well, children are unlikely to choose to read when there is something more

“exciting” to do like watch TV or engage with PlayStation. So if you want your children to read more, get rid of the TV.

I'm so slack about housework that for years I couldn't write in “Housewife” as my occupation on official forms. I just didn't feel that I was competent enough. Don Aslett books (*Clutter's Last Stand* and *Make your House do the Housework*) have helped a lot. I now feel on top of the housework.

Housework Tips: (1) A spray bottle filled with water and a capful of Handy Andy is a cheap multi-purpose cleaner. (2) At least once a day get *all* the children to help you to tidy away things, etc. (3) Whatever you throw out you will never have to tidy away again.

Who We Homeschool

Homeschooling is a *family* lifestyle, so I'm including all the family here. Graham: I couldn't have kept on homeschooling for these past 12 and a half years if it hadn't been for Graham's support and encouragement. There were times when David was in his teens that I was feeling overwhelmed with trying to get this boy to work rather than daydream! I would phone Graham at his work and actually suggest a school David could go to. Each time Graham would encourage me to keep on homeschooling him. Graham had become even more convinced of the benefits of homeschooling than I was! (His mother has reminded him that when he was a child he had told her that *his* children would never go to school! It's amazing how things turn out, isn't it?) Graham helps out in many ways: checking over the children's work from time to time, playing tennis with them, taking the children to many of their sports activities. But the *best* way that he helps the homeschooling is by taking me out for afternoon tea!

Rosalind: I drifted around a lot (spent a few years in NZ Army Intelligence, a couple at Massey University, and went to Outward Bound) until I became a Christian (and finally finished a BCom degree) at 27 years of age. This has given me a broad range of knowledge to draw on for homeschooling, but it has also made me concerned that my children have goals and don't waste their talents like I did. I love having the children around, but I also need my own “think time”. Sometimes I get that late at night, and sometimes I get it by sending them all to their rooms while I have an afternoon rest. (*A Survivors Guide to Homeschooling* by Luanne Shackelford & Susan White has some great practical advice for “hanging in there”).

David: (aged 18) This is his third full-time year of a conjoint BSc/BA majoring in Maths and Physics at the University of Auckland. (He got Provisional Entry at age 16.) During most of David's homeschooling I was either going through a tough pregnancy or had a new baby, and so I often left him to “homeschool himself”. What that meant was that he learnt a lot in his areas of strengths (maths and reading), and he avoided his areas of weakness. I now wish that I had put more structure (especially writing!) into his homeschooling. David is soooo much like me: he stays up too late at night read-

(Continued on page 29: *Peterson*)

The Faith of Us Fathers



Explain Why You Do — Make Others Wonder Why They Don't

By Craig Smith

Men must know what they are about. Men must be able and willing — maybe even to the extent that they are seen as aggressive about it — to articulate why they do as they do. When it comes to home education, we men must be able to defend not only our family's chosen lifestyle but also defend and protect our wives and children from the harassment they can sometimes receive from what we shall charitably call "well-intentioned" friends, neighbours and relatives.

We say "well-intentioned" only because they are acting according to what their conscious and unconscious beliefs tell them about your home education endeavours: that you are cutting your children off from proper socialisation, from a quality academic education, from the excellent resources and professional teaching experiences available at schools. That is to say, in their ignorance and lack of having thought the issues through, they try to get you to conform back to the present day cultural norm of sending your children off down the road at age five. They want you to join them in abdicating most of your parental responsibilities; in ensuring that your family is thoroughly fragmented; and most of all, in making sure that your children will be less under your influence and authority and more under that of the local peer group while on the playground and the professional social engineers while in the classrooms.

We must deal with a number of issues, recognise what is going on and come to a conclusion that we can then defend from the Scriptures.

Who is Responsible?

First, who is responsible for the education of our children? What say the Scriptures? Most of us are already very familiar with Deuteronomy 6:6-7: "And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children...." The very first two statements, verses 7 and 8, after the introduction to the entire book of Proverbs, say pay attention to God and to your parents: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge...Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and reject not your mother's teaching." Ephesians 6:4: "Fathers....bring [your children] up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." That is, while it may be Biblically permissible to delegate the edu-

cational task of our children to someone else, the *secular* state can have no responsibility in the education of *our Christian children*. To give our children into the care of these secular humanists is akin to committing lambs into the care of wolves. Let us no longer be timid about proclaiming this proposition: Bible-based education with a thoroughly Christian world view is the *only* alternative for the children of Christians.

So with this conviction firmly in your hearts and minds, men, your wives can confidently refer any neighbour or relative to you as soon as they start giving her a hard time about home education. It gets them off her back, the main objective of your role as protector. A real bonus here is that you can just about guarantee they won't have the fortitude to bring it up at all with you, the hairier, more testosterone-charged member of the family!

What if it is fellow church members — even your pastors — who express concern about your home education and who actually *do* bring it up with you? Pour the acid on *them*! Don't let them get away: make them justify (for one day they'll have to do this before God) why it is ok to send children of Christian families into the government schools, those temples of secular humanism, to be trained to think like pagans.

Perhaps it is time we ourselves began to call for a coordinated commitment by the Christian leaders in this country, by church pastors and the larger Christian community, to support every ongoing effort and to initiate even more efforts to enable Christian parents to get their children *out* of the government school system and *into* home education or, if that really cannot be done, into decent Christian schools.

State Schools Are Anti-Christian

A second issue is how to demonstrate that state schools are teaching from anti-Christian philosophies. This is simple. In the first place Section 77 of the NZ Education Act demands that in primary schools "the teaching shall be entirely of a secular character". According to every Minister of Education since David Lange in 1984, that means "with no religious instruction or observance". To rule Christ out of the classroom is clearly anti-Christian.

Is history taught as "His story", looking at the way God deals with mankind over time? Is history even taught in state schools? Has it not been replaced by the non-subject of "social studies" wherein one culture is as valid as another? Is maths taught as a discovery of the orderliness in God's creation that we can use to have godly dominion and responsible stewardship over the earth? Or is it taught as an invention of the mind of man that can be used to manipulate people, the environment and the economy for the greater good of all?

Is evolution taught as fact or as theory in science? Check out English language skills: grammar was dispensed with some time ago; spelling is on its way

completed the eight years of training required. Now he works as a registrar of an intensive care ward in Palmerston North at the Mid-Central Health Hospital, trying to decide between specializing in anaesthetics or surgery. To become a doctor David needed to sit Bursary, and so returned to school for his last school-year, achieving the high grades necessary to be accepted into medicine. He studied at Otago.

Personality-wise David is less of a "people-person" than Delwyn. As a young boy he was into everything, sussing out how things ticked (including people). He would observe the crowd, rather than participate; and in doing so developed keen discernment and understanding of people's psyches. He has a "razor-sharp sense of humour", is very self-motivated and loves a challenge. Apart from medicine his passion is for the outdoors: tramping, cycling, skiing — all the same sports as Delwyn. He wants to do the Rotorua-to-Taupo cycle race this April for the second time and climb to the top of all three mountains in our National Park one day, and find a wife — probably not on Mt Ruapehu....but you never know.

Reuben was home educated up to age eleven, when he went to school at the same time David returned for Bursary — being educated at home alone wasn't very appealing. Those first school years had a significant effect, however: Reuben learned to mix well with others, to monitor himself, to research, to work on his own and to love learning. Cool-headed, a born peace-maker, when he began at intermediate school, his teachers were impressed with how mature he was for his age. He got on well with his classmates, tending to choose his closest friends from those a year ahead.

The Rusks think the way Reuben was schooled was the best of their four children. "He was grounded well by being homeschooled and then went to school in his adolescent years when friendships and state school qualifications can be important." He became head prefect, dux, and achieved such high marks in bursary that he was given direct entry into the second year of his mechanical engineering degree...in sum, "a bit of a legend"! He has graduated with first class honours in what is a four year degree in just three years, and he is now about to embark on his thesis for his Masters degree (an aviation problem on air flow across aircraft wings).

Reuben's love for creativity and designing things dates back to pre-school years and was encouraged by his father. Mr Rusk spent a lot of time with Reuben in the workshop building things when the family first began homeschooling. Now Reuben designs all sorts of things using CAD (computer-assisted drawing).

But he has a competing passion: composing, writing the lyrics for, playing, singing and recording his own music. He intends to publish it. Like Delwyn he has a portfolio of instruments he can play: the

drums, bass guitar and guitar, piano/keyboard and trumpet. He won the prize for best trumpet player at the 1998 Tauranga jazz festival together with the best NZ composition award. Reuben's good at most ball games too, including tennis, squash, golf and cricket. And Mrs Rusk says that, like David, he is a "gun" snow skier.

The three were and are very close as siblings; some Christian fellowship camp leaders have several times commented on how well they got on together. The only drawback they experienced in homeschooling "seems to be that we became too close as a family... on the other hand the children learned the value of a secure and stable family unit." They have an attitude of serving others, of making their way in life, and none of them have lost their love for learning, music, and sport. "Our teaching philosophy was simply to teach them how to learn themselves. Now they are all self-motivated, progressive, independent thinkers and doers who loved excellence before that word became popular."

And what do people say now?

The headmaster, astonished at having Delwyn and David taken out of his school, has set up a gifted children's programme at his new school. He said to Mrs Rusk, "Maureen, this is the sort of thing your children would have loved."

An education review officer said, "If my wife and I had our time again, we would do with our children what you have done with yours."

The neighbours haven't said anything.

"The homeschooling phenomenon," says Mrs Rusk, "has been carefully observed more than you think. I just wish I could still work with children like I did with ours. I'd be very happy to hear from anyone with questions about bright or gifted children and more than happy to share my experiences with them."

Would you like to nominate someone for the "Home Educators Did It" column? Ph. Andrea on (09) 410-3933 or send me an email: andrea.munroe@intouch.co.nz

Andrea Munroe of North Shore City was home educated all her days. She is an aspiring journalist, despite being currently 2/3 of her way through entirely the wrong degree (bachelor of business). She hopes to graduate and complete a journalist post-graduate diploma, then go on to write lots of things (articles, books, music, doggerel, you name it), turn NZ completely upside-down and retire.



Home Educators Did It

The Rusks of Hikurangi

(Just north of Whangarei)

Maureen Rusk's three youngest children are testimonies to the fact that homeschoolers are in no way disadvantaged when it comes to embarking on a career.

Delwyn and David were home educated for seven and a half years each and Reuben for six. Today Delwyn is a nurse in the children's ward of a Whangerei base hospital, her brother David is a surgeon, while Reuben is an "engineer-in-progress" studying for his ME at Canterbury University. They agree that none of them would be where they are today if it wasn't for homeschooling.

At age 11 and 9 Delwyn and David were at school and not doing well. Delwyn was having trouble coping with the poor socialization skills of her classmates, particularly 12 "catty" girls who would love you one day and hate you the next. When her class merged with another two classes as a result of a change to open-plan, Delwyn was distracted by having so many pupils in one room. She was also having difficulties with the contract-style learning employed by the school which was putting her under a lot of pressure. Under this system she was getting 20 minutes of maths a week and had so little idea of the value of money, and so little self-confidence, that she was afraid to go to the dairy and buy a bottle of milk!

Meanwhile David was struggling with utter boredom. For some unfathomable reason half of his Standard three class was put with the bottom half of the Standard two class. As a result his teacher might spend a whole maths lesson teaching the class how to work out a sum which David knew how to do the moment she had written it up. Yet he was considered dull because his printing was nearly indecipherable. This was partly due to left-handedness but also (ironically) because his mind worked faster than his hand. David was also quite lonely until he discovered books at age seven and thereafter spent breaks in the library.

Mr and Mrs Rusk decided that the "one-size-fits-all" schooling method did not appear to be fitting their kids at all and took them both out of school to launch into home education. They anticipated that the school would not cater any better for Reuben, a very bright four-year-old, and so he was not sent to school when his "time" came 'round. This was during the mid



The Rusks: John (eldest), Delwyn (27), David (25), Reuben (20).

1980s. Very few people were homeschooling, and neighbours considered the step to be radical indeed.

"It certainly was unfashionable!" says Mrs Rusk. "It was obvious that most people thought it was a very wrong step to take. Their reasoning was that our children would be socially disadvantaged. The headmaster said no one had ever taken children out of a school he was headmaster of..."

But homeschooling turned out to be okay after all. In the Rusks' experience, home catered for the needs of their gifted children in a way the school did not. This meant the freedom to explore their gifts and work at a pace that suited

them, developing their own characters without the pressure to socially conform. The family agrees that had they not homeschooled, the three youngest would have been purged of motivation and desire to learn. As it was they had "marvellous times" during those years and enjoyed many extra-curricular activities that would have been impossible at school; this really contributed to the fun and satisfaction of homeschooling.

Delwyn's list of activities included tennis, snow-skiing, windsurfing, horse-riding, cycling, squash, and badminton. But her overwhelming passion is music, especially the piano, though she also plays the cello and "can just about pick up any instrument and play it". At age two she could play with both hands on the piano....without discords! She can compose and sing, and is an excellent actress as well. (In fact, when she was young, she would "act" to suit the company she was with, being very sensitive to other people's feelings.) She is good with animals and is very friendly and very popular; the children in her ward love her.

Ever since she broke her arm at age six, Delwyn knew she wanted to be a nurse. However, after she was taken out of school, she never returned; and because she had no state qualifications when she finished school, she chose Christian school teaching instead, for state qualifications were not a pre-requisite for the training college. But the teacher training spoiled her natural ability to relate well to children; and so she returned to her original goal, taking short courses to gain acceptance into the Whangerei Polytechnic. Now married, she continues to practice nursing, and this year is undertaking post-graduate study to further her career. Her long-term goal is to be a counsellor.

David was 14 when he announced that he wanted to be a surgeon. Nothing deterred him. He graduated at 23, completed two more years as a house surgeon, and thus by November 2002, aged only 25, he had

out; the "whole-word" approach to reading has crippled many thousands of children, most of whom could easily pick up reading once instructed in phonics; and essay writing is virtually impossible to teach in 45-minute classes when it takes sustained concentration to formulate a thesis, break it down into a number of points, explain each one coherently and then tie them all together again in a convincing conclusion. Maybe that's why professors in most of our universities complain that first year students can't write essays. Illiteracy is a friend of the enemy, a hindrance to us people of the Book.

Secular Morality Is Immorality

A third issue is the moral one. The people teaching children in state schools come in all kinds of moral configurations including practising and unrepentant paedophiles, sodomites, lesbians, fornicators, de facto arrangements, adulterers, etc. Some of these are start-

ing to come to the notice of the authorities, if media headlines of late are anything to go by. The children populating the classrooms also bring with them an apparently increasing amount of experience in fornication, lesbianism, incest, pornography (print, video, internet and live), homosexuality and abuse of all kinds. Sex and sexuality education programmes in the schools assume children are little more than feral animals with insatiable and uncontrollable urges that require instruction in condom fitting, contraception strategies, STDs and how to obtain abortions.

We cannot even assume that private or integrated schools calling themselves "Christian" are clear on the distinctives of a Christian world and life view. A Christian school this writer helped to get established invited the secular D.A.R.E. drug programme into their classrooms. They took over for three afternoons a week for five weeks! Their first unit was on self-perception, and they – remember this is a secular crowd in a Christian school – they first of all explored the question, "Who am I?" So how does a *secularist* answer such a question in a Christian school? That you are a creature made in the image of God? That you are fallen in Adam and possess a fatal sin nature? That your only salvation in this life and the next is in Jesus Christ? That you have a soul for which Christ died and for which the devil is going to make constant ploys to deceive into his camp? That God commands you to repent? That you have a sure home in heaven if you do, and that you will roast in hell forever if you don't? That you are called by God to be an ambassador of Jesus Christ here on this earth, to bear the ministry and the message of reconciliation to a crooked and perverse generation all around you, a generation who really doesn't want to hear? Or will they say you are a child of the universe, a citizen of mother earth, that you are very special to your family and have the ability of making others feel special too, that you are free to do as you like, as long as you don't harm others or limit their freedom to do as they like?

Schools Are Malevolent

There is something about the whole concept of "school" which appears to be malevolent. It has been a favourite tactic of social engineering by statist control freaks for many centuries. Plato (427-347BC) wrote a book called *Laws* in which we read on page 804, "The children shall come (to the schools) not only if their parents please, but if they do not please; there shall be compulsory education, as the saying is, of all and sundry, as far as this is possible; and the pupils shall be regarded as belonging to the state rather than to their parents."¹ Plato gives a further insight into statist education, both ancient and modern, when he writes, "If anyone at all is to have the privilege of lying, the rulers of the state should be the persons; and they, in their dealings either with their enemies or with their own citizens, may be allowed to lie for the public good."²

Prussian kings sought to instill social obedience into the citizens through indoctrination. Every individual had to become convinced, in the core of his being, that the King was just, his decisions always right and the need for obedience paramount. A series of schools edicts that for the first time made clear that education was a task of the state, finally culminated in 1763 when Frederick II made schooling compulsory for all children between five and thirteen. In 1794 all schools and universities were made institutions of the state.³

About 1832 a group of wealthy Unitarians in Boston adopted the Prussian system as their model for instituting publicly funded schools in America, because in that system the state had complete control, parents had no influence and children were entered at the earliest age. The group designed a three-part plan: (1) compulsory attendance, (2) a state teacher's college degree prerequisite to certification as a teacher, and (3) state owned and operated schools. When the Massachusetts state legislature hesitated to enact such legislation, the Unitarians offered to help pay for it, 50/50. They did, and in 1837 the first state public school system in the United States was established. Soon other states followed suit.⁴

Karl Marx, 1818-1883, identified free, compulsory and secular state education as one of the tools through which the proponents of Communism would take over the world. A contemporary of Marx, Abraham Lincoln, saw something similar, but expressed it somewhat differently: "The philosophy of the classroom is the philosophy of the government in the next generation."

Edward Roth, in his 1906 book *Social Control*, said, "plans are on the way to replace community, family, and church with propaganda, education, and mass media. People are only little plastic lumps of human dough."

In the May 1949 issue of *Progressive Educator* magazine, Kenneth Benne declared: "... Teachers and school administrators should come to see themselves as social

Your own home education also has an agenda.... and you need to be able to articulate it.

engineers. They must equip themselves as change agents.” He was merely spouting the same language as the “Father of Progressive Education” John Dewey.⁵

The Humanist magazine published a prize-winning essay in its Jan/Feb, 1983, issue entitled “A Religion for a New Age” by John J. Dunphy. He lays all the humanist cards on the table, including the fact that secular humanism is not just a philosophy but a religion. Part of this essay reads as follows:

I am convinced that the battle for humankind’s future must be waged and won in the public school classroom by teachers who correctly perceive their role as the proselytizers of a new faith: a religion of humanity that recognizes and respects the spark of what theologians call divinity in every human being.

These teachers must embody the same selfless dedication as the most rabid fundamentalist preachers, for they will be ministers of another sort, utilizing a classroom instead of a pulpit to convey humanist values in whatever subject they teach, regardless of the education level — preschool, day care or large state university.

The classroom must and will become an arena of conflict between the old and the new — the rotting corpse of Christianity, together with all its adjacent evils and misery, and the new faith of Humanism, resplendent in its promise of a world in which the never-realized Christian idea of “love thy neighbor” will finally be achieved.

New Zealand’s own Phillip Capper, past president of the PPTA, said, “What I would like to see in the political debate about education is a recognition that public education is an exercise in social engineering by definition.”⁶

All Education Has an Agenda

This is only scratching the surface of the evidence. Never let anyone get away with saying that education or schooling is neutral: all education has an agenda....it’s in the very nature of education itself (as you’ve just read in the statements quoted above): to change the way people think. Your own home education also has an agenda....and you need to be able to articulate it, or you may find yourself following an agenda *set by someone else*, an agenda you just picked up from what sounded like good ideas from here and from there. Sadly, many of us start home education with the ideas we imbibed during our own state secular schooling days. Such godless ideas do not work the righteousness of God: we need to dredge our minds, re-evaluating everything according to the Scriptures.

It must also be acknowledged that many Christian schools have been hijacked by teachers and administrators who are more influenced by the secular humanist, Marxist and socialist doctrines they picked up in their own public schooling than they

are influenced by Biblical doctrine. And if a Christian school was ever turning out effective Christian disciples, it would immediately become a prime target for the enemies of the cross.

This is another reason why we men must be committed to home education and to running as Biblical a home environment as we can: to keep our children immersed in a tightly focused Christian family, the most foundational and least-able-to-be-hijacked institution around. The key to its Christian soundness, men, is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ working through a husband and father who, as head of his house, is as committed to the Scriptures and to becoming as knowledgeable and articulate as he can be.

These articles in *Keystone* are written with this purpose in mind.

Notes:

1. Robert R. Rusk, *The Doctrines of the Great Educators*, 1954, London: Macmillan & Co., p. 30.
2. Plato’s *Republic*, page 389, as quoted in Robert R. Rusk, *The Doctrines of the Great Educators*, 1954, London: Macmillan & Co., p. 15.
3. “Public Education versus Liberty: The Pedigree of an Idea” by Michiel Visser, <http://www.acton.org/programs/students/essay/2001winners/index.html>
4. “We Are Losing Our Children”, Remarks to the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee by T. C. Pinckney, Nashville, TN, September 18, 2001, <http://sepschool.org/SIG/losing.html>
5. Dennis Cuddy, *20 Years of Federal Change Agency*, pg.1.
6. *Dominion Sunday Times*, 14 October 1990.

Putting the Sparkle into Spelling

world back round the right way.

Now don’t think it’s been a piece of cake for these children: they’ve had to struggle being raised by *us*, two ex-pleasure-is-everything hedonists who imbibed our world views from the likes of Elvis, the Beach Boys, Janis Joplin and the Rolling Stones. While trying to clean up our own personal acts, we did only what we could, inconsistent and tentative as it was, to disciple our children according to the Scriptures. But one thing we know: by the Grace of God the vision was there in our hearts and so we talked of it often.....and over the years our children have *seen* it and *embraced* it for themselves!!!! Hallelujah!!

How do we know they have embraced it? Because the reason our sons are going to Texas, leaving behind excellent paying jobs in Illinois, is to commit themselves to a six month internship where they will trade three days of work for room and board plus two days of lectures and mentoring in how to be men of *vision*, leaders in their future marriages, homes, communities, churches. In short, they are studying to be Patriarchs, without doubt the most hated target of the Feminist agenda and the most totally un-PC item on the menu of our modern society. The older son, in fact, is going for a second bite of this cherry: he and the oldest daughter only returned last December after nearly two years in the USA pursuing these very things: unpaid work and service experience with relations and friends, paid and unpaid work and service with friends and different organisations with visionary people at the helm.

Two families I particularly have in mind here are Bill & Diana Waring of *Beyond Survival & Reaping the Harvest* fame with whom NZ home educators have a special friendship (www.dianawaring.com); and Bob & Linda Schneider of Rainbow Resource in Illinois (www.rainbowresource.com). Two organisations I particularly have in mind are: Summit Ministries who impart a Biblical world view to young people bound for tertiary campuses or the work force (www.summit.org); and Vision Forum who also impart a Biblical world view and leadership skills particularly into young men (www.visionforum.org).

We also know they have the vision because they also have the multigenerational family ideals, as much as is possible with only two generations to work with! The 23, 21 and 19 year olds have been spending a lot of time with their 10 year old little brother, taking him out with them when they can, because he is their brother. In the evenings what activity do they choose above night-clubbing (which they’ve never done) or movies or videos? Playing cards and/or sewing while listening to me, their dad, read books written 100 years ago on the various family responsibilities of parents and siblings or more recent publications on courtship, modesty, etc.

The King James version of Proverbs 29:18 says, “Where there is no vision the people perish”. Other versions say something like, “Where there is no prophecy the people cast off restraint.” Casting off restraint indicates a loss of self-discipline, getting into the “Do your own thing” mentality, which is also a recipe for

perishing. A vision requires self-discipline, delayed gratification, labouring away today in the hope that eventually things will be as you have desired.

Now, Barbara and I have discovered a little secret here, a little something to give us the edge, the confidence that our desires will be fulfilled. We ask the rhetorical question, “Does the will of the Lord God come to pass? Do things turn out the way He desires?” The answer is obvious: God’s will is always accomplished, on earth as it is in heaven, for who can resist, thwart or nullify His will? So, we said to ourselves, if we set our puny personal desires and aspirations aside and long for and desire the same things *God* desires, surely as His will is accomplished we are going to be the most fulfilled and satisfied people around! And so it has seemed to us right up to this very day!

We see ourselves here in this place and at this time for a reason: to positively impact as mightily as we can for the Lord whatever comes into our sphere of influence. The marching orders for this very thing are repeated throughout the Scriptures, from Genesis 1:28 through Matthew 28:18-20 through II Corinthians 5:17-20 through Revelation 12:11. Home education is to us the one viable way we ordinary families can accomplish this task all by ourselves, yet in concert with one another, without waiting for some committee to organise it or for some government department to fund it (as if they would!) or for some self-proclaimed professionals to approve of it.

Develop a vision for your own family. Embrace it and run with it, you parents and each child as well! There just won’t be enough hours in a day thereafter, and each day just won’t come soon enough! “And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” - Hebrews 10:24-25.

Notes:

1. However, let me sound a warning here. I’m definitely *not* talking about new age, humanistic methods of visualisation and pep-talking one’s self to success such as one finds in virtually every single multi-level or network marketing scheme under the sun. I’m not talking about the short-sighted goal of “financial independence.” The high-sounding Million Dollar Personal Success Plan of early MLM-er Paul J. Meyer, Founder of Success Motivation Institute, which goes like this: “Whatever you vividly imagine, ardently desire, sincerely believe, and enthusiastically act upon...must *inevitably* come to pass!” (emphasis added by me) is about as humanistic, unBiblical and antiChristian as you can get.
2. And I’m not talking about financial profitability here. Three passages of Scripture have been our guides in this area: Proverbs 14:23, “In all toil there is profit, but mere talk tends only to want”; I Corinthians 15:58, “Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain”; and one on giving: Proverbs 3:9-10, “Honour the Lord with your substance and with the first fruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine.”

wasting, all the profitable things we could be doing.² No, every day is a holiday in that we are doing what we *really* want to do! We are *looking forward* to each new day and squeezing from each as much as we can! We burn the candle at both ends in this quest. We are exhausted every night but are up same time each morning diving straight into our tasks.

We are now fully occupied with working for home educators in many ways. We each put in about 50 hours a week for the Home Education Foundation here in New Zealand; we contribute time, effort and resources to three local support groups; the nationally heard Radio Rhema now has us doing a live half hour slot once a fortnight; and the *Keystone* Journal of Christian Home Schoolers which we publish for the Foundation is dedicated to this very thing... developing vision in Home Educators. This is part of our vision: to help others, dads in particular, catch a vision for how incredibly powerful can be their impact, and the impact of their family and the impact of each of their children on the community, the nation, the world.

Now, does this mean we are driven by the tyranny of the urgent, don't know how to say "No" to other people crowding their agendas in on us? Well, to some degree this *is* the case: but then, that is part of why we are here – to be of service to others. Long time ago Barbara and I were challenged *not* to do those things that others could do, but instead make it our business to do those things others *can't* do or *don't want* to do. I tell you, we have found that this approach has pretty much left most of the really interesting and challenging fields wide open to us and very few others! There is plenty of elbow room when there is little competition.

The hurdles and difficulties of life are almost entirely in the mind. If you focus on the hurdle or barrier in front of you, it is enormous and intimidating. If you are focussed on the glory of the vision way ahead of you, the barrier in front is actually suddenly difficult to see, just as a person standing directly in front of you is almost lost in the brightness of the sun just behind them. That doesn't mean the barrier isn't just as real...it just means that as you move toward your goal, either the barrier moves or you move it. If your focus is beyond the barrier, then beyond it your energies and efforts will generally take you. But if your focus is no farther than the barrier itself, then that is how far the energies you have rallied for the task will take you.

As Christian Home Educators in particular, if God is for us who can be against us? (Romans 8:31.) Many of the saints who continued to proclaim the Gospel in the face of fierce persecution did so because they understood this verse and the sovereignty of God more than do we today. They knew and operated on the basis of the fact that until the Lord chose to call them Home, they were unstoppable, indestructible, and so would carry on doing what they knew they had to do, what they were called to do.

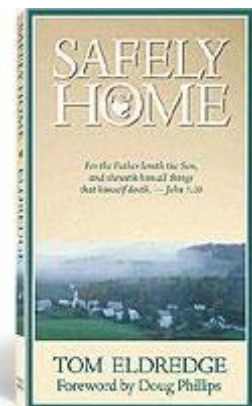
Here is a great source of motivation: reading biographies of the saints: Foxe's Book of Martyrs, CT Studd, Adoniram Judson, Gladys Aylward, Martin Luther, William Carey, David Livingston, David Brainerd.... the list goes on and on. Read any stories of pioneer types: mountain climbers, polar explorers, the settlers in South Africa or North America. Home Education is still a task for real pioneers, for we are still slashing our way through mostly uncharted areas of family dynamics, social ostracism, educational philosophies, methodologies and content applicable to home tutoring in the 21st century, the political implications of being outside the near monopoly of state schooling, etc., etc.

And being pioneers, life is just plain hard. No one understands you. You are constantly going against the grain of the majority. Your motives are continually being judged by others as devious and/or divisive. When you actually survive all that and get used to it, then you find yourself unable to bear graciously with the fools, the curious and the ignorant who constantly come to gawk at the strange sight you present.

And a strange sight it is. Our daughters aged 23 and 16 are doing a night class in making ball gowns. No one understands why they want their necklines so high or the fit so loose. Their peers at even church camps cannot understand why they don't want to join them in constant talk about fashions, boys and makeup....but the camp parents wish they had another dozen like them when they come asking for extra jobs to do after voluntarily doing every undone job in sight. No one understands why our sons aged 21 and 19 are not out chasing the girls and dating. But they are in demand as workers who put in a full day's work and don't stop til the job is done to a high standard, who get offered apprenticeships and full-time permanent jobs when they aren't even seeking them.

In fact just this month I bade farewell to these two sons as they flew off to the USA for a year. They will buy a car in California and drive 2/3 of the way across the USA to a family business in Illinois that is keen to have them work for them. Then they are thinking of driving across Canada to visit Alaska before heading all the way down to Texas for a further six months. No, we are not worried that they will get involved in drugs. No we are not worried that they will sow wild oats and pick up some terrible sexually transmitted disease. Why? Because we have seen our vision coming to fruition in these men, who have never set foot inside a state school class room, even as we struggled with them and our other four children, and the adoption hassles we had with two of them, and our own marriage problems and difficult situations over the years in our employment and in our church. Through all the difficulties, by the grace of God alone, we kept, no I need to say **HE** kept us focussed on the vision of raising a generation of totally committed disciples of Jesus Christ, young people who are not merely able to cope with this bad old world, but young people who are going to tear this place apart and, Lord willing, turn the

Bits of Books



Safely Home

by Tom Eldredge

The American Church spent the better part of the twentieth century living with the implications of the "isms" of the nineteenth. The "revivalism" of Finney and others became the intellectual predecessor to the technique-driven, program-based church. The evolutionism of the nineteenth century gave us a sociological approach to worship which demanded age segregation. The egalitarianism of the post-Civil War era taught us to view the local church as a connection of completely independent individuals, instead of as members of families, of covenanting communities, and as heirs to a patriarchal legacy. Likewise, the feminism of the post-industrial revolution, driven in part by the rise in absentee fathers, turned the church into a matriarchal society with women as the primary communicators of spiritual truths to the next generation.

By the twentieth century, the combined effect of these noxious, anti-familistic "isms", had finally taken its toll on the local church, transforming many into baby sitting operations, psychological rehab centers, and size-driven experiments in mass marketing – anything but the family-affirming community of saints required by Scripture.

But perhaps someday we will look back upon the early years of the twenty-first century as the turning point.

Why would this be?

After years of broken marriages, rebellious children, and misplaced priorities within the Church, some parents have begun to cry out to God. The cry has been answered by a Holy Spirit-driven desire on the part of fathers to turn their hearts to their children, by the rise of the home education movement with its emphasis on parent-directed Hebrew education, and with the wonderful rediscovery of historical and Biblical roles for men and for women.

Even more importantly, many of these parents recognize that apart from their ability to intimately know Jesus Christ and to communicate the kind of obedience that He showed to the Father, that their best laid plans for family revival will fail.

Remarkably, many church shepherds are catching on to the fact that, despite a smorgasbord of programs, the

majority of the children born to believing parents will reject the faith of their fathers and blend into an increasingly pagan society. They, too, grieve at the destruction of the family within their flocks, but they are at a loss for what to do.¹

[T]he family was [once] the central building block of society. Today, the individual, divorced from the loyalties, obligations, and blessings of family life, is the heart and soul of our culture. The priorities of our nation have shifted from God-centered multi-generational faithfulness to self-centered individualism and egalitarianism. This shift in priorities is reflected in the culture which at every point is at war with the Christian family. The government schools, and all education systems which divorce training from family-centered discipleship, are at war with the Christian family. Hollywood is at war with the Christian family. The philosophy of the workplace is at war with the Christian family. The modern obsession with professional sports is not only a revival of Greco-Roman philosophy, but a direct assault on the Christian family. The sad truth is that rather than building a distinctively Biblical approach to life, education and work, the Christian community has been absorbed into the culture, such that the priorities of many of our local churches and church leaders are often at war with the Christian family.

In just the past few years two cultures at opposites ends of the spectrum have met face to face. What are pastors to do?

The Word of God speaks clearly to the issue of the training and education of children. The passage that is most often recognised as a Biblical command for parent-directed, home-based education is Deuteronomy 6:6-7:

And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house and when thou walkest by the way and when thou liest down and when thou risest up.

Here we see the who, what, where, when and how of education. It is important to note that the passage immediately follows what Jesus affirmed was the greatest commandment: to love the Lord with all one's heart.

The who in the context of Deuteronomy 6 was the men of Israel, with the help of their wives (Deuteronomy 4:9-7:3). What was taught to young Jews in the early days of Israel? This at least included the Ten Commandments and clearly should include all of God's Word. Where? Two locations are specified: "in thine house" and "as thou walkest by the way". This passage indicates that education can take place anywhere the parent and the child go together during the day. When? The passage seems to suggest that there is no inappropriate time for teaching children from the Word. The how of Biblical education is summarized in the adverb "diligently".

How long should this training process take place? Some people believe their children are ready for independent missionary outreach in the public schools by

age six, after receiving a Christian education from the church nursery, Sunday school and Sunday church services. How many children are grounded in the faith [by this] age? If you think, as I do, that very few are, then you might agree that we must be talking about Christian education for some years beyond the ages five or six.

Are most children ready to stand alone by the time they reach puberty? I think it is interesting that Jesus did not begin His public ministry until He was thirty years old. He spent three full years with His adult disciples and then He sent them out as missionaries two by two to reach the world. This is quite a contrast to the preparation little boys and girls receive before being sent out into the public schools to be missionaries. Children need to be disciplined by their parents until they are grounded securely in the faith. For each child and each parent this process will take different lengths of time.

The Hebrew Pattern of Education

Since before the days of Moses, Hebrew women have been famous for their dedication to the privileged role God gave them as mothers. Hebrew women were uniquely successful in their matriarchal duties because they were educated to love and master this role (I Samuel 1:8, 22; Psalms 127:3-5). Young girls were taught how to be physically, spiritually, mentally and emotionally prepared for the birth, nurturing and early education (training) of the children God would someday send them. Their education also focused on how to help their future husbands in fulfilling their roles of husband, father and community leader and on the skills of successful homemaking (Titus 2:3-5). Mothers provided much of the education for both boys and girls in their earliest years. Young boys then became apprentices under the tutelage of their fathers, and young girls became apprentices of their mothers.

Thus did God entrust to mothers – not day care facilities or nannies – the tenderest and most formative years of human life. The first six years of life present an opportunity that cannot be postponed. At no other time in the child’s life is it as easy for the child to learn a language. In fact, the child will never learn another language as well as the language he learns during those years. It is also a time when the child can absorb facts phenomenally. The Hebrew mother, in a loving and joyful way, cultivated a thirst and love for learning in her children and created the opportunities and moments in which to give them the treasures of knowledge.

Hebrew mothers knew if they were not diligent in their training of their children, they as mothers would be brought to shame (Proverbs 29:15; 22:15). The Scriptures teach that when a woman serves her family well, her children and her husband will “arise up and call her blessed” (Proverbs 31:28). Hebrew mothers knew the importance of wisdom, language and the Word of God (Deuteronomy 6:6-9).

The Hebrew father had three responsibilities: “to in-

struct his son in the law, to bring him into wedlock and to teach him a handicraft.”² By the time a son reaches age thirteen, he was held responsible to know the law and to keep it.³ Since the father was responsible for this part of his son’s training, it is evident that the father’s involvement started early in the life of the son. In fact, the Hebrew fathers began teaching their sons the law as soon as they were able to speak,⁴ enabling the son to develop a manly spirit.

How were ancient Hebrew boys so well educated that they could know the law at age thirteen? A partial answer can be found in three characteristics from the preceding review: the specialization of the mothers and fathers in their roles, the father’s early involvement and the personal individualized training that Hebrew parents gave their children from birth. The Hebrew pattern emphasizes differences in the education and roles of men and women. The world attempts to make their roles and education the same. It is understandable that the world takes an evolutionary view in this area, but why do Christians? God wanted the training, thinking and even the appearance (dress) of men and women to be distinct, because in His plan they have different roles (Deuteronomy 22:5).

The nature of Hebrew culture was such that family life, the education of the children and work were inextricably woven together. While there was a rich diversity of occupations in Hebrew society, God’s message to fathers, so beautifully articulated in Deuteronomy 6, was that they were to walk alongside and train their sons throughout the course of the day. This meant that though there may be an infinite diversity of lawful forms of labor and commerce by which a man could provide for his family and develop the strength of the family economy, his work could never be at the expense of the mandate to walk beside his children and train them in the way. Consequently a man’s occupation had to be inherently family-friendly, or he would be unable to obey the Lord as a father.

Perhaps this is one of the most important messages for men to consider today: It was important for a father to have an occupation that allowed him to spend time with his sons. Men must develop a lifestyle which allows them to integrate work, home, education and children. Parents who want to train their sons for Biblical success must begin by freeing them from the modern philosophy that the priorities of the “job” should drive the lifestyle of the family. The precise opposite is true.

Notes:

1. To this point is from the book’s Forward and was written by Doug Phillips. The rest is from chapter 6, “Developing a Biblical Philosophy of Education” of *Safely Home* by Tom Eldredge, San Antonio: The Vision Forum, Inc., 2002, www.visionforum.com
2. William Barclay, *Educational Ideal in the Ancient World*, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1959, p. 16.
3. Emil Schurer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, Edinburgh: T & T Clark Ltd., p. 421.
4. Barclay, p. 17.

Tough Questions People Ask

by Craig Smith



Under extreme pressure, I elected to send the children to school last year. At first they loved it (and I hated it!) I was more stressed trying to get them ready, do homework I didn’t understand, and I just didn’t see them much or know what they were doing. As time went on, complaints started that someone was picking on me, or the work is too hard and stuff like that. It became a real grind for all of us. In the end, after one and a half terms I took them out again, and I really hope I never ever put them back in school. I still have the same troubles at home, I doubt, I think I’m holding them back, I slack off at times, I get grumpy and frustrated, the kids fight and don’t want to work and so on. How can I keep going? – (Home educator in New Zealand, March 2003.)

For what it’s worth, I’d like to talk about vision.

When you have a fire in your belly, when you are passionate about something, when you have this goal out there in front of you that just so motivates you every time you think about it that you can’t wait to drop whatever you’re currently doing and get back to it.....this is vision.

With vision nothing is a problem. The old saying, “Where there’s a will, there’s a way” becomes your life’s theme song. Things that to normal people become hurdles and barriers – lack of income, stress, criticism, self-doubt, tiredness, children who are disobedient and factious – these problems melt away for a person with vision, for the glory of what they see out there ahead far, *far* exceeds the hassles they have to deal with up close. Paul the Apostle said the same in Romans 8:18, “I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.” His mind was fixed on a vision, a goal, a reward, an objective out there in the future that was so exciting and glorious, it enabled him to put up with all sorts of garbage in the meantime...and dangerous things, too, like being stoned and left for dead, persecuted and chased from town to town, beat up and imprisoned, etc.

When you look at this vision, this goal out there in the future, the things up close shrink in size, become as

temporary encumbrances that you may even simply shake off or push aside. A freight train rumbling along toward its goal at the end of the line is not easily slowed down or derailed. A person so motivated by their own vision will normally so intimidate, awe, bluff, convince, scare, inspire or otherwise affect onlookers that these onlookers will either not bother to be a hindrance, not themselves inspired or motivated to opposition, or they will join you!

So how does one get such a vision and then how does one maintain it?

Read visionary material. Talk to visionary people. Listen to visionary tapes & CDs. Gather with other visionaries at home education workshops.¹

We have long said that in home education, the best and most important thing is to read good books *to your children*. We would now modify that and say the best and most important thing is to read good books *yourself*. What you the parent read and listen to and watch yourself is ultimately more important than what you read to them or allow them to watch or listen. Why? Because what determines *your* reading/watching/listening habits will determine what you do with and build into your children.

This is what has driven Barbara and I for 25 years of married life. We never wanted our children to be run-of-the-mill good all-round children. We wanted them to be total misfits...in a good sense....people who were going to be trained up to be part of the *solution* rather than simply remain part of the *problem*. Never once did the idea that we might be seen as different or odd bother us: it was seen as part of the territory, almost a guide that we were on the right track! We have always told the children that there are three kinds of people in the world: the tiny minority who *make* things happen; the much larger group who *watch* things happen; and then the vast majority who ask, “Hey, *what* happened?” We did not give them an option: we told them that we and they are to be part of that first group, end of story.

People tell us of how they need time out for themselves, to refresh, to relax, to focus on something else, to develop themselves in another area. I have a lot of sympathy for these sentiments. I have a number of hobbies I really enjoy. I have bought many books I would love to read. Into these things I have invested much time and money in the past. They have languished for many years now, covered in the dust of inattention. Why? Because, as I perceive it, apart from short breaks to regroup and re-focus, and as long as we pace ourselves wisely, the glory of the vision diminishes (and sometimes eliminates) the impact of the frustrations close in, meaning over all, the stress is less!

That is to say, we do not seem to have a dichotomy of the daily grind on the one hand from which we would like a spell, and on the other hand the blessed holiday breaks to which we are constantly looking forward. Every day is to us a holiday...not that we can just suit ourselves and blob out....that is a state into which we can settle for about 45 minutes max, and then we get really uncomfortable thinking about all the time we’re



In Line with Scripture

Armies for Christ

by Doug Phillips

“Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the sons of one’s youth...He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.” — Psalm 127:4-5

Recently, I was flying with my nine-year-old son when a kindly stewardess asked him if he had any brothers and sisters. “Five,” he replied.

“Six children!” the woman explained, “Your poor mother.” “I know,” replied my son, “it is kind of sad that she has so few children, but she is praying that God will give her twelve.”

The now-apoplectic stewardess exclaimed: “What are you building, a basketball team?” Without blinking my son replied, “No, an army.”

The remarkable thing was that my son was completely unaware that his answers were shocking. He was not trying to be funny or cute. In his little boy, home school mind, he sincerely believes that Christians are to populate the world for the glory of God to build an army for Christ. He prays regularly for more brothers and sisters and does not understand why this is considered strange or unusual to the world.

It is precisely because of this spirit that home educators will win the cultural battle, if they remain faithful and God blesses their efforts. The success of any movement lies in its ability to perpetuate its ideas and values to the third and fourth generation. It is from America’s home education movement that we see the best and the brightest hope for cultural victory. I personally know of hundreds of family-oriented businesses and ministries run by home educators. The parents and the children work together. There is even a growing tide of grandparents who are joining their children and grandchildren in the service of the Lord.

The common denominator I observe is a commitment to family discipleship, biblical patriarchy through sacrificial multi-generational leadership by fathers, and faithfulness on the part of the next generation to honor their fathers and mothers.

Book Review of the Novels of G.A. Henty

by Genevieve Smith

George Alfred Henty has been called “The Prince of Story-Tellers” and “The Boy’s Own Historian”, and soon you will understand why! When his children were young, Henty told them stories after dinner. His stories would last hours each night and would often continue for days or weeks! Visitors to dinner would marvel at how spellbound his children were as they listened to their father weave stories of adventure and bravery, patriotism and discovery. Friends encouraged him to write his stories down, and many who have enjoyed his stories will be glad he did! Each of his over 70 historical novels contains a similar mixture of ingredients. Firstly, there will be the central character, a young boy or man. Secondly, the story will be set in some important historical period. Perhaps it will be the War for Independence, or the Fall of Jerusalem, Ancient Egypt, the Roman Invasion, the Crusades, the Siege of Rhodes, the rise of the Dutch Republic, or the conquest of Mexico or any number of other time periods. Thirdly, the young man will come into contact with some extraordinary historical characters such as Josephus, Hannibal, Robert the Bruce, Sir Frances Drake, Robert E. Lee, King Alfred, Napoleon and many others. These are truly historical novels without the drudgery often associated with reading history. Enjoy what many others have before you — a Henty book! Available from Geneva Books.

Learning Disabilities



Bryce’s Story: Living With Spina Bifida

by Rachel Olstad

My story begins when I was 25 years old and had been married just three years. We’d been trying for a baby for a while and were very excited to finally be pregnant! We’d had an early ultra sound (at six weeks) and had seen the baby’s heart beat, so we didn’t have another routine ultra sound later on. We also chose not to have an AFP test, because we thought back then that the only reason people had those tests was so that they could abort their babies, and we knew that we would never do that.

Well, God took care of us despite all of our plans! I had unexplained spotting a little before my seventh month. It was a weekend so I went to the hospital for an ultra sound. There it was discovered that my precious baby had spina bifida, a neural tube defect. He also had “remarkable” hydrocephalous, Arnold Chiari II brain malformation, bilateral clubbed feet, a missing rib and a missing kidney. My OB sent me to the University of California at Davis because, lo and behold, there were things that could be done to help my baby. They monitored the baby’s lung growth so that as soon as he was “ready”, they would deliver him so that his brain damage from the hydrocephalous could be halted. They also planned a C-section so that he would have a greater chance of making it, and then he would be whisked away to OR by the neurosurgeons to repair what they could of the hole in his back.

Despite planning this all out for him, the doctors didn’t give us much to hope for. He only had a 25% survival chance. If he made it he would most likely be a “vegetable”. The genetic counsellor assigned to us kept urging us to consider abortion. Even after asking her to please not mention that again, she kept mailing us stories of other parents who had made the choice to end their babies lives. The picture painted was bleak. But we knew that we had no right whatsoever to end a life that God had entrusted us with. Our baby’s life was in God’s hands. So we prepared ourselves for the worst...

But guess what? The worst didn’t happen! Our son, Bryce, is now 12 years old and extremely healthy. He pushes himself around in his manual wheelchair. He reads at an adult level. He loves music and even plays a mean swing beat on his drum set. He loves learning anything he can about Native American Indians. He loves to go to church and visit with all of the people who love him the most. He sits in the front row at all the concerts of our local city band and conducts along with his own baton. Some of the band members say they actually follow him instead of the conductor! He loves telling funny stories and jokes. He loves slapstick humour. He loves to play with his younger brother,

Abel, who is 6, and his baby sister, Phoebe, who is a year and a half old.

If we had been referred to a spina bifida clinic *before* we had Bryce, we could have seen all of the wonderful parents and children who are living successfully with this birth defect. We could have seen the happy smiles on their faces. We could have talked to other parents, other doctors, who would have given us a brighter picture of what our lives were going to be like. So now my advice to moms who are expecting a baby with a prenatal diagnosis of spina bifida is to pretty much ignore the genetic counsellor (who told us never to have more children) and instead, to get themselves to a spina bifida clinic — usually at the large teaching hospitals.

Has it been easy? No. Bryce has undergone about 30 surgeries, had umpteen hospitalisations, umpteen close calls with death. We dress and bathe him every day. We take care of his toileting needs. We interpret his speech to those who cannot understand him. We teach him at home. We deal with his learning disabilities. We answer his endless questions that are the same questions he had yesterday and the day before.

But you know what? Our joys are greater because our pains have been greater. His first smile, the first time he laughed, were reasons to throw a celebration party! The first time he signed a word, spoke a word, were reasons to call everyone we knew to let them know. If we had chosen to end his life before he was born, I think all we’d have would be the pain. No joy. Probably a broken marriage.

Because of our son, we’ve entered a whole new world. We didn’t choose this world, we didn’t want this world, but now that we’re here, we are loving life. You see, God knew that we would make it with His help, His strength, His people. We have become people with stronger character than we had before, more compassion, more patience. We have a whole circle of friends and acquaintances that we would have missed out on if it weren’t for our son. My husband has become an expert at fixing wheelchairs, and has even gone on missions trips to foreign countries as a wheelchair mechanic. We have become people who seek God and dig into his Word more, because we see clearly just how much we need Him.

Our son will never be able to live on his own, but at least we’ll never have “empty nest syndrome”! Our middle son is being raised around a lot of disabled people, and you know what? He doesn’t even notice it. He’s already talking about how his brother Bryce can live with him in his house when he grows up. Our son has touched more lives than we will ever know. We take him to the local assisted living home to visit with the residents while his daddy plays music for them. He just loves to visit with the residents, and they just love him back. Once while he was talking to a man (who was talking back to him and giving him an orange from the centrepiece bowl to take home), one of the attendants ran to get a camera to document the occurrence of this man speaking. Apparently he never talked to anyone — except Bryce! Another resident passed

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away and his family requested donations be sent to the Spina Bifida Association of America in honour of our son Bryce, because their dad always talked about him and just loved him. We never knew!

Is his life worthwhile? You bet! He loves Jesus with such a simple trust, that I wish I could do the same! He can't wait to get to heaven so that he can talk with Jesus and so that he can walk. (Although he can't imagine walking: he wonders about who will teach him how to walk there, and will he be using crutches?) Can I imagine life without him? Never. Although his life, and my life, and my family's lives, are not easy nor typical, we find joy, humour, love and laughter where it can be found: all around us. Sometimes we're scared, discouraged, frustrated, dare I say even angry or bitter? But then we remember to run to Jesus and let Him handle it for us. It's so much easier that way. Would we change our lives now? Nope.

I've been compiling a humorous list of all of the benefits my life has because of my son Bryce:

1. We never have to worry about not having a good parking spot.
2. I have a built in sweater dryer by flinging them over Bryce's bath chair.
3. Our family never has to wait in line at Disneyland. (Bryce is a hot commodity when we go to D-land with his cousins)!
4. We will never have "Empty Nest Syndrome".
5. I always have someplace to hang my purse and my purchases when we go to the mall. (The back of Bryce's wheelchair).
6. Bryce's hand held shower sure makes it easier to rinse the tub when I clean it.

I'm always looking for the positive side of things. This helps me from dwelling on the "poor me" stuff.

The following is a poem that a friend wrote for us *before* our son was born. She gave us the gift of seeing the value of his life, even if it was only for a short time as the doctors predicted. If he hadn't survived, we still would have been blessed by the presence of this child.

**The Presence
of this Child**
(Bryce's Song)
by Diana Hancock

There's a precious baby
waiting,
God's angel from above.
Who, yet unborn and
troubled
Has touched our hearts
with love.

For whatever God has formed
Is perfect in His sight.
And we know this special child
Is absolutely right!

And already we have seen
A bond of love abound
For this baby and his parents
As we've become so interwound.

And as one day we cried
And another as we smiled,
We know we've been so blessed
By the presence of this child.

(Copyright 1990 Hancock/Olstad)

My prayers are with those of you Mums out there who are going through what we went through over 12 years ago. The pain and fears have subsided for us over the years. One experienced mum told me that the first two years would be the hardest. In our case it was the first four years, but life has actually gotten a lot easier. Our son has a severe case of spina bifida. Like all birth defects, spina bifida ranges from mild to severe. Never limit your expectations based on what you're told in the beginning, for, like us, you never know what "miracles" might happen.

God bless,
Rachel Olstad

(Used with permission from NATHHAN, NATIONAL Challenged Homeschoolers Associated Network, a Christian non-profit organisation dedicated to providing encouragement to families homeschooling special needs children in ways that glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. www.nathhan.com.)

dents where they were hurt and deceived by other students. "Dealing with betrayal from people that I thought were my friends. I can't trust people. There is so much gossiping over stupid things and there is so much lying that took place. Students lie without ever considering it as being wrong. I mean, they don't even think about it."

Home schooled students had to learn that profanity was part of the accepted language of the student culture in public schools. "When I entered public school, it was common to hear the students using profanity out loud in the halls and quietly in the classrooms. I had never really heard young people cursing. I had only heard it on 'bad' movies or when an adult was very upset. It was shocking to hear people use those words so casually. It was a large part of their vocabulary. Many of my friends could not believe I had never used profanity, and they would constantly pressure me to."

Even though these home educated students seem to be firmly planted in their beliefs, they soon accepted profanity as part of the culture. As one informant stated, "It's easy to become numb to the constant bad language and actions that go against your ideals and make you think about your views." Most did not embrace profanity as part of their own character (however there were hints that some students did, although they seemed reluctant to discuss this). There were other related issues that presented these students with some temptations as well. As one student stated, "sex, drugs, stealing and doing bad things became tempting as a way to fit into the social aspects of the school...it is an easy way to be accepted." At times, peer pressure may have induced behaviours that violated their personal standards.

The value of materialism and the importance of one's appearance emerged as an issue for many home schooled students. "I was not expecting clothing and appearance to be such a big deal...if you didn't have the right clothes or look good it was tough to fit into the 'right' crowd. So many students seem to place appearance as such an important thing...I mean I was taught that it was not that important. But in school it is!"

"It was tough not obsessing about my appearance or how I come across to others. So many other students were obsessed with this."

Home school students face the various young adult issues when they are older and more mature. This seemed to enable them to make wiser choices. As one student stated:

"Although, I believe, all students will face these pressures regardless of where they go to school, I think students who attend public school from kindergarten are exposed to these pressures at a much earlier age than children who are home schooled. In my case, I was at home long enough to establish my belief system, and I was mature enough to stand on those beliefs when I went back to public school."

There is a perception of public school teachers and administrators who view home schooling as a serious threat. They often become defensive about home

schooling because they consider it to be a personal attack on their profession and their abilities in the classroom. Accompanying this defensiveness is a somewhat arrogant attitude that views home educators as professionally and academically inferior. Some teachers and administrators express major objections toward home schooling "citing lack of social development, lack of classroom-provided stimulation of ideas and lack of academic and social competition" (Duffey, 1988, p. 23). In addition, assumptions about issues such as socialisation, adequacy of facilities and the quality of instruction and academic standards all contribute to the negative views of home schooling (Mayberry, *et al*, 1995). Depending upon the local school district and individual teachers, these views can play a role in a home schooled student's transition.

Overall the majority of the students were positive regarding their decision to attend public school. These individuals reported positive aspects such as playing sports. Several informants mentioned that they have several good and caring teachers that they learned from, they developed some great relationships, were challenged to grow in a variety of areas and despite some of the negative aspects of public education and adjustments and struggles, most seemed pleased with their decision to enrol in public school.

However, there were several students who had bad experiences that included fighting, stealing, involvement with alcohol and an overwhelming feeling because of the demanding schedule of school, practice and homework. One student stated, "I was happier when I studied at home."

Limitations of this Study

Most of the research conducted on home schooling is descriptive and "located in a particular context that makes the results not strongly generalisable." (Archer, 1999, p. 23). It is challenging to obtain samples that are truly representative of all home schoolers. There is no claim for generalisability [with this study] and the conclusions are loosely and generally drawn.

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(Condensed from *Home School Researcher*, Vol 15, No. 1, 2002. Editor: Biran D. Ray, Ph.D., National Home Education Research Institute, PO Box 13939, Salem, OR 97309, USA, www.nheri.org)

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(Continued from page 13)

“A lot of time is wasted waiting for everyone to finish their assignments in class...It’s hard when the teacher has to teach to the lowest common denominator. I don’t think school is very challenging.”

“It takes so much longer to get the same amount of work done. I hated teachers yelling at students. I got tired of having to tolerate students acting up in class and talking. You waste a ton of time in the classroom. You don’t get done half the stuff you could get done at home...its gets boring.”

“I had to wait for the less adept kids in the subject to grasp the concepts which I already had. I was expecting this but not to the extent I experienced....many students just simply won’t work....they hated school and their attitude and behaviour often took the class off task.”

Although most indicated that they were “worried” or “concerned” that the academic work would be difficult and that the teachers would be “hard”, these same informants found the opposite to be true.

The realities of public school and the adjustments these home schooled students experienced affected their view of school and learning. For example, several explained that because school work was unchallenging, they found themselves less motivated to learn and actually spent less time studying and engaging knowledge. Other students made comments such as, “I felt I lost the freedom to think on my own...I had to do it (work and assignments) like the teacher wanted. There was no room for creativity or individual thinking.”

Doing assignments for the teacher instead of doing them for themselves seemed to be a major adjustment for many informants. Students indicated that they had to change not only the way they think, but they had to conform to “the teacher’s thinking.” Several stated that the joy and desire to learn slowly eroded as they progressed in public school. As one student stated, “At home I enjoyed reading and learning...it was fun and I saw a purpose; but now it is just a matter of getting the information, getting the grade, and doing other things I like.”

Issues of Maturity

Smedley (1992) argues that home educated students are significantly better socialised and more mature than those in public school. This thought was supported by several students’ comments.

“Many of the kids in class were very immature....I often feel more comfortable and fit in better with the teachers...I could relate to the teachers much better than some of the other students.”

“I felt I was much more mature than my peers because I dealt more with adults than kids my own age. I had a vision for my future with goals when most of the girls my age were more concerned with their hair and make-up...I found it difficult to find things in common.”

“I had to adjust how I deal with people. Most of the kids were immature and many are cruel. I can’t talk to

them like I talk to adults. I didn’t expect the kids to act so childish.”

The Social Aspects: “Fitting In as a Home Schooler”

The manner in which administrators, teachers and fellow students view and understand home schooling plays a role in the student’s transition. “There are no-win situations. If you do well in school, people say, ‘Well she was home schooled: she should do well.’ If you do poorly, they blame home schooling. Also, in sports when I got injured and didn’t play, ‘Well that is because she is home schooled and is not tough enough’ ...in these situations you always lose until people slowly forget you were home educated.”

“I was the valedictorian, homecoming queen, and president of several clubs in school. My senior year (grade 12) when scholarships were being given, I was passed up for the Principal’s Scholarship. I later found out that my principal made a comment to one of my teachers that he was ‘disgusted’ that a home schooled student was going to be the valedictorian of his high school.”

Values and Beliefs are Challenged

It is inevitable that all students who attend public school face situations that challenge their personal beliefs and values. For these home schoolers, it seems [such] challenges frequently occurred. As one informant explains, “My morals were tested on a daily basis.”

How did these former home schooled students cope with these dilemmas? Most preferred to keep quiet, thus avoiding possible conflicts or consequences such as lower grades or any disdain from teachers or classmates, while others viewed these predicaments as an opportunity. One student stated that “subjects like evolution open up chances to talk to other students about my beliefs.”

Several students discussed the acts of cheating and the acceptance and tolerance of cheating. “It seemed that students were open about cheating. It didn’t seem like the students care if you cheated...it was no big deal for many students.”

“I have always been taught and I believe that cheating is wrong. In public school, there are so many more opportunities to cheat, while at home you are not really confronted with this problem...It was hard to see many students taking the easy way out and nothing happening to them...it seems so unfair!”

Peer pressure may induce behaviours that violate students’ personal standards, and some informants found themselves wrestling with the temptation to “cut corners” and were frustrated with the lack of consequences for those students who regularly cheated.

Honesty seemed to be stressed in the majority of the informants’ homes, and many of these students embraced honesty as an important part of their character. Most had a difficult time adjusting to a culture that they perceive as considering honesty as irrelevant and dishonesty as the norm. Several cited examples of inci-

Home Education Research



Home-Schooled Students’ Perceptions of the Transition to Public School: Struggles, Adjustments and Issues

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Although most parents plan to home school their children through the high school years (Ray 1999), for many families their reasons for home schooling change as their children mature, and they decide to enrol their children into conventional schooling. The purpose of this study is to describe, from the home schooled students’ perspectives, the struggles and issues they face as they enter the public school classroom. In particular, the study describes the reasons why families discontinue home schooling and the ideological conflicts that are persuasive when home schooled students transition into public schools.

Methodology

For this study, surveys and one-on-one telephone interviews were selected. [A total of twenty informants who had transitioned from home education to public schooling (that is, not to private schools) were located.] Out of these twenty informants, six entered public school at grade seven, three entered at grade eight, seven at grade nine, two at grade ten and two at eleventh grade.

Why Families Decide to Discontinue Home Schooling

These include, but are not limited to:

1. A desire to spend additional time with friends or to make new friends.
2. A desire to be involved in organised team sports [and] competing for possible athletic scholarships.
3. A concern for more in-depth curriculum, detailed and intense study for areas such as science and maths which parents felt they could not provide.
4. A desire to face peer pressure, meet different types of people, have their ideas challenged and actively apply a particular worldview to evaluate life and peer situations.
5. Factors relating to the child’s personality, emotional maturity, readiness and willingness.

Ideological Conflicts

From their first step into the classroom, they must adapt to a new learning environment where their values and beliefs are challenged daily. They must learn and adapt to a new culture, and cope with being labelled as different since they are home schoolers.

Adapting to the Public School Learning Structure

School culture serves as a blueprint for the way students think and act. As one student stated, “literally enrolling in our local high school was like travelling abroad to a foreign country in which I knew no one and did not speak the language of the land.”

First, the basic structure of schooling required adjustments. “It was fairly hard for me to go from unstructured school to very structured school. Not so much with the order of classes but when I have to start and finish. For example, in home school I could start at 6 am and get done by 8 am, but in public school you are locked into their time frame, even though much time is wasted.”

“I had to learn the system and jump through the hoops, and as a home schooler and a free spirit who used my own standards and work and study habits, it was difficult.”

“I expected more difficulty with the classroom routine – sitting still, paying attention, taking turns, learning class rules and even some of the unwritten rules that all the other students knew. However, I picked these skills up rather quickly and the teacher told my parents that she had very few discipline problems with me in class.” For informants who identified these as adjustments, most quickly learned the rules, routines and skills, smoothly making this aspect of the transition.

Second, the actual learning processes of public education differ from the one-on-one tutoring style that many of the informants were familiar with during their home schooling. One student stated that “it was hard to get used to several teachers and the homework...I was not as comfortable asking questions...at first I had to wait until I got home to understand some of the information.” The nightly homework many students thought was busy work that could be completed during school hours. One female student described her adjustment: “Being home schooled, I was used to not only one-on-one teaching but also studying and thinking independently. There were a few adjustments that had to take place in order to learn in a classroom setting. Many times I felt as though the teacher was going too slow. She would continue to show examples when I had already figured it out from reading the instructions. It was difficult to be patient while she helped others. I used my ability to study independently to my advantage. I would get a head start on that evening’s homework in the middle of class while the other students were paying attention to the teacher’s examples.”

The following quotes further emphasize this problem:

(Continued on page 18)

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.

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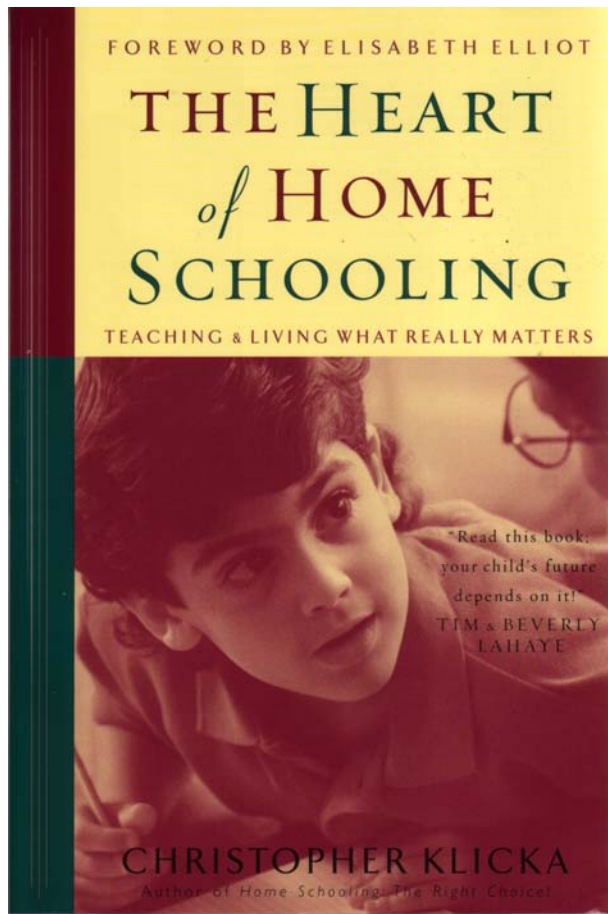
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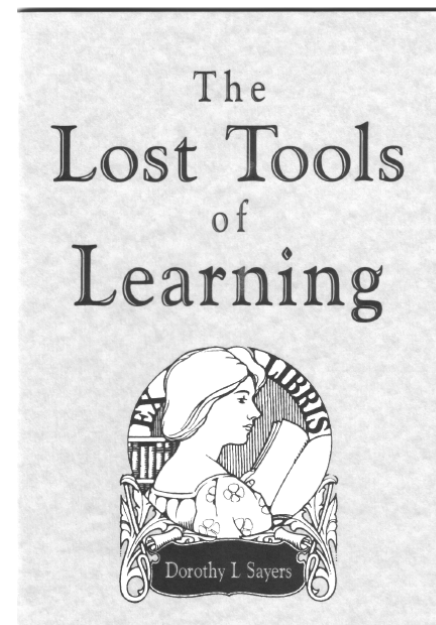
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