

Keystone

The Journal of Christian Home Schoolers

of New Zealand

Vol. IX No. 4

July 2003

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



Featured Family
Rodger & Christine Whetton
Christine, Yulia 18, Dima 19, Sergei 17,
Evan 17, Rodger, Anya 14

KEYSTONE

is the Journal of
Christian Home Schoolers of New Zealand.
It is read by subscribers in New Zealand,
Australia, Japan, Brunei, the USA,
Canada, and the UK.

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

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

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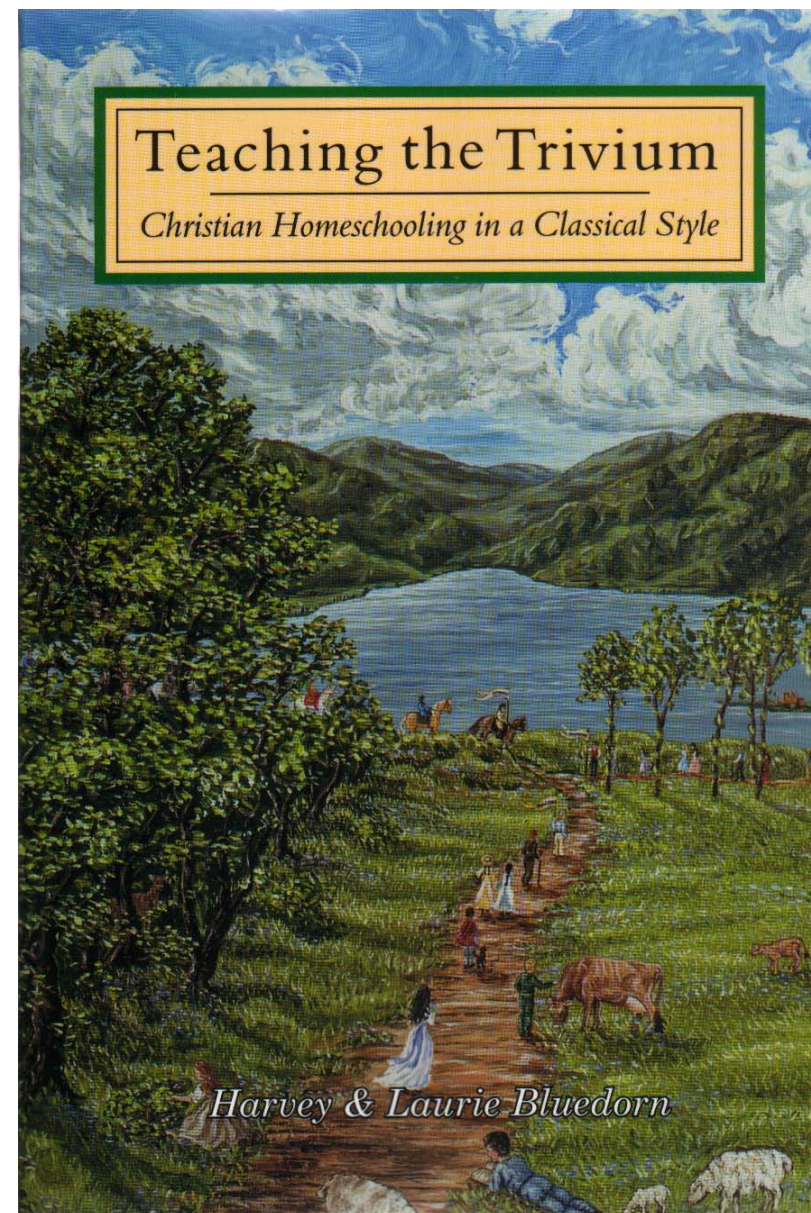
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It was Henry R. Van Til, in The Calvinistic Concept of Culture (1959) who stated that "culture" is religion externalised. Look at the expressions of our culture today: hatred, violence, murder, infanticide, anti-Christianity, immorality, drugs and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

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(Continued from page 7: **Whetton**)

hadn’t had a Christian background, our own understanding has grown. All our temporal needs have been met, often in remarkable ways. We’ve had times of fun and laughter as well as tears. We’ve seen two daughters grow into very domesticated and lovingly supportive young ladies, and, by the grace of God, we’re still together as a family, pressing on day by day.

Let’s take a snapshot of our children now.

At nineteen years of age, Dima is working in a joinery factory making aluminium frames for display cabinets. Book learning was not for him! He wanted to work with his hands, and in this he has been quite successful. However, experience is beginning to make him realize that it can be hard to get along without a competent grasp of the 3Rs, and he is talking about making a renewed effort. Flying model aeroplanes is his hobby, and he’s proud of the fact that he is now an instructor.

Yulia, at eighteen, is still persevering with home-schooling in an effort to minimize the time lost in her earlier life. She is talented at art, and has been producing some very attractive oil paintings. Recently she attended a course in floral art, and is enthusiastic about improving and using that talent. She is also taking piano lessons. For work experience and a bit of pocket money, she has a part-time job on a free-range egg farm, and she sometimes helps elderly people with housework and gardening.

Evan, almost eighteen, has become progressively bookish. On finding himself suddenly in the middle of a family of high-needs siblings, he had to become much more independent. Our book-hoarding habits started to pay dividends! History is his first love, and books like those of Francis Schaeffer, RC Sproul and David Noebel have helped him think through the issues from a Christian perspective. He is also our computer-fixer-come-adviser, having learned from a friend, and by reading and experimenting. By way of contrast, an interest in Regional Council projects in the Hunua Ranges has seen him join in on a voluntary basis and sparked a renewed interest in studying Biology and Maths. He too has a part time job, working in local greenhouses where lettuces are grown by hydroponics.

Sergei, just turned seventeen, has all the makings of a comedian! His great ambition, however, is to be a fighter pilot with the RAF, although, when his feet are more firmly planted on the ground, it can be anything from a graphics designer to a dog handler in the police force! The latter seems consistent with the unflagging interest he takes in our pets. He has taken to reading, and, with a very good memory, picks up languages easily. He also enjoys flying model aeroplanes.

Anya, fourteen years old, is a very practical girl and a great cook. She attends St John’s Ambulance Cadets and last year brought home the trophy for the most improved cadet. Conscientious in trying to improve herself academically, she enjoys Biology, Latin, History and Literature but still works hard at what she doesn’t like - Maths! She sits her first piano exams this year. Her ambition is to work with animals.

So there we have it - a kaleidoscope of interests and talents, not exactly what a teacher would have ordered to make her life easier, but this is our family, and therefore the right mix for us.

With our children now being so much older and so diverse in their interests, our unit study approach is largely a thing of the past, although we do try to squeeze one in during the summer months - we couldn’t miss out on our “field trip”! Evan studies independently for the most part, working toward A Level History, English and Biology, and Sixth Form Maths. Sergei and Anya are studying Biology together, using Apologia’s *Exploring Creation with Biology*. They’ve both just completed Part I of *The Latin Road to English Grammar*, and Anya would have liked to go on to Part II. However, when she prioritized all the things she wanted to study, she decided she couldn’t fit it in at the moment! Sergei has been doing German from the Correspondence School, helped by another home-school mother. Christine regularly reads to the children, and she often uses literature study guides for in-depth studies. Progeny Press Study Guides have proved very helpful, and for Shakespeare, “Brightest Heaven of Invention”. Each of the children follows his own maths programme, apart from Evan and Sergei who are both doing sixth form maths at night school. From time to time we have a blitz on some skill which needs refining. Written Language has recently improved immensely, thanks to the *Teaching Writing: Structure and Style* syllabus from The Institute for Excellence in Writing. Having inherited computers from a business which updates regularly does help greatly with presentation and editing. But generally speaking, as the children grow older, they increasingly pursue their own interests, and parents are more often than not facilitators, encouragers, procurers of resources, and especially taxi drivers!

The one study which brings us all together is Bible study. In the evenings, Rodger is leading the whole family through the New Testament. Five mornings a week, Rodger and Dima leave early for work, and the routine for those who remain is: Chores, Breakfast, Worship, then Studies. Worship consists of prayer, praise, systematic Bible reading through the Old Testament, with explanation and discussion, and Scripture and catechism memorization. Every Wednesday, our minister joins our “Home-School” for an hour of Bible study based on the Westminster Shorter Catechism. This is a great support, and spurs the children along with their memory work. (Perhaps we should add that cream donuts often help memories too!)

Flanked by emerging adults, we are confident that, as we return our children’s exemptions and they join the work force or go on to tertiary education, it will not be the end of home education for home-schooled kids, but only the end of the beginning. Hopefully they will have acquired the skill, foundation and enthusiasm needed to continue a lifetime of learning. After all, our own education is only just gaining momentum! But the learning we supremely desire for each of them is that they learn increasingly to glorify God throughout their lives, and enjoy Him forever.

Editorial



I am pretty excited at the moment! I’ve been given some Air Points recently that have to be used up this year. So what better way to use them than to go visit my two sons, Zach 21 and Alanson 19, who are presently working for Rainbow Resource Center in Illinois, USA (www.rainbowresource.com), a mail-order curriculum & resource warehouse for home educators. (Their job includes writing reviews of new items, taking phone orders — they get a lot of comments about their accents, “Wha’re y’all frum?” — stocking shelves, picking orders and shipping them out. Most of their time, though, is spent loading the truck and 27-foot trailer with stock and display props, driving two or three *days* across the USA — my son Zach does all the driving! — setting up at a State Christian Home School Convention site and selling flat out for two days before packing up and driving back home.) Since the air points are with Japan Air Lines, I have to go via Tokyo. We have a friend, a native Japanese, Takeyuki Ozawa, PhD, who was a member of our church here in Palmerston North a couple years ago when he was here on sabbatical and who lectures at a University there. He has not only invited me to stay with him for a couple of days, he has organised for me to talk to a collection of Japanese Christian home schoolers in Tokyo!!

This is a rare breed of people over there, and it is a rare opportunity. It happens on 2 August 2003. Check it out at: <http://gratias.cube-web.net/>. (This is Yoshii’s Home Page. Scroll down a wee bit to a list of numbers, the first is 2003/7/14 followed by some Japanese script. It should also say “New” after it. Click on the Japanese Script and you will be looking at a page of Japanese Script advertising a seminar to be held in Tokyo Sat 4 August 2003 with yours truly as the guest speaker! You’ll see my name and “Keystone” there in among the script as you scroll down, and scrolling down some more you come to some English outlining my talk.)

Our friend, Take, is going to interpret and has asked that I speak plain English! This is going to be quite a challenge, folks, so I could do with your prayers for this event, that it would be an edifying and encouraging time for the saints gathered there to hear. Take has also organised an interpreter to sit with me in church the next day, so I have been abundantly blessed. Please also pray for the five weeks Zach and Alanson and I will have together as we drive up through Canada, visit Alaska, down again along the West Coast, across the South West deserts and to San Antonio Texas, visiting family and friends all the way. It is the extended time I was always going to organise with my sons, but never “got around to it”....and now the Lord has organised it for us. Zach is probably going to take a permanent job with Rainbow, so we may not see him here for a while.

The Lord is strengthening home education ties within families and households, helping them see the incredible power they possess *as a family household* to mightily influence whoever is enveloped in the hospitality of their homes and to impact the community around them

Contents

Feature Family	
Rodger & Christine Whetton.....	5

The Faith of Us Fathers	
Leaving the Fence Line	
for the Front Line.....	8

Bits of Books	
Public Schools, Article 1, Part 2	
by Dr RL Dabney.....	9

Learning Disabilities	
Custom Fitting a Program	
for the Learning Disabled.....	10

Home Education Research	
The Why of Homeschool	
by Isabel Lyman.....	11

Exploring God’s Creation	
Go to the Ant.....	13

Tough Questions People Ask	
How Can We Get Our Children	
to Be Musically Talented	
When We Are Not?.....	14
How Do I Do Assessments?.....	25

Letters.....	19
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Home Educators Did It	
Morrinsville History Fair.....	20

Over a Cuppa	
“Home Schooling”:	
I Dislike that a Lot.....	21
Keeping Going When the	
Going Gets Tough, Part 5.....	22

World Views in Focus	
What Every Christian Should Know	
About Intelligent Design, Part 2.....	26

Teaching Tips	
Saxon Maths.....	28

as their family-centred, purposeful lives are observed from day to day by those around. We are doing a new thing with our children by producing these strong households. As Eric Wallace says in *Uniting Church and Home*, “The Achilles’ Heel of many children’s ministries has been the lack of parental involvement. Often what is taught is not known or understood by the parents. It may not even agree with their goals, so there is no reinforcement at home. Thus we produce little ‘hearers’ and not ‘doers’ of the Word (James 1:22).... Strong households are the core of strong churches, and strong churches are the foundation for outreach to our communities, nation and the world.”

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

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

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

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(Continued from page 8: **Faith**)
than the Creator. They need saving from this state of futility and insanity, they need facing up to the fact that they are headed for hell; they do not need us trying to identify with their fallenness or affirming them in their worldliness or trying to be relevant to their misguided view of things. They need us to point them to higher standards in all areas, to be modelling this ourselves, to see us moving in this direction while urging them to join us. They need to see us struggle with and resolve peacefully, gainfully and victoriously the same kinds of problems they have: problems with parents, with children, spouses, employers, employees, workmates, the IRD, neighbours, relatives, in-laws, budgets, drink, porn, anger, gambling, drugs, etc., etc. They need us to love and serve them, to practice hospitality so they experience the heavenly environment (or so it should be) of Christian fellowship, making some hungry and thirsty for such righteousness. They are dying to see what real, heart-level, loving, self-less relations between friends and spouses and siblings look like, for that’s what they want. They need us to be the light set on a hill. They need to see reality in us: open, honest, transparent reality. And when they do, brothers and sisters, they will beat a path to your door, ring you all hours of the night, share the most intimate details of their lives at the drop of a hat if they even suspect you might be able to help them and refer all their messed up mates to you as well. At this point you will never lack any opportunities to evangelise but will be more involved in making disciples than simply “witnessing”.

If the local congregation doesn’t catch the vision, we as Christian home educating parents must certainly stop and reassess: can we continue to offer our youth a cheap imitation of the world and worldliness in the form of “Christian rock”, “Christian teen youth c a m p s ”, “Christian teen magazines”, “Christian tattoos and body piercing”, that is, life in the fast lane, or rather, life along the fence line, when the Lord is waiting for us to join Him at the front lines? How can we expect our youth to play with fire and not be burned?

“Let the time that is past suffice for doing what the Gentiles like to do...Above all, hold unfailing your love for one another,

since love covers a multitude of sins. Practice hospitality ungrudgingly to one another. As each has received a gift, employ it for one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who utters oracles of God; whoever renders service, as one who renders it by the strength which God supplies; in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To Him belong glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.” 1 Peter 4:3, 8-11 (RSV).

- Notes:**
1. The Scriptures define love toward Him as obedience to Him. See I John 5:2-3.
 2. Our neighbour as ourselves...the two greatest commandments on which rest all the Law and the Prophets, Matthew 22:37-40.
 3. For example, Deuteronomy 6-7, most of each of the Epistles
 4. Romans 6:13

(Continued from page 9: **Dabney**)
“Old School” Presbyterian theologian, philosopher and political economist; seriously considered emigrating to New Zealand during the post-Civil War years of Reconstruction, late 1860s.
2. Again, Dabney is saying that because the secular State can only give secular education, the result will always be to propagate crime and other social ills rather than to reduce them. In the previous article (in *Keystone* Vol. IX, No. 3, May 2003) Dabney backed up his statements with statistics. See more stats at: *Keystone* Vol. VI, No. 4, July 2000, “Poison Drops in the Federal Senate”, p. 11-14 or http://www.axon-family.net/kaleb/poison_drops/.

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Conclusion

Intelligent Design is not Christian, is anti-creation science and is unBiblical. Within the theory is a refusal to examine the issue of who God is and who one is in relation to God. And, since ID does not identify our God and Father in heaven as the Creator of the universe, it fails to give glory to God. This is a big problem since glorying God is our purpose here on earth.¹¹ As Christians we must not compromise God’s truth. We can and must stand on the authority of Scripture and follow Jesus’ example to speak with authority. We must maintain our belief in the Genesis account. Do not falter. Speak with conviction. *God* created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them in *six, 24-hour periods*.

But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them. — 2 Timothy 3v13-14

References:

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10. William A Dembski, “What Every Theologian Should Know About Creation, Evolution and Design.”, www.origins.org/articles/dembski_theologn.html.
11. Westminster Shorter Catechism, Psalm 86v9; Isaiah 60v21; Romans 11v36; 1 Corinthians 6v20 & 10v31; Revelations 4v11.

(Genevieve Smith is a native born Palmerstonian. “I inherited my love of philosophy and debate from my father who homeschooled me. Most of my education consisted of my Dad discussing things with me. From history to religion and politics to economics – we discussed it all. When I came across the Intelligent Design movement I was horrified and became determined not to let anyone I knew accept the theory blindly.” Genevieve Smith works for the Home Education Foundation and is active in importing books to sell in New Zealand on Christian living. She may be contacted at: 4 Tawa Street, Palmerston North, New Zealand, or beefsters@thelanddownunder.com.)

Teaching Tips

Saxon Maths

by Kay Christensen



Saxon books are very thorough with times tables and have an interesting way of teaching them and getting the children to remember them. For instance, one of the first multiplication tables you learn is 7x. They start by getting the child to figure that there are seven days in one week, and slowly over time they are asked to figure how many then are in two weeks, in three weeks, etc., until they can confidently and effortlessly get all the way up to 10 weeks.

By this stage they can now recite 7, 14, 21, 28, etc., up to 70 and back down again without even thinking about it because it has become so ingrained with short, daily, regular practice. There is a pattern they have by now learned to appreciate, and if they momentarily forget, it is not much work to mentally add seven to form the next number. It is slowly built up as a gentle exercise until the point comes when the multiplication proper is introduced. The child is referred back to what they already know, and it all goes snap-snap-snap, the lights come on, the child says, “Oh, but I thought multiplication was hard!” and I say, “Ha, ha, you’ve been doing it for weeks only you didn’t know!” It becomes one of those “overnight success” stories you hear about.

Saxon’s view is that the multiplication tables are basic facts that need to be learned so thoroughly that they come automatically — if they are to cope with maths at a higher level. The concept behind multiplication is taught at an early stage, is introduced in Grade 2, and all tables up to 10x are covered in earnest in Grade 3. Even as the child progresses onto other things, they continue to practice their basic multiplication facts for the next four years, along with a repertoire of other basic facts involving (if I remember rightly) adding, subtraction, division, reducing fractions, converting fractions to decimals and back again. Believe me, after your child has so thoroughly learnt all that, you’ll never need a calculator again!

By the way, I don’t think Saxon is the only book to use. One of the best features about Saxon is that its approach, being so different compared to traditionally styled maths texts, makes it a true alternative worthy of consideration for those looking for alternatives. However, the beauty of homeschooling is that we each can choose the materials that are best for our family, and that will mean something different for each family according to their preferences, personalities, needs, finances, etc. In other words, it is not so much deciding if Saxon is “best”, but if it is best for your family. Only you can decide that.

(The NZ supplier of Saxon Maths is Carol Munro from Christian Education Services in Auckland, ph (09) 410-3933, cesbooks@intouch.co.nz.)

Rodger & Christine Whetton

of Clevedon



Evan 17,
Anya 14, Yulia 18, Dima 19,
Sergei 17.

From North, South, East and West — that describes the Whetton family. Christine, an ex-schoolteacher from the Highlands of Scotland, as they say, “bred on porridge and the Shorter Catechism”, had settled in New Zealand and married Rodger, a tall kiwi builder of Ulster Presbyterian stock. Before Evan was born we had decided we would home school, not initially from any conviction that it was Biblical, but more because of disillusionment at how the public school system seemed to compromise the progress and well-being of children. Perhaps it’s more accurate to say that Christine was disillusioned - Rodger, twenty years removed from school life, was too busy keeping his building customers happy to think of sitting down to analyse the impact of pedagogy on the rising generation! However, in Christine’s case the evidence was staring her in the face.

Having taught for ten years in each of the various age groups of the primary and intermediate school, Christine took a position in a small two-teacher school. There she became increasingly excited by what could be accomplished with a small number of children whom one taught for four years. When she returned to a large school to teach for one year a large class that had had a different teacher each year (in some cases less than a year), the degree to which these children were compromised really hit home. She stood back and asked herself whether the public school was really a good place for children and whether she would ever subject a child of her own to this experience. Shortly afterwards, some friends introduced her to the concept of home schooling, lending books which opened both Rodger’s and Christine’s eyes to the fact that much more was at stake than a child’s academic progress.

Can you imagine how devastating it is for a teacher who has worked for sixteen years in public schools to

suddenly realize that she has to rethink her whole philosophy of education? No: teaching her child the syllabus she was familiar with and adding Bible study would not do. The Bible could not be compartmentalized and tagged onto a system constructed by secular humanists using their set of criteria and to suit their agenda. The idea that “secular” and “sacred” were two distinct and separate spheres of life was their smoke screen, so that people would understand “secular” to mean “neutral” when in fact it meant “God excluded”. To teach “knowledge, skills and values” by their definition, so that a child could become “autonomous” was to short-change and deceive him - in the case of children from Christian homes, to confuse them. The primary aim in educating a child should not be so that he may gain qualifications and do well for himself, but that he may gain wisdom and serve God and his fellow men. And so, no matter which discipline we were focusing on as we trained the next generation, our world-view and agenda needed to be God-centred. Only then could we really help equip our children to discern the good from the bad in all areas of life, so that, by God’s grace, they may choose the good. Unfortunately, Christine was to find that a secular education and her “teacher mentality” were not so easily wiped as she had hoped.

Home-schooling doesn’t start when a child reaches “school age” but when life begins, and, with all the zeal of older parents of a first and only child, we threw our energy into nurturing and teaching our little son. We summed up our focus as the 3Ws: God’s word, God’s worship, and God’s wonderful world. Not that we had taken on board “super baby” or “teach your baby to read” philosophies but rather that, being given our time, surrounded by books, talked to, played with, encouraged in his fascination for creepy crawlies, introduced to cooking, gardening, to classical music, and so on, he might develop a love for learning. The local kindergarten teacher was told he was too busy to join!

As the years rolled on, Evan’s enthusiasm for books provided high motivation for him to learn to read. In fact he was reading long before we were half way through our phonics programme - we called that spelling. We hadn’t invested in a structured reading programme either. We used the children’s story books we had, always, of course, looking out for more, and we often made our own. And we bred a bookworm! We did invest in a structured maths programme, but apart from that, our approach in the pre-teens days at least was basically a unit-study approach — and generally based on history or nature study. As time went on, we became more and more fascinated by history, using a time-line guide and lots of literature. (Any text books we had were only guides for Mum!) History is His story, and as we studied it in the light of God’s word, we could see God’s ruling and over-ruling in past events, and what an encouragement to know that He is

the same yesterday, today and forever. We could learn from the dilemmas and decisions made in history, find good mentors by studying the lives of great people in days gone by, and understand the historical context of the literature we read. We found the Greenleaf “Famous Men” series very helpful, and would also recommend Diana Waring’s study guides, although they weren’t around in our early home-schooling days.

Our family was particularly blessed in terms of opportunities to “learn from the environment”, as the Ministry of Education likes to put it. We began with our own back yard and the bush reserve behind us, and soon invested in nature guides, bug bottles and magnifying glasses. The rock pools, only a ten minute drive away, were also favourite haunts. Living only forty minutes’ drive from Auckland, we had easy access to libraries, museums, exhibitions, the observatory, crafts peoples’ workshops, and of course second-hand bookshops! In the summer months we would study some area or feature of New Zealand, then pack our tents for a field trip. The world was our classroom.

Having grandparents and extended family in Scotland occasionally enlarged our “environment” quite considerably. Once, when planning a visit, we discovered that Malaysian Airlines not only offered the cheapest fares, but also a free side-hop to any part of Malaysia. A quick geography-history-nature study of Malaysia, and we were on our way to Borneo to be introduced to the history of the head-hunters and to visit orphan orangutans at Sepilok Rehabilitation Centre. It was a fascinating experience. On another occasion we made London our stop-over, having prepared ourselves with a study of the kings and queens of England. But by the age of nine Evan had his own agenda. He’d been bringing home library books about World War II, and so he requested a visit to the Naval Museum on the battle cruiser “Belfast”, and to the Imperial War Museum. Staying with Christine’s cousin who berated her in front of Evan for her latest lunatic experiment — homeschooling — added an extra social studies lesson!

One of our really memorable “field trips” occurred in 1992 when Rodger was asked to undertake a building project for six months in Samoa. Realizing what an opportunity that would be, he agreed on condition that all three of us could go. Living in a hired house in a Samoan village, we mixed with Samoans rather than Europeans. We learned how to survive comfortably without the degree of privacy and ownership we have come to expect in a European culture, and enjoyed every minute of it - well, nearly every minute. Christine and Evan got around on the local wooden-seated buses and learned how to stack up when the bus became rather crowded, while Rodger, driving his pick-up provided by work, often had lots of passengers in the tray. Christine and Evan came to prefer riding in the tray too - the air conditioning seemed to work better there! Apart from our basic 3Rs lessons under the palm trees for a short time each day, or shopping at the market with Mum, Evan was in the middle of whatever was going on in the village, whether it was preparing the pig for the umu or playing Samoan cricket with the rest of the village - yes, from Grandma to the four year olds. When playing with the village children, he

learned that you can have a lot more fun using a make-shift bat cut from a tree, and batting a make-shift ball (generally a rolled up jandal, a plastic bottle or a coconut shell) than in owning the most expensive toys money could buy. At seven years of age he was picking up the language very easily too. We realized that, had we retained our old mentality and sent Evan to school, we would probably have passed on this opportunity so as not to interrupt his education!

If we left the story there, home schooling might sound a breeze, even idyllic. But human nature isn’t ideal. Two things which Evan found distinctly distasteful most of the time were maths and written language, and our frustration and criticism of his attitude were quite unhelpful. On hindsight we should have asked ourselves whether our approach was tailored to his maturity and learning style (he’s very strongly visual). It’s not a matter of allowing a pampered child to dictate what he learns and when, but rather of maturity and a more appropriate approach rendering a discipline accessible. But old teacher habits — poor teacher habits — die hard. However, just to encourage anyone with similar problems, we should add that Evan did warm to written language when he was about fifteen, and at seventeen decided to do sixth form maths — after having dropped maths for two years! So, as they say, we’re in it for the long haul.

On our return from Samoa, Christine was prevailed upon to help with the “homeschooling” of some friends’ children. Needless to say, the result was a miniature school - certainly a school with a difference: shorter hours, more individual attention (for the others but certainly not for Evan), and much less confined to four walls - we never took on more than we could fit in the car. There were some advantages in this arrangement, one being that discussing ideas with other creative, enthusiastic parents resulted in some wonderfully challenging projects. Inevitably, however, it put certain constraints on the family, and is probably not a good idea long term. What we did continue as the children became older and more specialized, was sharing with other home schooling parents our strengths in certain subject areas.

Our little family of three grew — not unusual, except that ours grew in an unusual way. We believed that there was room in our family for more children, and felt burdened to adopt one of the countless youngsters who, in various parts of the world, are desperate for the love and nurture of a family. And so it was that in December 1996 a little ray of sunshine danced into our lives. Seven-year-old Anya came from an orphanage in the Smolensk region of Russia. The language barrier was soon overcome with the initial help of Christine’s “emergency Russian”, and Anya injected a load of life and energy into a basically bookish family. There were a few problems to work through. One was the fact that she was a complete stranger to books. And then there was play. Anya had never learned to play with things, only with people, and she had no idea how to amuse herself. She wanted us to play hide-and-seek with her all the time! As we tried to push ahead with her education, it really hit home how important to the formation of concepts, especially maths concepts, is the manipu-

Quote five

“[The ID movement] is more consistent with the scientific data [than Darwinism] and, importantly, is not driven by any prior philosophical commitments... Adherents to [ID] are no more compelled to embrace a specific deity than Darwinists are to deny one...[The ID movement] sets no *a priori* boundaries to the possible explanations for the existence of life and the universe.”⁸

Quote six

“ID presupposes neither a creator nor miracles. It detects intelligence without speculating about the nature of the intelligence. ID is compatible with everything from the starkest creationism (ie God intervening at every point to create new species) to the most subtle and far-ranging evolution (ie God seamlessly melding all organisms together in a great tree of life)...If you’re a Christian, what is the theological payoff of ID? It is important to realise that ID is not an apologetic ploy to cajole people into God’s Kingdom. ID is a scientific research program.”⁹

Quote seven

“Design is not young earth creationism. This is not to say that there are no young earth creationists who are also design theorists...but...design theorists are willing tacitly to accept the standard scientific dates for the origin of the earth and the origin of the universe (4-5 billion years and 10-20 billion years) and reason from there...The design theorists critique of Darwinism in no way hinges on the Genesis account of creation... There is nothing in design theory that requires a narrow hermeneutic for interpreting scripture. Indeed, design theory makes neither an explicit nor an implicit appeal to Scripture.”¹⁰

Quote eight

“Ask any leader in the design movement whether ID is stealth creationism, and they’ll deny it. All of us agree that ID is a much broader scientific program and intellectual project... The boundaries of ID are not limited to theism. I personally have found an enthusiastic reception for my ideas not only among traditional theists like Jews, Christians and Muslims, but also among pantheists, New-Agers, and agnostics who don’t hold their agnosticism dogmatically. Indeed, proponents of ID are willing to sit across the table from anyone willing to have us. That willingness, however, means that some of the people at the table with us will also be young earth creationists. Adversaries as well as supporters of my work constantly point to my unsavoury associates [and ask me to distance myself from their disreputable company].”³

ID Is Not a Christian Movement

Referring to quotes one and two above; it is plain that design theorists have taken great pains to ensure it is understood that ID is not a Christian movement. The comments made in the two quotes point to ID being Godless and completely unBiblical. Now refer to quote eight. New-Agers and the like have enthusiastically received ID. My question is, in joining the ID movement, are they (New Agers, etc.) compromising their

intellectual position by coming onto Christian turf, or are we compromising our Christian intellectual position by adopting a thoroughly secular position and then trying to argue our case using secular presuppositions? ID is not a neutral position: it is a secular position. When Christians adopt the ID parametres, we are dropping our unique, Biblical weapons and going into the debate unarmed.

ID Is Intellectually Dishonest and Thoroughly Secular

In quote five, it states that ID is not driven by any prior philosophical commitments. But this is nonsense. The fact that they strenuously separate themselves from the creation science movement shows conclusively that they are driven by very strong although not very clear philosophical commitments.

Now Dembski has said that “ID presupposes neither a creator not miracles.”⁹ So let us look at this for a moment. He has also explained in his articles the problem for design theorists in deciding whether something has been designed or not. If it has been designed, that would indicate a designer; but if it hasn’t, then it must come from natural causes. But how to discover whether something has been designed? Having to dwell on questions such as these is a ***backward*** step for Christians and for science. God has already revealed in the Scriptures that ***all*** things ***are*** designed: by Him. As a result we should be streaks ahead in our science.

Referring to the quotes again shows that the ID movement gives no framework for the nature of the intelligence. It refuses to say whether it is natural or supernatural, male or female, one or many. Once ID acknowledges the presence of intelligence, it fails to answer the questions, “Who is the intelligence and who am I in relation to it?”

ID appears to require one to leave his religious faith at the door to the science lab. One cannot consciously do this with the true Christian faith and remain a Christian. To deny God in the lab is to cut the lab off from reality. Being separated from reality is a definition of insanity.

To go along with all this, design theorists must be simpletons, or they are deceived or deceivers. Whichever it is, Christians would be well advised to stay far away.

ID Is a Faulty Tool for Evangelism

An effective tool for evangelism will lead us to the God of the Bible, show us our sin and misery and convict us of our need for the Saviour. ID does not and will not do any of this. And in fact, design theorists don’t want ID used as an evangelistic tool (refer again to quote six). Christianity is unique. Design theorists do all they can to deny that the ID movement could point to a unique God, a unique Saviour. Instead, they are happy that ID attracts pantheists and New-Agers (refer to quote eight). The design theorists themselves make the ID movement unusable as an evangelistic tool by thinking Christian evangelicals.

World Views in Focus



What Every Christian Should Know About Intelligent Design, Part 2

by Genevieve Smith

Review

(With some extra bits thrown in just for fun!)

Intelligent Design (“ID”) is a theory held out by those who call themselves “Design Theorists” to counter Darwinism. Darwinism is the theory based on Charles Darwin’s work. It relies on naturalism to function and is popularly called ‘evolution’. Naturalism — the idea that all we see has resulted from natural causes as opposed to supernatural causes — is the doctrine of origins that design theorists are trying to fight. However, design theorists don’t wholly disagree with natural causes. Their main concern is with the total ban on or exclusion of intelligent causes by the Darwinists. ID says that the intelligent causes behind the universe are empirically detectable, meaning that if a person uses certain methods, they will be able to reliably ascertain whether something has come about from intelligent causes or from natural causes.

What ID does not do is identify who or what the intelligent cause is and what implications that may have for us. Design theorists say that a belief in the supernatural is not necessary in order to believe in ID.¹ They don’t rule out the possibility that the intelligent causes could be non-supernatural causes.¹ Design theorists like to separate themselves from theistic evolution (and rightly so, as it is a terribly flawed idea), from the idea that ID is religious (I maintain that all ideas are religious) and from the creation science movement. They believe that the creation science movement is dead (this is the movement which includes folks like Dr Henry Morris, Duane Gish and Ken Ham) and that it is not intellectually respectable. Design theorists have been heard to describe creation scientists as redneck, Bible-thumping simpletons,² cultural pariahs,³ and unsavoury associates.³

Introduction

Within the ID movement I’ve been able to identify three main groups: the first group, desiring to accrue to themselves intellectual respectability, want Darwinists to admit that intelligent causes could be the answer for some or all of what we see in the world. They deny wanting to use ID as a ploy to cajole people into the Kingdom of God and neither do they have aspirations to see it taught in the schoolroom. This group is at the helm and is leading the movement. It is characterised

by the likes of William Dempski and Origins.org. The second group wants desperately to see ID in the schoolroom. They want it to be taught as a positive alternative to Darwinism and, I suppose, an alternative that doesn’t close the door on there being some kind of purpose in life for us all. This group also denies that ID is a Christian theory or that the implications of ID point people to the Scripture. Those involved in this second group would be the likes of the Intelligent Design Network.⁴ The third group is the grassroots of the movement. These people are not the intellectual greats in the universities or those involved in education but are your average Joe-Christians who think they can use some of the design arguments to lure people to Christ or at least get them thinking. *Their* primary objective *is* evangelism.

Through these articles on ID, I hope to show:

1. that the aim of the first two groups of design theorists of currying intellectual respectability from secular society’s academic elite is not worthy of a follower of Christ; and,
2. that ID is faulty as a tool for evangelism. (I’d also like to critique the idea of teaching ID on an equal platform with Darwinism in the state classroom, but I don’t think I’ll have room. For those of us homeschooling, though, it is a non-issue.)

ID Speaks for Itself

Quote one

“ID has no liturgy or form of public worship, no clergy or people ordained for religious service, no observance or religious holidays, no sacred text, and no churches or other religious institutions. Intelligent design, unlike religion, takes no position on the existence of God or gods, does not require belief in God or gods, takes no position on any theory of morality or code of ethics, presents no opinion as to an afterlife, and holds no opinion on the ultimate meaning of life or the universe.

“Additionally, intelligent design does not teach that the universe was created by God, that the universe was created suddenly out of nothing, that the earth’s geology can be explained primarily by the occurrence of a world-wide flood, or that the earth is old, or young.”¹

Quote two

“The [ID] movement is not focused on proving the Genesis account or any other religious precept or doctrine. It has no sacred texts or doctrines. Its primary focus is to remove the scientific censorship of the evidence of design so that origins research can proceed without religious or philosophic bias.”⁵

Quote three

“Nowhere do I see that [the ID movement] is attributing creation to a deity.”⁶

Quote four

“Human actions are a case in point: ‘Just as humans do not perform miracles every times they act as intelligent agents, so there is no reason to assume that for a designer to act as an intelligent agent requires a violation of natural laws.’”⁷

lation of toys, even make-shift toys, in early childhood. However, always keen to be in on the action, Anya found new games like washing dishes, baking, dressing the dog in baby clothes, pushing her in the doll’s pram and feeding her with a spoon! There was so much to learn that was more fundamental than academics.

One big problem kept gnawing at us. When we had gone to adopt Anya, we believed her to be an only child. It was after we had met her and promised to make her one of our family that we learned that she had two siblings in the same orphanage. We were really disturbed. Not only was adopting them financially prohibitive, but we had given Evan our word that we wouldn’t adopt anyone older than he - and both Dima and Yulia were. Nor were we particularly confident in our own ability to cope with such a sudden and enormous change. But as time went on, it proved to be a problem that would not go away. These children should be together, and it seemed that that could only be our responsibility.

Between the “can’t” of our inability and the “ought to” of our responsibility came the amazing grace of God. First He made Rodger, Christine and Evan united in heart and purpose to adopt those children if a way could be found. (It goes without saying that Anya was keen for her brother and sister to join her.) There followed a time of many prayers, efforts and not a few frustrations. In the end the Lord showed Himself sovereign over all the officials we had to deal with and all the resources we needed. He opened the way - every last detail. And perhaps partly to show us that in our inadequacy we should not limit Him, He sent us Sergei too!

We had known nothing of Sergei until, just as we were beginning to make some headway with adoption plans, a letter came from Dima and Yulia:

*Dear Anya,
Thank you for your letter and the lovely photos. You have grown so big! We sent some photos to our brother Sergei in Safonova orphanage so he can see how big you are.*

Back to the drawing board!

On 31st December 1999, the last afternoon of the last day of the millennium, the family of seven Whettons landed at Auckland airport. Dima (short for Dmitri) was almost sixteen, Yulia almost fifteen, Evan fourteen, Sergei thirteen, and Anya ten. For us, in a unique way, it was the end of one era and the dawn of a new one.

The home school challenges we now faced were largely uncharted as far as personal contacts or helpful home school literature were concerned. In the first place, four out of seven in our family spoke English and virtually no Russian while the other three spoke Russian and hardly any English! How to make our legal family-status a reality seemed to be even more far-reaching. To what extent could children bred in an orphanage have experienced the true meaning of “family”, of trust, of submission to loving authority, of

mutual respect and responsibility, that might does not make right but that it is love and self-denial that save the day. Even those of us who had experienced stable family life had to think these issues through much more carefully. Above all, we were bringing into such a close relationship teenagers who only knew God in terms of the icons which are so plentiful in Russia, while His ways, His word and His worship were totally unknown. And while addressing these problems we would also need to put our finger on the academic pulse and figure where to go from there. “Plug holes and follow interests” seemed to be the simplest way forward, particularly in the case of the two eldest, but even the holes would have to be prioritized.

In the early days, just getting through each day was a major achievement. When we were busy with chores we had them join in, the rest of the time we tried to keep them entertained. Routines and boundaries had to be established - much easier said than done! Deciding to major on majors and minor on minors, we tried hard to set ourselves achievable goals. After about two weeks of unbearably inadequate communication and lame attempts at ESL, we ruled that only English should be spoken at the dinner table. It took a couple of “no pudding”s to establish that we meant it, but from there on communication progressively improved until before too long all three were even talking English in their sleep! We began systematic study of the Bible, with Dima, Yulia and Sergei following in their Russian Bibles, and we took them to church with scrupulous regularity so that they knew that this was foundational to our existence and not something to be casual about. Bit by bit we worked on reading, writing and arithmetic, and by the end of the year we managed a unit on Early New Zealand and had a fascinating tour of Northland. Yes, there were many times when it was difficult to avoid feeling panic-stricken, particularly as we learned more and more about ourselves. But in our heart of hearts we were still staggered at how God had over-ruled in getting these children here, and we knew He could save and use them too, even in spite of us.

One afternoon about two years ago, Christine had all the children at swimming lessons in Papakura. It had been a bad day. It quite probably had been a bad week. One lovely Christian homeschooling mother approached her and began to chat. She remarked, “Christine, I have learned that when God wants to do something with us, He gives us something to do that we can’t do.” Suddenly the clouds gave way to the bigger picture. He expects us to press on, a day at a time and in His strength. He understands our frailties. Nowadays it is politically correct to talk about outcomes-based education. But what God requires is that we strive by grace to be diligent, informed and faithful, and the outcomes we must leave in His hands.

Looking back three and a half years down the track, we recognize that, had we chosen a different path, opting instead for an easier life with more financial security, we would have missed out on many wonderful blessings. We’ve had to become more supportive of each other and clearer and firmer in what we believe. By having to explain God’s word to older children who

*(Continued on page 30: **Whetton**)*

The Faith of Us Fathers



Leaving the Fence Line for the Front Line

by Craig Smith

I recently read the following in response to a Christian children's magazine:

"I guess I feel sad that Western churches (generally) are so unappealing / powerless that we have to imitate the world to attract people - especially young people. On the other hand, I accept we have to be relevant to our world if we are to earn the right to speak to their needs."

But when churches do this, and far too many do, it shows they have clearly lost the plot. Imitating the world does not make you relevant, it only makes you an imitation. An imitation is a copy, a non-original. More than likely it is a scaled down and cheaper version of the original. That is, when churches imitate the world to attract people, they lower the Gospel and the Church of Jesus Christ to the level of just another cheap imitation entering the marketplace, hoping to attract a few customers away from the Real McCoy, the higher-quality genuine article.

Which raises a rather scary question: what, then, is this genuine article some churches are so keen to imitate? The excitement of life in the fast lane: a carefree realm of worldliness, transient emotional liaisons, recreational sex, the pursuit of eternal youth and flight from responsibility.

So here the church youth are encouraged to move right up to the fence line of total sinfulness, to live all their days along that fence line (except on Sunday mornings) in order to be relevant and to witness. But they are told they mustn't go over the fence line into that next paddock, no matter how much greener that grass looks, because that paddock belongs to the devil.

The result? Very predictable. The church has all these young people (the ones who haven't left yet) who are totally dissatisfied with everything. Life in the fast lane has turned out to be a very restricted strip along the fence line, forbidden to reach into that next paddock which contains all the genuine-article pleasures and experiences they're only allowed to imitate on the one hand; and on the other hand seeing way off in the distance of the opposite direction the unexplored, virgin territory of sanctifying godliness (you know, Galatians 5:22-23 characteristics). That is obviously a boring, unpleasant place, for none of their friends are out there,

and hardly any of the other church members for that matter.....just one or two of those Holy Joe eccentrics, and who wants to be like *them*?! So their choices are to stay where they are and be miserable; go the Holy Joe route and possibly be even more miserable but with a promise of good things later on; or jump the fence line to join the fun, gambling that they'll be able to jump back before it's "too late".

Such churches are asking their youth to aim at bare minimums: to live a life with a minimum of true worldliness and a minimum of true godliness is to have a minimum of challenge and purpose. This is lukewarm, spew-you-out-of-My-mouth kind of stuff. And to live that while exposed to maximum temptation along the fence line is madness. No wonder the church youth suffer so many casualties and attract so few stayers.

The Lord created us all for tougher assignments than this. Playing footsie with sin at the fence line while countless "youth leaders" and "youth pastors" endlessly advise how far is too far and how much is too much – and each advising different amounts – is pathetic. Gird on your spiritual armour, young men and maidens, for the Lord is calling us to His Front Lines!

Romans 12:1-2, II Corinthians 3:18, Ephesians 4:22-24, Philippians 3:12-14 and plenty of other passages all talk about being totally, utterly different from the world and moving in a totally opposing direction to it. Galatians 5:22-23 especially invites us to aim at maximums, go the whole hog, to have it all, to blaze full-steam ahead, to carry it to the extremes, to max-out where there are no laws against being as loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle and self-controlled as you like! Such lives, dedicated first to loving our Lord¹ and second to loving one another², present the excitement and challenge youth crave: they will battle their sinful selves, the sinful world and the lazy "Christians" all around who don't want to be shown up. Such lives are also totally relevant: relevant to God, to all of creation, to all our fellow humans.

Believe it or not, evangelising the lost may not be number one on God's priority list. There are many passages, nay, chapters and books³, in the Bible given over to God tenderly describing the relationship He wants with us and among us, a people He chose for His own possession. We are purchased with the blood of Christ, not so we can do His will our way ("evangelising" the worldly by becoming worldly), but so we can submit ourselves to Him as instruments of righteousness in the hands of the Master.⁴

The sin-cursed and fallen society around us may, from their corrupted and fallen viewpoint, consider us irrelevant. But that is because it is *they* who are detached and separated from reality – the knowledge of God – and it is they who are irrelevant to God, to all of creation and to their fellow humans as they commit murder, abortion, euthanasia, genocide, infanticide, embryonic research and manipulation, spread disease and death through immorality and homosexuality and who serve the creature (animals, trees, mother earth) rather

(Continued on page 29: *Faith*)

Tough Questions People Ask



How Do I Do "Assessments?"

by Kay Christensen

When we first began homeschooling, I really didn't have any idea of what it meant to assess and evaluate my child's work except in school terms of tests and assignments. These still have their place in specific instances, but it is not the mainstay of what it now means for us to evaluate our children's work after nine years of homeschooling.

Most of my assessment and evaluation is performed "on the job," so to speak. I am doing it constantly as I go about the formal teaching or in daily, ordinary interaction with my children. It is where eyes, ears, heart, mind and arms are open to the children, engaging them, discussing with them, asking and answering their questions, drawing them out, leading them on, repeating and reinforcing. Evaluation is an integral part of the teaching and learning and is *not* a separated, external activity. And because it is happening at the same time, it is thus contextual, relevant, responsive and immediate. At the same time, and not incidentally, it is also building and reinforcing the relationship between myself as parent/teacher and my child/learner.

In practice then, my evaluation is conducted in four main ways, by way of:

1. Working alongside. It is pretty obvious and very easy to evaluate the children's progress when I'm sitting at the table with them, or cuddling up on the couch as we go through books, or sharing activities. I know when they are bored, distracted, keen or dutiful. I know if they have understood or are coping or need more. How do I know? In much the same way a mother knows if her young child has learnt to walk. In other words, you're simply there to see it happen, where its happening, when its happening and how its happening.

2. Discussion, feedback, questions and answers, going back and forth. It may happen when the textbook is open, at the dinner table, as a last minute question while putting the children into bed. It often comes up again and again as the children take time to reflect, process and internalize the information, building their knowledge brick by brick, perhaps in response to outside prompts that serve to bring the matter back to the forefront and maybe weeks later.

3. Demonstration, observation, practice, back and forth, of various skills learnt. For instance, I know my daughter has learnt to touch type because I see the product of her labours. I don't need to test her formally, because she is using the basic skill to now produce a newsletter, and to do that she has taught herself

to use two computer software programs. I could get her to do a typing test, but it's a bit pointless. I could get her to do an English test, but she is testing and correcting herself for publication. I could get her to do a computer test, but the finished product is tangible and obvious.

4. By acquiring skills of expression such as writing, performing, displaying and then putting them into practice with subjects of interest, or projects etc. Here the newsletter is an obvious example, but it could also be artwork, a poster display, a book, portfolio or sharing knowledge with siblings and friends.

In these ways I gain a pretty good idea of their understanding and progress. The key lies in the strength and depth and richness of our teaching/learning relationship. This bond is *the* primary homeschooling tool of evaluation, and it is one that teachers and schools can only dream about.

But what about a test? An assignment? *Proof!*

Well yes, we could do that too, in order to provide some tangible evidence that the child has learnt something. But note the shift, away from a focus on the child's learning needs, and onto meeting external demands. The advantages of tests/assignments is really to prove to others (and sometimes ourselves when we lack confidence) that something has happened, that the child has learned, that the work has been done, that homeschooling is vindicated. It may satisfy our families and sceptics and the ERO, but it doesn't really satisfy the needs inherent in the teaching/learning situation, and it doesn't usually tell us any more than what we already know. It is important to remember that tests/assignments are methods favoured by schools because they cannot relate to their students as we can and don't have any other way of knowing what is going on.

So far I have raised the matter of evaluation that is child-focused and evaluation that provides tangible, objective proof to outsiders; but there are two other types of evaluation as far as I can see. The first is evaluation that weighs up the curriculum itself. For instance, once a year I will summarize in writing our work, books and methods and will also take the time to consider changes and improvements. The second is evaluation that is for diagnostic purposes, especially when problems occur, or perhaps to establish where a child is at when they are first taken out of school.

To summarize then, our evaluation is a daily, ongoing event and an integral part of the teaching/learning that goes on. Periodically I pause to reflect on how it is all going, and when there have been real problems, I have actually stopped that aspect of our homeschooling for weeks or months to consider what I was doing without the stress of trying to do it. About once a year I summarize in writing what we have covered the previous 12 months, and how the children have worked and what they have accomplished. Last year we had our first ERO visit after seven or eight years of homeschooling. I was asked the question about how I evaluated, and I basically answered it in this way. *I was not required to provide any other proof — Aaagh!* All my preparations for nothing!

pencil then becomes the sign of your alertness while you read...Why is marking a book indispensable to reading it? First, it keeps you awake-not merely conscious, but wide awake. Second, reading, if it is active, is thinking, and thinking tends to express itself in words. Spoken or written.

“The person who says he knows what he thinks but cannot express it usually does not know what he thinks. Third, writing your reactions down helps you to remember the thoughts of the author.

“Reading a book should be a conversation between you and the author. Presumably he knows more about the subject that you do; if not, you probably should not be bothering with his book. But understanding is a two-way operation; the learner has to question himself and question the teacher. He even has to be willing to argue with the teacher, once he understands what the teacher is saying. Marking a book is literally an expression of your differences or your agreements with the author. It is the highest respect you can pay him.

“There are all kinds of devices for marking a book intelligently and fruitfully. Here are some devices that can be used:

1. Underlining
 2. Vertical lines at the margin
 3. Star, asterisk, or other doodad at the margin
 4. Numbers in the margin
 5. Numbers of other pages in the margin
 6. Circling of key words or phrases
 7. Writing in the margin, or at the top or bottom of the page
- (See Adler’s book for an expansion of these ideas.)

“The endpapers at the back of the book can be used to make a personal index of the author’s points in the order of their appearance. To inveterate book-markers, the front endpapers are often the most important. Some people reserve them for a fancy bookplate. But that expresses only their financial ownership of the book. The front endpapers are better reserved for a record of your thinking. After finishing the book and making your personal index on the back endpapers, turn to the front and try to outline the book, not page by page or point by point (you have already done that at the back), but as an integrated structure, with a basic outline and an order of parts. That outline will be the measure of your understanding of the work; unlike a bookplate, it will express your intellectual ownership of the book.

“Any art or skill is possessed by those who have formed a habit of operating according to its rules. This is the way the artist or craftsman in any field differs from those who lack his skill...Reading is like skiing. When done well, when done by an expert, both reading and skiing are graceful, harmonious activities. When done by a beginner, both are awkward, frustrating and slow...It is hard to learn to read well. Not only is reading, especially analytical reading, a very complex activity - much more complex than skiing; it is also much more of a mental activity. The beginning skier must think of physical acts that he can later forget and perform almost automatically. It is relatively easy to think

of and be conscious of physical acts. It is much harder to think of mental acts, as the beginning analytical reader must do; in a sense, he is thinking about his own thoughts. Most of us are unaccustomed to doing this. Nevertheless, it can be done, and a person who does it cannot help learning to read much better.

“Every book has a skeleton hidden between its covers. Your job as an analytical reader is to find it. A book comes to you with flesh on its bare bones and clothes over its flesh. It is all dressed up. You do not have to undress it or tear the flesh off its limbs to get at the firm structure that underlies the soft surface. But you must read the book with X-ray eyes, for it is an essential part of your apprehension of any book to grasp its structure.

“Cervantes may or may not have been right in saying, ‘There is no book so bad but something good may be found in it.’ It is more certain that there is no book so good that no fault can be found with it.”³

Home Educating parents **must** be readers. This could mean radical changes at home. Reading to our children and personal reading are usually the first disciplines, the first victims, sacrificed to the TV and VCR. As we said at the beginning, reading time must be taken from somewhere else: try taking it from these two, “redeeming the time for the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:16).

Notes:

1. From: *Classical Education-The Home School*. By Douglas Wilson, Wesley Callihan and Douglas Jones. Available from Geneva Books.
2. *Chalcedon Report*, No. 439, March 2002, “On Reading Books” by Rev. P. Andrew Sandlin, www.chalcedon.edu.
3. From: *How to Read a Book* by Mortimer J. Adler & Charles van Doren, available from the Home Education Foundation.

(Continued from page 19: **Letters**)

Home School Our Grandchildren

My husband and I would like to subscribe to your wonderful *Keystone Journal*. We have three of our grandchildren with us every Monday morning and we home school them. I do enjoy sharing the benefits of home schooling with my friends, some of whom are in their 90s! May the Lord be pleased to bless your work and the times I hear you speak on Radio Rhema.

J & M H...
Upper Hutt

South Island Tour

Thank you so much for phoning me even though you were both so busy on your South Island tour. We value your work, advice and the fact that you were always there whenever we have had questions.

MH
Blenheim

Bits of Books



Public Schools

Article 1, Part 2
by Dr. Robert Lewis Dabney¹

All such promiscuous efforts to educate the whole masses by any secular authority must disappoint our hopes, and result in mischief, for the reason, simply put, that “You may lead a horse to water, but you cannot make him drink”. True education, taken in any extent of its meaning, broad or narrow, is so greatly a moral process that a certain amount of aspiration and desire in its subject is an absolute prerequisite.

Something else must be first done, then, for the “school children” besides building and equipping schools for them; and that is something which the State can never do—at least not by its schools. The moral aspiration and virtuous aims must be already present in the student, for they alone will utilize the academic education the schools are hoping to impart. This is very plain.

Now, it will be found generally true that in this country it is precisely the children of those who are presumed to need State education, and for whom the provision is chiefly designed, who are in this unprepared condition. Separate those who have neither aspiration, nor industry, nor property enough to insure that they will educate their own children, and in those children we usually find precisely that apathetic and hopeless condition. The parents are the real architects of their children’s destiny, and the State cannot help it. There are, of course, exceptions. There are meritorious parents reduced by exceptional calamities to destitution, and there are a few “rough diamonds” unearthed in the unlikely mines of groveling families. Such exceptions should be provided for; but wise legislators do not make universal systems to reach exceptional cases.

The law which we assert is accounted for by several practical causes. Parents who remain too poor and callous to educate their own children are so because they are ignorant, indolent, unaspiring, and vicious. The children’s characters are usually as much the progeny of the parents as their bodies. Again: The aspiration, virtuous desire, and energy of the parents are absolutely essential to supply that impulse, which the child’s mind requires to overrule its youthful heedlessness, and to impel it to employ and assimilate its otherwise useless acquisitions. And once more: The home education has so much more potential than that of the school, that the little modicum of training which a “common-school” system can give to the average masses is utterly trivial and impotent as a means of re-

versing the child’s tendency. That which costs nothing is never valued. Old Judge Buell, of Albany, placed a sack of a new variety of beautiful wheat upon the counter of the pavilion at a great agricultural fair, with a label inviting every farmer to take one quart as a gratuity, for seed. At night the sack was almost untouched. The old gentleman fretted at this result, took it the second day to the booth of a seeds man, and directed him to sell it at two dollars per quart. It was at once bought up greedily. One of the best teachers we ever knew determined to devote his latter years to the philanthropic work of teaching a gratuitous school for his neighbors. In a few months it had dwindled to five pupils, and died a natural death within a year. There is a natural humiliation also in being compelled to accept the provision of charity, or of the State, for that which conscience tells parents is obligatory upon them. These reasons account for the fact, which the advocates of public schools so desire to hide, that the children do not attend, and the parents do not care to make them attend. He who goes “behind the scenes” in the Northern States knows how extensively this is true. The rising movement for a “compulsory education” is a confession of this fact. The unwilling disclosure of the failure of the system is the only thing this new movement will effect; for its folly is clear from this simple thought, that it contravenes, worse than all, the axiom: “One man can lead the horse to water,” etc. Hence it results, that the class which is low enough to need this State aid, is one which usually cannot be elevated by it. But the abortive effort will awaken other influences, as we shall see, which are likely to make the children more miserable and less innocent than their ignorant parents.²

Must the philanthropist, then, submit to the conclusion that ignorance and its consequences must needs be hereditary, and that knowledge, culture, and virtue are not to be extended beyond the fortunate youth for whom their parents secure them? We reply: this sad law does hold, and must hold to a far wider extent than our overweening zeal is willing to acknowledge. Yet its rigor may be relaxed but not by the meddling of the civil magistrate or the arm of legislation. The agency must be social and Christian. The work must be done by laying hold of the sentiments, hearts, and consciences of parents and children together — not through their grammatical and arithmetical faculties. The agents for this blessed work are the neighbor and the church. Christian charity and zeal, with the potent social influences descending from superiors to inferiors, in a society which is practically a kindly and liberal aristocracy; these may break the reign of ignorance and unaspiring apathy. The State cannot; the work is above its sphere.

(Edited and abridged by Craig Smith from a series of four articles written as open letters to Dr. W.H. Ruffner, Esq., Superintendent of Virginia State Schools, April 18, 1876.)

Notes:

1. Robert Lewis Dabney, 1820-1898. Chief-of-Staff and official biographer for General Stonewall Jackson; author of *A Defense of Virginia and the South*;

(Continued on page 29: **Dabney**)

Learning Disabilities

Custom Fitting A Program for the Learning Disabled Child

By Tom and Sherry Bushnell

When a child looks “normal”, society expects ordinary skills to be learned on time. It is frustrating for those families who must “hide” for fear of not measuring up to normal homeschool standards. Well meaning folks may give them advice such as, “Perhaps you let them play outside too much,” “Be more structured,” “Maybe you are too structured,” “Don’t push so hard.” However, these mothers know in their hearts that it has nothing to do with the “program”, and everything to do with the abilities (or lack of them) of their child.

It always amazes us how people measure children with learning disabilities by what they *cannot* do instead of what they *can* do. Learning disabled children are much more normal than abnormal. The amount of skills that are lacking are relatively small compared to all of the skills they *have* mastered.

With this in mind, let us look at finding curriculum that will work for our children.

1. We need to find out how our children prefer to learn. Is it by sight, touch and exploring, hearing and looking at pictures? Use different combinations. It’s not good to put our children in a box by saying, “Sally is a kinesthetic learner, so we only use touch as a mode of learning”.

We don’t mind picking and choosing from a variety of curriculums. Using this practice to our advantage, we can custom fit a program for each child. Homeschool fairs are a good way to see the resources. Networking with other parents is another great way to become familiar with what works. Let’s present interesting information and let our children assimilate it. They’ll find the best way to retain it.

2. Being wise stewards, let us use what we have on hand. The majority of beginning concepts (ABCs, 123s) can be taught with household materials in fun and interesting ways. Try the hardware store before the expensive catalogues! This may take more preparation, but including our children in the process can be the beginning of their concept recognition.

3. Is phonics not clicking with your child? Try a combination of sight words and phonics to give some success. If that doesn’t work, try word keys (parts of words are memorized) ARL Assured Readiness for Learning is a good program and very inexpensive! (McInnis ARL, 2452 Route 364, Penn Yan, New York, 14527, U.S.A.



Tom & Sherry, Jake, Josh, Jordan, Sheela, Zack, Lynny, Zeph, Shera, Mercy Grace and Jayben Bushnell

Phone: (315) 536-3034, www.readinessforlearning.com.) The Lindamood-Bell program has also been highly recommended for intense phonics teaching. (Lindamood-Bell, 416 Higuera St., San Luis Obispo, CA 93401, U.S.A. Ph. (805) 541-3836. Fax (805) 541-8756. www.conceptimagery.com)

4. Using a hands-on approach is fun even for those children who are not learning disabled. Child-motivated learning works. Let’s play it smart by throwing away old conceptions of “school” and have fun! It almost sounds too good to be true, but a good majority of the usable information our children need to survive in this world cannot be gleaned from text books! It also helps when we put aside the “this concept is to be learned by this age” mentality and to once again...relax. How many fairly normal children do you know who cannot actually count by age 12? These skills will come. And even if they are never really mastered, people learn to cope without those particular skills. A rule of thumb we use is: If concepts are being presented in a simple fashion, and we are at the point of despair of ever grasping it, then *stop*. We’ll try a month or two later. Perhaps even a year or two! It is not worth getting to the point of burn-out. Learning should be interesting and fun, not a battle ground!

If our children are consistently self willed and refuse to listen to our words, or they are unable to sit still while we work together, training them to have some self control is the first step before actual teaching should take place. As home schooling parents we are faced with the importance of establishing a healthy learning relationship with our children. It is not the school’s responsibility anymore. The ball is in our court to find exactly where the problem lies and to eradicate it! If we spend six months on behaviour and we feel successful...*it is six months well spent*. Now we can start learning together. It takes time and consistency to teach our children to sit still. We start in the morning after breakfast during Bible time. We share a cup of tea or juice after we’ve eaten and the little ones are finishing up. For 10 - 15 minutes we read the Word, discuss the passages and pray before the day’s explosion of activity begins. Over a period of time this 10 minutes can be expanded into 20 or 30 with age appropriate activities. The basic message.....STAY!!!

As our children (special needs) learned to quiet themselves and just plain sit still, we reaped great harvests in other areas too. Self-control, patience, and listening skills are among the fruits we have seen.

(From www.nathhan.com, 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, PO Box 39, Porthill, ID 83853, USA, ph. (253) 857-4257.)

without reading. Education is the process of selling someone on books. Parents who will not read simply cannot be equipped to supply a classical and Christian education for their children.

“As the task of educating yourself and your children continues and broadens, you will always have a need for more books. And once your reading has begun in earnest, and you have gone down some of the bibliographic trails suggested by that reading, you will soon be in a position to start compiling your own book lists... We should remember that with such preparatory reading, a good pace to maintain is to try and finish a book every week or two. This may seem intimidating at first, and if it were considered a hobby, it would be overwhelming. But the task is the education of your children, which is not a hobby but a vocation. The word vocation comes from the Latin verb *voco*, which means ‘I call’. A person’s vocation is his calling; a parent’s vocation is to learn in order to teach.”¹

After I left school, I hardly read a book at all. When I was around The Navigators in the ‘70s, I was challenged to read a book a month. I found it a struggle, perhaps because I was committed to reading the Bible through once a year during this time. Once we got married, I was busy with babies, and reading the Bible in a year seemed to be all I could manage. In the mid-‘90s I became interested in Classical Education and began to read a bit more. After reading the book *Classical Education - The Home School*, I was challenged to read a whole bunch more. ***This reading gave me the confidence to Home Educate our children.*** *Teaching The Trivium* (see inside back cover) is a must for a Christian home educators reading list.

I don’t think I will ever reach the reading habit of Summit Ministries’ Dr David Noebel: one book a day. But I am in the middle of about 12 or 13 books that I am reading to myself, plus three books that I am reading to the boys and one to Charmagne. Craig and I are still reading a book together. Craig has always been a reader. Now with both of us reading, there is plenty of material for discussion. Not only that, our children are also avid readers. The older ones read much faster than I. This is frustrating for me, but I am very pleased for them. I will never even get through all the books in our personal library. But I am excited that our children will be able to have a good go at it. Even though Jeremiah, at 11, is not reading for pleasure yet, he has the desire and love of books his older siblings have. For example, when we are planning a trip, he will put out half a dozen books for himself to read on the way should his reading skills suddenly click into place....he wants to have enough books on hand to keep him going.

Andrew Sandlin writes: “When I first encounter a book I intend to read, I do what Mortimer Adler calls ‘inspectional reading.’ His book *How to Read a Book*, is an outstanding work; and it is probably the definitive work in this field. By inspectional reading, I mean what some people call “skimming”. I will read the table of contents, any chapter subheadings, the blurb on the back cover, the book jacket’s inside and outside flaps (although I am careful here, since these promotional blurbs are not always an accurate description of the

contents!) and even glance over the index. The problem with people who skip the inspectional phase of reading, as Adler notes, is that they are forced to learn the book’s general content while they are reading it. This is silly, unnecessary and counter productive. If you have a general idea of the author’s thesis, you are much more likely to understand his detailed, sustained argument. In short, you should know the writer’s viewpoint and thesis before you start reading his book.

“I get a pen and straight edge (and sometimes highlighter) and start reading. When I encounter especially memorable statements, or those I intend to cite or refer to later, I underline them and put words and other notations (like stars) in the margin. I have never encountered a reader who marks up the text of his books as much as I do - there probably is somebody out there; it’s just that I haven’t met him. Not only do I underscore; I use brackets, carets and braces; I annotate all four margins, and I copiously turn down the edges (both top and bottom) of certain especially memorable pages....My wife Sharon once chided me when she saw how my marking had massacred a page, ‘Why do you do that? Now, nobody else will be able to read it!’ ‘Precisely,’ I responded. ‘This is my book. It is not meant for other people to read. Let them get their own copy.’ This is why I rarely read library or any other borrowed books - *if I can’t mark a book, I simply don’t read it.*”²

Reading the previous two paragraphs by Rev Sandlin for me was so liberating. I now mark the books I read to my heart’s content! This has greatly helped me find important or interesting things again so that I can use it or point others to it. Recently Diana Waring gave me a signed copy of her new book *Reaping the Harvest*. She had written such a nice note in it that I decided to read it without marking it. I regret that now. I told Diana that I would write a book review of it, but I now have to re-read the book – marking it this time! And I know I’ll use it more if I mark the many things that impressed me. I also find I enjoy reading books after Craig has as I can see the things that have caught his eye, and it helps me to appreciate him more and can be a source of discussion for us.

I now want to quote Mr. Adler at length:

“People go to sleep over good books not because they are unwilling to make the effort, but because they do not know how to make it. Good books are over your head; they would not be good for you if they were not. And books that are over your head weary you unless you can reach up to them and pull yourself up to their level. It is not the stretching that tires you, but the frustration of stretching unsuccessfully because you lack the skill to stretch effectively. To keep on reading actively, you must have not only the will to do so, but also the skill...the art that enables you to elevate yourself by mastering what at first sight seems to be beyond you.

“If you have the habit of asking a book questions as you read, you are a better reader than if you do not. But, as we have indicated, merely asking questions is not enough. You have to try to answer them.... The

which is good. But when we use the term “home”, people more often than not think we mean “house”. So I suppose we could also say, and dare I say it... “*House* Schooling” (yukky eh!). When we say “Home School” this is what people usually, if not always, think. Which I happen to dislike... a lot! (I guess it’s similar to when we use the word “church”. Unfortunately the way in which we use this word also has given the world a totally wrong impression of what “church” is actually about.) So after thinking about it, I came up with the word “family” instead of “home”. I came to the realisation that we have put the mantle of education back where it has belonged since Biblical times... with the family.

Which leads me to the second important point my good friend John McGeorge made to me. Someone once made the comment to John, “When did the Israelites ever send their children to the Philistines to be educated?” The answer: never! And I guess that’s how I see the state education system now; it is like the Philistines. “A bit strong,” I hear you say. Well, I guess I see that the NZ education system has a few of its own Goliaths sent to challenge our Christian values: sex education and the (very poor) theory of evolution immediately spring to mind. Our Children need to have the slingshot of revelation and the smooth stones of Scripture with which to battle these “giants” and ultimately defeat them. It’s amazing what a few well-placed Scriptures will conquer. It’s interesting to note, too, that David picked up these giant-slaying attributes by being brought up in the “family” business, not by joining the Philistines.

The well-used Scripture in Proverbs 22:6, “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it,” is not talking about school: it is a Scripture to parents, where the mantle of education and training should firmly lay.

So in case you have not guessed already, I call what we do “family education”. So when people ask if we “home school”, I say, “No way; we ‘family educate’.” Then they ask the fatal question, “What’s the difference?” It’s funny, you know; they always end up justifying why they do *not* “family educate”. As they say, “Let the truth speak for itself”.

So I hope some of you have found this little article challenging. I do not mean to get hung up on terminology, but I think the term “home schooling” does not do us “family educators” justice. It would be like calling a Porsche “just a car”.

(Gavin lives in Wanganui. He and Katherine have been very happily married for 15 years. They have five children being family educated aged 14 to 2 and another one due in November...each one is counted as a blessing. Gavin manages the Sommerville Centre in Wanganui, an organisation that provides services to children and young adults with disabilities. His favourite sport is soccer — he coaches the Wanganui family educated team — and loves riding minibikes.)

Over A Cuppa



Keeping Going When the Going Gets Tough — Part 5

Parental Reading

by Craig and Barbara Smith

So far in this series of articles we have briefly looked at:

1. The need to improve our personal relationship with God: to be going to Him with all our needs, frustrations, hurts, joys - everything - and finding satisfaction in Him. To glorify Him and enjoy Him forever.
2. Our marriages are to reflect the relationship of Christ and His Church. Such a high standard requires us continually to work in every area of our marriages, for something will always require a bit of attention.
3. We need to be consistent in the way we discipline our children.

Being on top, or at least making progress in each of these areas, will help prevent burnout. It may sound contradictory, that to prevent yourself from stressing out too much you need to take on other projects you’re not currently working on, but it’s true! Being fully occupied with minor things, even though they are good things, is a huge source of stress *when it causes us to neglect the really major things*.

This brings us to the fourth area that we as parents need to be concentrating on - our own development. Over the years Craig and I have recognised the truth indicated in Deuteronomy 6:1-6: that Home Education is all about us parents first, then our children. If we are going to be giving out day by day, we need to be taking in day by day, or the well is going to run dry.

This self-development is best done through our own reading. So often we hear parents saying, “Oh, I don’t have time for personal reading.” We must make that time...it is, after all, that “time for yourself” everyone seems to advise us to take. And that time for reading must be taken away from something else.

The writers in *Classical Education - The Home School* say, “And we state emphatically, again, that the reading of the teacher is more important than the reading of the student. If the teacher reads as he should, the reading of the student will naturally fall into place.”

These writers also say, “...as diligent parents, we are confronted with two areas which stand out with respect to the necessity of hard work. The first is the necessity of reading, and reading some more. A person can successfully sell someone else on a vacuum cleaner without reading, but he cannot sell someone else on books

Home Education Research



The Why of Homeschool

by Isabel Lyman

It was only a matter of time before Hollywood “discovered” homeschoolers. Ponder the promo from *The O’Keefes*, a sitcom, which will premiere this (northern) summer on the Warner Brothers network.

“Harry and Ellie O’Keefe are loving but eccentric parents who’ve homeschooled their three children to protect them from the loud and libidinal world.” (Translation: The parents are losers.)

“Despite a ban on all things pop culture, teenagers Danny and Lauren and younger brother Mark are growing increasingly curious about what lies beyond the walls of their school/dining room.” (Translation: The children are kept under house arrest.)

“They can speak six languages, but are unable to converse with kids their own age. The answer lies in their father’s worst nightmare: public school.” (Translation: Kids who don’t attend government schools become misfits.)

It’s infuriating, but not surprising, that homeschoolers—the largest group in the so-called school choice movement—still elicit scorn. The National Education Association (NEA), for instance, regularly passes an anti-homeschooling resolution at its annual convention. The resolution states that homeschooling “cannot provide the student with a comprehensive education experience.” Now it’s apparently Tinseltown’s turn to bash the estimated 1.5 million homeschooled children in the United States.

Even in a nation that applauds innovation and liberty, the act of homeschooling continues to raise many uncomfortable, but important, questions about government regulation of private choices. What follows are the seven most frequently asked questions about home education. Hopefully, the answers will explain the benefits of this educational endeavour and dispel common misperceptions.

Why Homeschool?

Homeschooling is simply the education of school-aged children at home rather than at a school. Why do people choose this option? In 1996, the Florida Department of Education surveyed 2,245 homeschoolers, and 31 percent of that number returned the survey. Of that group, 42 percent said that dissatisfaction with the public school environment (safety, drugs, adverse peer

pressure) was their reason for launching a home-education program.

Focusing on homeschooling and the media, my own doctoral dissertation analysis of over 300 newspaper and magazine articles revealed that the top four reasons to bypass conventional schooling were dissatisfaction with the public schools, the desire to freely impart religious values, academic excellence, and the building of stronger family bonds.

What Types of Families Choose Homeschooling?

The Associated Press reported the findings of a U.S. Department of Education report about the “average” homeschooler in 2001. The AP story noted, “They are more likely than other students to live with two or more siblings in a two-parent family, with one parent working outside the home. Parents of homeschoolers are, on average, better educated than other parents—a greater percentage have college degrees—though their incomes are about the same. Like most parents, the vast majority of those who homeschool their children earn less than \$50,000, and many earn less than \$25,000.”

Given many Americans’ penchant for associations, there are national homeschooling groups for the disabled, the religious and the athletically-minded. Johnson Obamehinti, for instance, founded the Minority Homeschoolers of Texas. His organization promotes home education among ethnic minorities, such as African-Americans, Asians, Hispanics, Jews, Native Americans and Anglos with adopted minority children. Homeschooling has also attracted the “high-profiled” to its ranks, such as Jason Taylor, who plays in the National Football League, and LeAnn Rimes, the country music sensation.

Are There Different Methods of Homeschooling?

Families may choose to purchase a prepackaged curriculum from companies that specifically target homeschoolers, such as A Beka Home School or Saxon Publishers. Others may choose to enroll their children in correspondence programs, like the Calvert School of Maryland, the Christian Liberty Academy Satellite Schools of Illinois or the Clonlara School of Michigan. Cyber schools, like K-12 Inc., offer an online curriculum for homeschoolers.

As families gain confidence in their homeschooling abilities, they may opt for a less structured approach. Tutors may be sought to teach particular skills, such as a foreign language, a musical instrument, or a high-school science class. Homeschooled children also participate in field trips and learning co-ops with other homeschooled students or even take courses at a day school or local college.

How Do Homeschooled Children Interact With Others?

This question stems from a caricature of kids isolated

and holed up in a house. Defining socialization is an arbitrary exercise. The burden, however, still seems to fall upon the parents of the homeschooled to make their case. To that end, one study debunked the myth that homeschoolers are undersocialized. In 1992, Larry Shyers of the University of Florida defended a doctoral dissertation in which he challenged the notion that youngsters at home “lag” in social development. In his study, 8- to 10-year-old children were videotaped at play. Their behaviour was observed by trained counselors who did not know which children attended conventional schools and which were homeschooled. The study found no significant difference between the two groups of children in self-concept or assertiveness, which was measured by social development tests. But the videotapes showed that youngsters taught at home by their parents had fewer behaviour problems.

Typically, home schoolers engage in a variety of activities outside the home—athletics (homeschool sports teams are plentiful), scouting programs, church, community service or part-time employment. Richard G. Medlin of Stetson University notes that homeschoolers rely heavily on support groups as a means of maintaining contact with like-minded families.

Is Homeschooling Legal?

The National Homeschool Association has noted that “homeschooling is legally permitted in all fifty states, but laws and regulations are much more favourable in some states than others.” For example, Oklahoma is considered friendly toward homeschooling in that parents are not required to initiate contact with state authorities to begin teaching their children at home. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, however, is heavily regulated (approval of curriculum, submission of students’ work, etc.). Seasoned veterans encourage homeschooling parents to become familiar with their state’s laws *before* creating a homeschool.

The favourable legal climate does not mean that skirmishes don’t occur. Dean Tong, author of *Elusive Innocence: Survival Guide for the Falsely Accused* (2002), says that a smattering of homeschoolers have had to fight false charges of child abuse.

“Based on the phone consultations I’ve had with (these) homeschoolers, most have been charged in Juvenile-Dependency court with neglect, failure to protect, emotional and psychological abuse and failure to thrive,” reports Tong. Relative to homeschoolers, he says that these unfounded charges are usually made by nosey neighbours who believe children should receive a more formal classroom education.

How Does the Education a Homeschooled Child Receives Compare with That of Conventionally Schooled Children?

One measure is how well they perform on standardized tests, like the Stanford Achievement Test or the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. The National Home Education Research Institute notes, “Repeatedly, across the nation, the home educated score as well as or better than

those in conventional schools.” The National Merit Scholarship Corporation selected more than 70 homeschooled high school students as semifinalists in its 1998 competition. There were 137 homeschooled semifinalists chosen in 1999, and 150 in 2000.

Rebecca Sealfon, a 13-year-old homeschooler from Brooklyn, New York, won the 1997 Scripps Howard National Spelling Bee. David Beihl, also 13, of Saluda, South Carolina, won the 1999 National Geographic Bee. George Thampy, a 12-year-old homeschooler from Maryland Heights, Missouri, won the National Spelling Bee in 2000. Calvin McCarter, a 10-year-old homeschooler from near Grand Rapids, Michigan, won the 2002 National Geographic Bee and became the youngest competitor to do so.

Homeschoolers have graduated from such prestigious institutions as Yale University Law School, the United States Naval Academy and Mount Holyoke College. Barnaby Marsh, who was homeschooled in the Alaskan wilderness, went on to graduate from Cornell University and was one of 32 Rhodes Scholars selected in 1996.

What Type of Young Adults Does Homeschooling Produce?

J. Gary Knowles of the University of Michigan studied 53 adults to see the long-term effects of being educated at home. In 1991, he presented a paper of his findings at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association in Chicago. Notes Knowles: “I have found no evidence that these adults were even moderately disadvantaged. . . . Two thirds of them were married, the norm for adults their age, and none were unemployed or any on any form of welfare assistance. More than three quarters felt that being taught at home had actually helped them to interact with people from different levels of society.”

Small business owner Tim Martin, 29, and his wife, Amy, 28, live in Whitehall, Montana with their four children. Both the Martins have a homeschooling background and are now teaching their brood at home. “Education just works better one-on-one,” says Tim. “Why do we think the ‘right’ way to do education is to put 20 or 30 children in a classroom with one teacher. That model is more fit for manufacturing than education.”

No kidding. By using their liberties wisely, homeschooling parents have graduated scores upon scores of literate, well-adjusted students with minimal government interference and at a fraction of the cost of any government program. Now a second generation is following in those footsteps. It’s the kind of story worthy of thoughtful documentary, not a silly sitcom.

(From www.mises.org/fullstory.asp?control=1167, Ludwig von Mises Institute, 25 February 2003. Isabel Lyman, Ph.D., is the author of *The Homeschool Revolution* (142 pages, Bench Press Int’l, Oct 2000, ISBN: 0967043069). Contact her at: ilyman7449@aol.com.)

Over A Cuppa

“Home Schooling” I Dislike That... A Lot!

by Gavin Ander



If someone told me three years ago that I would be “home schooling” my children, I would have told them that they were nuts. I guess because my preconceived ideas of “home schooling” was a group of poor, socially starved children sitting at home bored out of their brains with a stressed parent trying to replicate the schooling they did at... well... er ... at school. I mean, what serious law would my child have to break in order to receive such a harsh sentence. I can just imagine saying to my children... “*If you don’t do exactly as you are told... I warn you... I will “home school” you!!*” . The child would respond with a blood-curdling “*Noooooooo...anything but that!... I will obey... I promise*”. Now back to reality...

My eldest son Absalom was just finishing form two at a local Christian school in 2001. I started to have some conviction in my heart about sending him to a state secondary school, but I thought, “What alternative do I really have?” I mean, I went to high school, and it didn’t do me any harm....did it? Let’s see, there was the pressure to reject Jesus, accept evolution and the new age movement, get involved in alcohol, smoking, drugs, fornication... and that was just from the teachers! I prayed to the Lord earnestly, “What shall I do?”.

Enter the McGeorge clan (one of those funny “home schooling” Christian type families... need I say more!). I had known John and Vicki for about five years. They have four really neat children who, on the face of it, did not seem to be too adversely affected by their home schooling experiences. In fact, they were really bright, very well socially adjusted and were comfortable around any age group young or old. They did not seem to have the “clique” mentality of modern day teenagers. “Hmmm,” I thought, “how could this be so?”.

Then I made a critical error. I mentioned to the McGeorges that I was going to send Abs (Absalom) to High School. Vicki and I then had a rather interesting discussion (argument really) on the pros and cons of state secondary school education (actually... now I come to think about it... I don’t remember any “pros” being mentioned). People who know me know there is nothing I enjoy more than a good debate, normally because I win (though, for some reason, there are people who say that is debatable). In this particular “debate” I found it really hard to put up a good argument; I felt that I was mostly engaged in “pumping a dry well” as it were. Vicki had stirred something in me, and I found

myself really challenged, as much as I would have hated to admit it at the time.

So I consoled myself by thinking, “I can understand Vicki being a protective mother not wanting to send her children out into the big wide world. Next time I’ll talk to John; I mean, he is a bloke after all. He will understand why I need to send my son to High School so that he can experience life...” (umm, plus we are far too busy to home school, or so we thought, and I do not want to feel guilty about sending my son to a state school, so there!).

Well, John’s approach was a little bit different to Vicki’s, but the message was the same. One of the first comments he made was that he did not really like the term “Home Schooling”, as it was not about schooling your children. It was about educating them. He went on to say many children are “schooled” but that they are not “educated”. This was quite a revelation to me, and it gave me quite a different perception of things. So we then started to talk about “Home Education” as opposed to “Home Schooling”.

I raised many other issues with John, and he was able to answer all in such a way that I went away with much to think about. I will leave most of these for another time, but there were two particular aspects of HE (Home Education) we discussed that really challenged me, one being (of course... you guessed it)... Socialisation!

I asked John (and I was *sooo* sure I would get him on this one), “Are you not worried about the socialisation aspect of HE?” When he said, “Yes, I do have some concerns,” I thought, “Aha!!... gotcha now!!” until he said, “Vicki and I are having to look at cutting some back; they are having far too much”. When I looked at the children’s activities, I was surprised at how much they were doing out side the home: singing, dancing, gymnastics, puppetry, teaching Bible in schools, serving, etc., etc. I clicked at this point just how easy it was to tailor-make your child’s education with HE, and how that, if you were not careful, they would thoroughly enjoy the experience. Imagine....children actually enjoying how they learnt! Wow, what an amazing concept!

Well, after much prayer and soul searching, my wife Katherine and I decided we had no real choice...and here we are. It has not always been easy, but it has certainly been worth it. One particularly hard aspect of choosing to Home Educate was...you know...telling others. In fact, the most flack we got was from other Christians. In the early days I found myself justifying many times to “bothers and”... oops, I mean “brothers and sisters in Christ” why we chose to Home Educate.

I found many had the perception that all our children did was sit at home all day and do “school work”. Now to a certain extent, due to the terminology we use, either “*Home* Schooling” or “*Home* Education”, we do give this perception using the word “home”. Now “home”, as we all know, has different meanings. When Focus on the Family says, “Let’s turn our heart towards home,” its has more of a “family” connotation

Home Educators Did It

MORRINSVILLE HISTORY FAIR

Home Educators have always been a fairly creative lot. It was pretty evident earlier this month, Wednesday 2 July, when a “History Fair” was held at Morrinsville (north-east of Hamilton). This was the second time the home educators of the area had held such an event, last year being the first one. This year the registrations were up by 40%, with 40 individual and family projects being entered. Organiser Robyn Smith says it was a resounding success with everyone having a lot of fun during the day.

The day started around 9.30am, with people arriving to set up their exhibits. Robyn then welcomed everyone, explained how the day was going to run and invited each child to stand by his or her exhibit. It was very gratifying, and a measure of how impressive last year’s effort must have been, to see that six or seven dads had taken the day off work to come and be part of what their children were doing, as well as mums and nanas! The adults were asked to go around and talk with the children about what they had done. Feedback from last year indicated that the children had really appreciated the adult interest in their projects.

Judging started straight away with an independent judge, Diana Makker, doing the primary-aged children’s



Zachary Smith
Napoleon and the Battle of Austerlitz



Eldon Pitchford of Matamata &
Soirse Chapman of Hamilton

Diana was very impressed with the quality of entries and particularly awarded marks for those children who were articulate in describing their work.

Judging all the exhibits was too big a load for Diana alone so Grant and Robyn Smith, not having any children entered in the older age group, judged these exhibits. The local Piako Post newspaper was in attendance and interviewed both organisers and exhibitors. He said he was very impressed with the size of the occasion. He not only asked to be invited again next year but also expressed interest in home educating his own preschool children.

Once judging was complete, the prizes were handed out by Helen from the local “Books & More” shop which was happy to donate prizes and set up a small book-stall with discounted books.

Each child who had taken part received a chocolate bar and a certificate. As a reading of the results will show, the quality of entries was very high, indicating that every entrant was a winner due to the benefits gained by the amount of work they would have put in.

The day finished with a shared lunch and a lovely time of fellowship. Consider joining them next year, the last Wednesday of Term 2. They already reckon they’ll need a larger hall!

The prizewinners were:

Up to 7 years: 1st prize - Emma Griffiths of Hamilton, with her project on NZ in the 1850s. Emma hand-made her own tasty butter to go with her project.

Highly commended - Bonnie Pitchford of Matamata with “The History of Stoves” (with lots of little salt-dough models of stoves through the ages!) and Ruth Marshall of Hamilton, with “A Touch of Silk”, an interesting history of silk.

8 - 10 years: 1st prize - Bradley Griffiths of Hamilton with a project on the Middle Ages included several scale models of siege machines such as mangonels.

Highly commended - Zachary Smith of Morrinsville on “Napoleon and the Battle of Austerlitz” and Keziah Baxendine of Matamata on “Hebrew Clothing”.

11 years and up: 1st prize - Soirse Chapman of Hamilton on “The Early Settlers of NZ” - a large project with period artifacts on display.

Highly commended - Eldon Pitchford of Matamata with a fabulous project on Thomas Edison that included a telegraph machine that he had built; and Michael Fowlie of Hamilton with his project on Ancient Egypt that included a computer programme that he had written to demonstrate it.

Exploring God’s Creation



Last year, our family helped my sister prepare an insect collection for a university paper. We had lots of fun catching bugs. Jonathan (3 years old at the time) got thoroughly involved in the whole process. As well as learning to catch, identify and freeze the insects, he dreamed up a new species of insect and wrote (well... illustrated and dictated) a book about them.⁶ When I saw the final collection, it occurred to me how easy it would be to build up my own collection.

Go to the Ant

by Peter van den Brink

Insects have always been a source of fascination to me. They supply us with a very easy and amusing opportunity to enjoy the wonder of God’s creation.

I used to spend a bit of time just watching the ants in our kitchen in Auckland. We once discovered a small pile of dust on top of our microwave that reappeared after we cleaned it up. I examined the dust closely to try to discover its source and found that among the particles were numerous ant parts – legs, antennae, heads and whole ants as well. As I was looking at this, I happened to glance up to observe an ant poking its head out from the crack under the cupboard door and dropping another piece of debris onto the pile. I had just seen a member of the ant garbage disposal team! I had been aware of the way God caused ants to organise themselves, but this small personal discovery filled me with a new sense of wonder.¹

God encourages us in the Proverbs to “go to the ant”² and to find wisdom in the locust.³ Of course, it’s not only those creatures specifically mentioned in Scripture that reveal God’s wisdom. As someone said, we live in a world “charged with the grandeur of God,”⁴ and every part of God’s creation has, in a spiritual sense, the label “made by Yahweh” inscribed upon it. In my view, insects bear that label in a remarkably plain and accessible way.

Most people will have read something about insects, but have you ever stopped to wonder at God’s wisdom and creativity as demonstrated by the sheer variety of bugs out there? There are the familiar ones like bees and butterflies, beetles and flies. If you stretch the definition of “bugs” beyond just insects, you can include spiders and centipedes and other creepy crawlies. Insects live just about everywhere, from hair follicles to deserts, mountain tops to jungles. And every one of them has its own wisdom and its own peculiar task as God has seen fit.

People often make use of the God-given abilities of insects. Bees make honey for us, silk worms make silk. The way people have made use of insects’ abilities to control other species (“biological control”) has often fascinated me. On a school science trip, I learned that tiny wasps are used to control whitefly on tomato crops. I have heard that praying mantises are used to control insects on some orchards. I read recently about the work of John Mann M.B.E. who was involved with breeding insects (*Cactobastis cactorum*) to control prickly pear plants in Australia.⁵ This insect cleared vast tracts of land that had become unusable because of an introduced plant. Awesome!

The process is quite simple, and doubtless there are books available for those who need more details. Having caught and frozen your bug you can wait until you have 10 to 20 minutes free to thaw and mount it. I have done this with a number of pins and some corrugated cardboard pieces. It’s usually a bit fiddly and delicate work to arrange the wings etc just right and to hold them there until it dries. Leave the bug to dry for a few days out of the sun and away from the damp. It’s a good idea to label each bug as to where and when you found it, and if possible, what species it is (great for classification skills). Once dry, you can store it in a box, mounted on its pin and stuck onto a piece of cardboard or polystyrene. They keep very well - I recently saw a beautiful collection prepared by a teachers college student over 40 years ago.

If the Westminster Shorter Catechism is right in saying that “the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever,” then here is a simple, fun way to enjoy God through what He has created. The latest *Creation* magazine⁷ has an article about a man who has written a book based on 30 years of butterfly collecting and study.⁸ This man has spent a lifetime enjoying this one type of insect that God created!

Whether or not you choose to look more closely at bugs in particular, or at some other aspect of creation, make it a study in the enjoyment of God.

Notes:

1. Of course I had to poison the ants (a bug out of place is a pest, just as a plant out of place is a weed) which seemed a pity.
2. Proverbs 6:6-8
3. Proverbs 30:27
4. Gerard Manly Hopkins in Sire, J.W., *The Universe Next Door*, IVP, 1988, p. 22.
5. <http://www.answersingenesis.org/docs/3516.asp>
6. van den Brink, J.E. *All About Spiderclomps*, 2002.
7. *Creation* vol. 25 no. 3
8. It is interesting to note that Bernard d’Abrera, the author of the book, goes out of his way to indicate how utterly foolish and unscientific evolution is. He writes, “Evolutionary Man, having slandered and libelled Biblical Man into impotent irrelevance, is now leading mankind backwards down atavistic pathways into terrifying auto-demolition of civilisation and all that is transcendently good.”

(Peter, MSc, is an analytical chemist at the Wool Research Organistaion in Christchurch. He has been married to Ruth for six and a half years, and they have two children: Jonathan (4) and Hannah (2), whom they plan to home educate.)

Tough Questions People Ask



How can we get our children to be musically talented when we are not?

by Sue Fairhead

My two teenage sons have turned out very musical despite my (and my husband's) inability to play or sing anything, so I guess I have a little experience. My suggestions, which may not come out in any logical order would be:

1) The obvious one - listen to a lot of good music. Classical CDs seem to be available very inexpensively in some places, and this is the best way to introduce a musical environment at a young age without any pressure. My two much preferred listening to Mozart or Vivaldi when they were two or three than any nursery rhymes or the like. When he was about five, my older son couldn't get to sleep unless he was listening to Mozart's clarinet concerto!

2) A piano is a great instrument to have in the home - it doesn't need to be new, but in my opinion it does need to be reasonably good. I'd suggest looking out for a second-hand one; maybe talk to a piano tuner as they often have inside information and tend to make good recommendations of what's worth having. A piano is good because it's easy for a small child to pick out a tune. As the keys are laid out in logical order (so to speak!) the relationships between the notes is obvious. The relationship between naturals and the sharps and flats is also obvious. Having said that, a piano is not really an easy instrument to learn to play well: so don't be disappointed if your children never get beyond the tune-picking-out stage. However if you could pick up your skills on the piano, it's a great instrument for playing to singing, or with other instruments, and pianists are always welcome just about anywhere!

3) Descant recorders are inexpensive and also can be good as "first" instruments, since they don't require much breath-power and are light and easy to handle by a small child. On the other hand, they can sound dire. My sons went to school when they were younger and were very blessed to be taught by a dedicated and enthusiastic recorder teacher. She taught descant recorder to all the Year 3 children, then those who chose to continue joined an ensemble that played in Assemblies. They then learned the alto (treble) recorder in Year 5, and the tenor or bass in Year 6 - at which point a select group of about 12 children made

a recorder consort for special occasions. Those that did well did really well, but many weren't interested. If you know someone who's a keen recorder player and willing to introduce young children to the instrument, then it could be an excellent starting point. But it has to be taken seriously, like any other instrument — and it's all too easy to play the recorder very badly and put someone off music forever.

4) Violins — the smaller sizes are for smaller children. Very young children can learn to play on a quarter-size using the "Suzuki" method which is mostly ear-training at first. It's a little controversial and not always guaranteed to be successful — some children do brilliantly starting this way, others don't. I'd suggest you research online and see if there are any Suzuki teachers or other violinists locally, if this is an instrument you particularly like. They would then be able to recommend what to buy or may have one available for rent to start with, if your children show some interest.

5) If there's any chance of joining a choir of any sort, I can highly recommend it! My sons joined a local children's choir when they were eight and six, and picked up loads of music theory, new songs, techniques for singing and so on along with having a lot of fun. Singing is always useful and early choir training seems to help a lot in developing a good ear for music and a good sense of rhythm as well.

6) One of the most useful books I've ever read is *The Right Instrument for Your Child* — which I see is available second-hand from Amazon.co.uk but not new; perhaps it's no longer in print. Libraries often stock it. It's an overview of just about every instrument, with pros and cons, linking to the child's bone structure, size, mouth, personality, etc. When I read it, knowing very little about music, it seemed likely that my older son would be "right" for the clarinet or flute and my younger son for the piano or guitar... and guess what? (Read on!)

7) Watch the child for clues. Once I'd read the above book, I realised that successful music learning was about finding an instrument that suited the child, and one which the child would naturally gravitate towards. As a toddler, my older son would always play with toy instruments that had to be blown....and then took to the recorder like the proverbial duck to water when he was in school. He was also in school when wind instruments were "tried out" in Year 4. He had rather liked the idea of playing flute, but when he had a try on the various instruments available, he immediately fell in love with the clarinet! He was able to have lessons, and within a year took (and passed with merit) grade 3. He still plays at 16 in the town band and the church worship group and is hoping to learn the saxophone too, which is not dissimilar. He also still plays recorders and was recently in a professional medieval consort with some friends, playing at a banquet.

My other son, by contrast, would pick up anything

(Continued on page 19: *Music*)

(Continued from page 14: *Music*)

like a plastic spade when he was only two or three years old and strum it like a banjo or guitar. He also wanted to play any toy or real piano that was around and taught himself a few tunes. At four he asked for a toy guitar, and at about seven he asked for a real one — we bought him a 3/4 size guitar from Argos. He didn't really take to the recorder at school and wasn't very keen on any of the wind instruments. However at eight he started piano lessons and then guitar lessons at 11. The Argos guitar was fine for a year, then his teacher asked us to buy him a *better* one. Fortunately my parents came to the party, so he got rather a nicer one than he would have done otherwise! At 14 he now plays piano in church with the band when the regular pianist is away, otherwise he's the band's guitarist. He also leads worship on his guitar in Sunday School and also with an outreach group for students that our church runs.

8) Conclusion: I wouldn't recommend buying expensive instruments at this point, since you don't know what will appeal to your children, and some are difficult to make sounds from anyway. But if you do come across very inexpensive instruments, or are given some to try, then make the most of it and see how your children react. Watch to see what kind of music appeals to them, and see if they're interested in trying other instruments they might see at other people's homes. You might also want to visit a large music store — some of them will let children try out a variety of instruments, giving advice on how to hold them, etc., and may have schemes for renting them if they're not sure about playing long-term.

Music is a wonderful thing for children, and I'm so thankful we were in the right places at the right time (yes, even including school!) for my two to start on this path and to gain their own love of music in many forms. In recent years when I've seen some other teenagers fall right away from the Church (even if temporarily), my sons have been so involved in the musical side that they've continued with a definite "role", alongside other teens and some adults.



Richard & Sue Fairhead and sons Daniel (16) and Timothy (14) are from the UK but have been living in Cyprus for the past five and a half years since Richard is involved in a mission agency that works in the Middle East. Their home educating started with the move to Cyprus; they liked it so much they have continued. Sue has a website about home education in the UK at www.homeed.cjb.net.

Letters



Praying for Direction

A friend lent me a copy of *Keystone* to encourage me as I was praying for direction for our family regarding homeschooling our four children. We have now decided to take our two school age children out of school. Keystone, I believe, will offer invaluable encouragement. I look forward with great anticipation to receiving this wonderful journal.

S.....
Buckinghamshire
England

The Willies

Thank you both for your time and effort. You are a tremendous blessing to me personally. I can't express how grateful I am to you both in what at times may seem a thankless task. *Keystone* just keeps on showing me we have made the right decision and *TEACH Bulletin* fair gives me the willies to see what is going on behind the scenes. Both positively reinforce our decision to home school. Bless you both in your ministry.

N.....
Renwick

(Continued on page 24: *Letters*)

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Training Our Children to Worship.....	Page 17
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