

Keystone

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



Featured Family
David & Sharon Wilson
Dallas 12, Phillip 16, Justina 14,
Jesse 18, Jordan 21,
Courtney 20, Bethany 7, Ariana 10.

September 2003

(Continued from page 6: **Wilson**)

cake shop. He passed his grade seven piano exam in 2002. In 2000 we had the children take part in the Australian Schools Competitions. Jesse was awarded a High Distinction in English and Chemistry. Later, he was awarded a trophy (Award of Excellence) from the Royal Australian Chemical Institute for gaining a mark that put him in the top 1% of all Australasia. He has just been selected to go to the World Youth Chess Championships to be held in Greece in October.

Phillip: 16 years old, our very practical, “hands-on” boy. If ever there is anything that needs doing around the yard or house, Phillip’s the man! He has struggled with mild dyslexia and learning difficulties but has made excellent progress. I’m still amazed that he can manage the ACE English at the level he is at. It is not easy with its emphasis on syntax, but he has plodded away steadily and has been rewarded for his diligence. He is an invaluable support to me, and he hopes to do an apprenticeship of some sort, maybe in carpentry. He works part-time for Pizza Hut and also plays the piano.

Justina: has just turned 14 years old Our “songbird” sings, plays the piano and violin and has learnt tap dancing for the past 4½ years. She is very neat, methodical and organised and is developing into a very good cook. She likes to knit and has knitted me a patchwork blanket and is now knitting one for Dad. Also likes to read and keeps fit with two paper runs and a circular route. She gained high distinction and distinction in English and Maths respectively for the Australian Schools Competitions.

Dallas: 12 years old, is another Chess enthusiast. He attends the Wellington Chess Club along with Jesse. He plays the piano, gaining distinction in his last exam, likes to read and goes bush walking with Phillip (they like to imagine they’re pig hunters!). He also has a paper and circular delivery run. Another quiet boy, very servant-hearted. He also gained high distinction and distinction in English and Maths respectively for the Australian Schools Competitions.

Ariana: 10 years old, is the chatterbox and tomboy of the family. She likes to do fearless stunts on her bicycle (I’m glad I don’t know about half of them!) She makes up for all the quiet members of the household. If ever a marathon competition was held for non-stop talking, Ariana would win hands down! She learns the piano and does ballet. She is very scientifically minded and can bake some nice cakes. She shares a paper and circular delivery run with her siblings.

Bethany: Our baby turns seven in October. She loves to read, and her favourite books are the *Little House* books and *Milly-Molly-Mandy* series. She is very maternal and loves playing with her dolls. She also learns ballet and is very eager to learn the piano.

Well, that ends the introduction to our family. I’m grateful for the support and encouragement of my husband over the years. Also the encouragement I get from Craig and Barbara Smith’s articles in *Keystone* (and it’s great to hear you on Radio Rhema, Craig).

Most of all, we thank the Lord for the way He has sustained us over the years. We are just an ordinary family, and we have our struggles, failings and weaknesses like anybody else. But we all have access to an extraordinary God who promises “never to leave us nor forsake us”. What started out as a preference is now an unswerving conviction that the home is the best place to train, educate, nurture and disciple our children in the way of the Lord. Praise be to God!

(Continued from page 9: **Future**)

deeply of the humanist air drawn from ancient Greece and filtered through Enlightenment Europe. The humanist worldview puts man at the center of the world and man’s mind as the supreme arbiter of truth. In this system education — that is, intellectual achievement — is all-important. The humanist solution to every problem known to man is more education.

Our brothers who propose the superiority of Christian schools over home schooling are showing a bias toward intellectual achievement that is not drawn from the Bible. The most important question is whether the educational method is designed to pass on the faith and to reach and transform the heart, not whether it will lead to the highest intellectual achievement. God’s method for reaching the heart of the next generation with the Christian faith is home-based discipleship with the parents as the instructors.

The Institutional Efficiency Fallacy
Modern men, Christians included, often conclude that the most efficient methodology is always the best. However, when the task is the production of mature Christian disciples, efficiency is not the standard. There, effectiveness is measured by the fruit in the life of the person being trained, not by efficient cost-to-production comparisons.

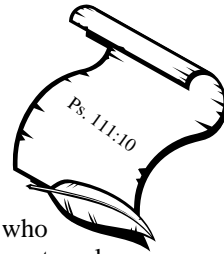
It is the “dreadful inefficiencies” of home schooling – one-to-one tutoring/mentoring as opposed to one-teacher-to-thirty-students-in-a-classroom efficiencies – that are the source of its great success in passing on Biblical values of faith, character, socialization, family solidarity and intellectual achievement. Even very ordinary home educating parents are effective, for this mentoring, one-on-one system is so much closer to God’s revealed method for shaping human beings than are the classroom alternatives, efficient as they may be.

Conclusion

We ought to be teachable and strive to improve the common model of home education. And by all means, we ought to have academic excellence as one of our goals. Yet it would be a giant leap backward for Christians to abandon home education in favour of establishing new institutional schools. We ought to stick with our wildly unregulated, dreadfully inefficient, hopelessly homey system, simply because it works better than any other system in terms of achieving the goals God sets before Christian parents.

[Phil (BA; MDiv) and Pam Lancaster totally home educate their six children aged 24 to 10. Phil has been a seminar and conference speaker on home education, spiritual leadership of men, family-based church and related issues since 1986. Phil edits *Patriarch* magazine, founded in 1993.]

Editorial



New Zealand is an amazing place. If we Kiwis want to keep it as a decent place to live, we who understand that there is unchanging, eternal truth (the Bible), and that life is linear (going from where we are to a definite end on Judgment Day) rather than endlessly cyclical...we are going to have to get busy and both model and explain these things to the rest of society. This is a long-term project, but we Christian home educators should be way out ahead in thinking outside the box and in discipling our children to be as consistently Christian as they can.

We can also permeate the society much more easily. Why do I say this? Because our natural networks already cover the whole country. This was illustrated to me once again (that is, it has happened to me before and is a common report I hear among other Kiwis travelling abroad) when I got on a plane recently and sat next to a guy who had to be 30 years younger. He was from Greymouth, for crying out loud, not exactly a major centre of influence for either commerce, industry or tourism. Yet sure enough, as soon as I mentioned I had friends just north of town, in an area called Coal Creek, he said, “Oh, that’ll be the Ropers.”!! At first I couldn’t believe it. But then the Ropers, you see, because they are Christians and home educators, tend to be involved in a number of things that put them in touch with a lot of people. And so it is with most of us: our influence stretches a lot farther than we think.

I want to quote a bit from a new book, *Uniting Church and Home* by Eric Wallace:

Many household leaders do not see themselves as educators of their children because the word “education” has been redefined by our culture to describe a purely academic, programmed process. This, coupled with the fact that for almost a century parents have been sending their children off to school every day has had a deleterious effect upon parents’ understanding of themselves as home-educators or home-disciplers. As a result, fundamental needs like character, growth, morality, Biblical virtue and healthy relationships are not seen as part of the education process. Education is no longer a process of learning how to learn, or learning how to be a spiritually mature person; instead, it has been reduced to the refinement of marketable skills and the teaching of a worldview that is diametrically opposed to the Judeo-Christian view.

Keystone is dedicated to helping Christian families, fathers in particular, develop and keep sharp the vision of training up the next generation of believers who will not just cope with the big, bad world out there, but who will eat this place alive, turning it “upside down” for the Lord, taking every thought captive to obey Christ.

NZ is a bite-sized country, tailor-made as a place where the people of God, as they faithfully follow Him and train their children to do the same, will be able to see in a single lifetime visible fruits of their labours.

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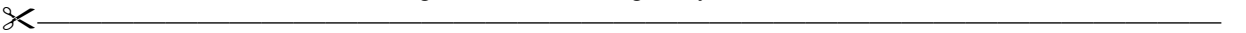
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The University of Chicago recently published some statistics by Tom W. Smith of Chicago’s national Opinion Research Center. Noting that in the 1950s the most common age for brides was 18, Smith reported that today the average age at which people were **ready for marriage** was 25.7. In addition, those surveyed felt that **having children was the milestone which represented true adulthood**. The average age before having children was 26.2. As I read those statistics, I couldn’t help but note that, in addition to the extension of adolescence to the mid-twenties, the average time from marriage at age 25.7 to child-bearing at 26.2 was just 0.5 years, or six months. That at least explains why they eventually do get married! **The cult of youth** is a cult of *immaturity and irresponsibility*. **The Christian** believes he is created for a purpose and thinks in terms of *work, calling and the assumption of responsibility*. Mark R. Rushdoony, President, Chalcedon Foundation, May 2003.

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 19 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 books the Foundation sells 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 “Christian Home Schoolers & Home Education Foundation”, reference 10898651, ph. (06) 357-4399, through Telecom’s “School Connection” Programme. TelstraClear subscribers can ring 0508 888 800 and ask to support the Home Education Foundation, ph. (06) 357-4399, through TelstraClear’s “Friends of the School” Programme. Please ring today!



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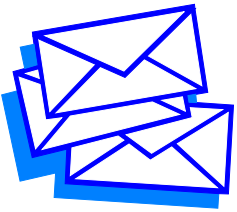
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Letters



None as Good

Thanks for such a wonderfully encouraging magazine. Have seen quite a few American magazines but none of them are as good as yours.

Trudy Kinloch
Shropshire, UK

Hate to Be Without

I’d hate to be without my *Keystone*! Thanks for the encouraging talk you gave on “Emotional Purity” last month. Tom said I should drag him out to any future evenings such as that one. He’s so glad he came. God’s grace be with you both.

Tom & Fran Townshend
Christchurch, NZ

Wanted:

Christian pen-friends for students of English in Turkey (for ages 11 to adult). Make a friend with similar interests and share the Gospel! To be assigned a Turkish pen-friend and receive helpful guidelines, send: your name, postal/email address, age, gender and a brief list of interests. No one under 11 without adult assistance. You may have more than one pen-friend if you wish. We normally assign persons of the same gender. Respond to: postalfriends@cs.com.

Steve Hagerman
TWOsh@onlinecol.com

Back on Track

This is a belated thank-you note for the wonderful workshop of yours in Nelson I attended in June. You really helped to get me back “on track” with my children. I bought the book by the Bluedorns [*Teaching the Trivium*] and although I haven’t finished reading it all, I have read the chapters that apply to my children’s ages, and I love it! It has really challenged me. Don’t yet know if I can get my head around Latin, Greek and Hebrew, but if I could get some good books, I’d be willing to start it off and see how we go!

Kerry Watson
Picton, NZ

Free from Bondage

I want to thank you so much for all the great teaching about Classical Education imparted in the Nelson H.E. Seminar. I have read *Teaching the Trivium* and have found it such a great inspiration! God has brought a renewed vision in so many areas — God bless you both! I feel that the secular model of education so ingrained in me has finally had a funeral service! Jesus did come to set us *free* — from every area of bondage. It was great to get to know you more.

Margaret
South Island, NZ

Teaching Tips



Decimals and Fractions

God’s numbers are absolute. A dictionary might give five pronunciations for “resource”, and grammarians might not agree on whether to use “hopefully” at the beginning of a sentence. But who can argue that 314 is the same as 3.14 or that 2/3 is more than ¾? Pupils may stare at algebra lessons and sigh, “I’ll never use this!”, but they cannot say this about decimals and fractions! Woe to the cook who cannot triple a recipe that needs 2/3 cup of flour and to the farmer who writes a cheque for \$2,270 when he meant \$22.70!

Since decimals and fractions are so foundational, teaching them should begin early. Even a first grader can learn that ½ is less than one. Not only should introductions be early – they should also be *thorough*. Be willing to drill, practice and review fractions and decimals until your pupils can handle them with ease. A sixth grader who moves on to upper grades while struggling with these concepts is like the hunter who needs to make new arrows every day. He can get the job done, but it takes him much longer than necessary.

Pupils need to understand that decimals and fractions are closely related and often interchangeable. Three-fourths is the same value as 0.75, is the same value as 75% is the same value as ¾. Use practical demonstrations from life around you profusely. Cut rhubarb pies for Sunday dinner, fill and empty oil barrels, sell lawn mowers at a given commission, figure GST on a load of home education books you’re bringing in from California, etc., etc., etc.

Teach the potency of the decimal point. It is a multiplier and a divider as well as a value-establishing character. Teach exactly where to place the decimal point in a quotient or product. And demonstrate why you cannot afford to guess at this. Teach shortcuts: use cancellation when multiplying fractions; find 1/10 of any given number mentally by moving the decimal point. Shortcuts are not to stimulate laziness; they are to save time and avoid frustration.

Young mathematicians must learn to recognize unreasonable answers. Having \$33.75 as the price for a box of cereal just does not make sense. If a candy bar weighs 2 ounces, 1/3 of the bar cannot weigh 6 ounces. Teach that the bar between the numerator and the denominator always means “divided by”: ¾ really means three divided by four; 9/4 means nine divided by four.

Finally, be inexhaustibly patient. Remember that while you may be doing this for the thousandth time, this may well be the first time your child has ever faced it. If they don’t pick it up this year, next year’s almost a certainty! May you be delighted by God’s numbers.

(Reprinted from *The Christian School Builder*, Sept 2002.)

Have Public Attitudes About Homeschooling Changed?

An annual Gallup poll indicates public opinion is mixed. Respondents who regard homeschooling as a “bad thing” dropped from 73% in 1985 to 57% in 1997 (Rose and others 1997). In 1988, when asked whether parents should have a right to choose homeschooling, 53% thought they should (Gallup and Elam 1988).

Eighty-two percent of respondents in 1988 agreed that those providing instruction at home should “be required to meet the same teacher certification standards as the public schools.” In 1997, 88% agreed that homeschools should “be required to guarantee a minimum level of educational quality.” And in 1999, 92% said that children educated at home should take all the state and national assessments required of public-school students (Rose and Gallup 1999).

The 1999 Gallup survey asked, for the first time, about publicly supported services for homeschooled children. Access to special-education courses in public schools was favoured by 92% of respondents; 80% would allow homeschooling teachers to participate in teacher-development activities; 74% would allow participation in school extracurricular activities; 73% would allow children to enrol in driver’s education; and 53% would provide transportation services.

In sum, the growth rate in home instruction is slowing. Legal issues now focus narrowly on specific regulations or access to resources. Public programs for homeschoolers are on the rise. Where test data are available, children educated at home continue to do well. Acceptance of this option is growing, though the public would like to see the practice regulated.

Notes:

1. Praise God New Zealand’s Ministry of Education is far too sensible to require such things.
2. This paragraph describes what could be dangerous accommodations, allowing the state to use money and resources to woo home educators back into its godless system.

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(Patricia M. Lines, PhD, is a Senior Fellow at the Discovery Institute (www.discovery.org) and a Research Associate at the U.S. Department of Education’s National Institute of Student Achievement.)

David & Sharon Wilson

of Wainuiomata

David and I first met at a local Open Brethren fellowship in Auckland back in the 80s; he a single man having been a believer since his varsity days and I a solo mother with five children having “come out” of Jehovah’s Witnesses and a new babe in Christ. Well, the rest is history as they say! We married and then had five more children of our own (one who is now with the Lord) giving us a family of five daughters and four sons to educate. I had always been concerned about the kind of education my children were receiving. I desired a Christian education for them, but as a single parent, it was out of my league financially. When David and I married, it was still financially prohibitive for us; maybe we could have managed to finance one or two children through Christian schools, but no more than that.

So we looked around and were fortunate enough to be able to get them all into the local Catholic primary and secondary schools. We felt on the whole that academics were sounder, discipline more consistent, and at least God wasn’t “shut out” of the picture. And after all, it was “values based”. Our children did very well at the local parish school and were happy there. But a move from the suburb of Manurewa to Papakura necessitated a change in parish schools and things changed dramatically. Although the children did well academically (except for Phillip who had learning difficulties), I felt we were losing ground socially and spiritually. The children became a lot more tense, fearful even. The younger ones often cried before leaving for school (I found out later they were being bullied); Jordan’s stutter worsened, and he often had stomach upsets (due I think to stress. By the way, the stutter disappeared after the first year of homeschooling). Then we found out that some of the “theology” in RE class was quite unbiblical; i.e. God didn’t really part the Red Sea, but a sea of Reeds, the story of Jonah was just a parable, and Ruth was a nice fictional “love story”. I’m not saying this would be the case in all Catholic schools; I can only speak from our experience with this particular one.

Well, what to do? We knew we had to do something and quickly! We still didn’t have the money for Christian schools, so it left one option - Homeschooling! We spoke to a couple of people who were homeschooling, getting advice on curriculum, exemptions, etc., and just general encouragement for the plunge we were about to take. Did I mention that by this time I had in addition to the older five: a 3½ year old, a nearly 2 year old, and I was in the latter stages of pregnancy with our eighth child? I was apprehensive to say the least! Looking back, I can see how God was providentially leading us into a way of life that would change our marriage, our parenting and our entire worldview. We often joke that God led us into homeschooling to train us as much as train the children! We left the oldest girl at the convent secondary school where she sat and passed her School Certificate, and we homeschooled

her for her sixth form year. She then attended Polytech for a year, worked for five years before settling down to marriage and motherhood — yes, we have a 3 year old grandson named Joshua. They live in Auckland and attend a local Brethren church.

My first year of homeschooling was a “challenge” to put it mildly. I started in February 1993 and gave birth to Ariana in March. She had a few feeding problems that necessitated pediatric care for a few months. I felt depressed and exhausted. David had started a new job as an Industrial Chemist and was working a 60-hr week! I was also teaching Bible in Schools. I really didn’t think I could keep going. Our very first day had everyone in tears (including me). I felt the disapproval of family, church and just about everyone else in between. I felt this enormous pressure to “produce results” that resulted in a very stressful couple of years. Now, I am much more relaxed and laid back about things, although I am still a structured person. I am not seeking man’s approval, but God’s — He is my employer, and it is to Him I will answer. I’m more concerned about character development now. In the early days, the emphasis was on academics, (namely, to shut all the critics up!). I should mention at this stage, we started using the ACE curriculum and spent a few years doing our own thing using ABeka, Saxon and some Cambridge University Press texts.

After our ninth child, Bethany, was born (up north where David taught for a year), and we moved to Wainuiomata, Wellington in 1997, I felt so stressed and busy that we went back on ACE and have been using that ever since. I have never regretted that decision. This way I know all my “basics” are being covered, and I can supplement as I see fit (which we often do with ABeka and project work, etc.). The children are all voracious readers, having got rid of the TV 10 years ago. Lots of free reading time is a great supplement to any curriculum.

I think homeschooling parents, particularly mothers, are great at comparing: but we need to remember that God has created us all as unique individuals. This in turn is going to determine the unique method in which the Lord would have each of us homeschool, including the type of curriculum we use. I’m sure we all know of families who seem “picture perfect” — immaculate homes, well-mannered children who never seem to put a foot wrong, and their children are on Saxon Algebra ½ when only 10 yrs of age! Suddenly, we feel inadequate, we don’t measure up, and depression sinks in. But comparison is deadly. Each family has its own strengths and weaknesses. God is still sovereign and has a plan for each family. We just need to trust in Him each step of the way and keep our eyes focused on Jesus. To quote someone I once heard, “If God brings you to it, He will bring you through it”. I’m sure all of us could say “Amen” to that.

With two of my homeschool graduates at varsity and one due to graduate from home at the end of this year, I am starting to see the fruit of our efforts. Things are getting easier. My “baby” is almost seven and works pretty much independently, as do the older children. For years I clung to this verse: “Do not be weary in well doing, for we shall reap if we faint not,” from Galatians 6:9. God has been faithful!

A typical day for us goes something like this:

7:00 am — Rise, get breakfast prepared and make husband’s lunch, personal prayer.
7:30 am — get children up, breakfast them.
8:00 am — chores, personal ablutions, etc.
9:00-9:30 am — Devotions. We work systematically through the entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation and start again when finished! We learn the Heidelberg Catechism with Dad in the evening.
9:30 - 11:00 am — Maths and English, dependant on the age of the children.
11:00-11:15 am — Morning tea.
11:15-12 noon — Word building/vocab/spelling/essays
Noon — Lunch break
1:00-2:00 pm — Science and social studies/history/geography.
2:00 pm onwards — electives, music practice/lessons, art, cooking, playing with dolls, playing with dog, cycling/walking in nearby park, swimming in nearby river in summer, reading, dance lessons, personal Bible reading, etc. The younger children finish their work a little earlier than older ones.

This is only a rough guide, and one has to be flexible enough to stop to hear the tuis sing so beautifully in the bush and trees that surround our house and to giggle as we watch our cats try to catch the fat wood pigeons that flutter there. We are fortunate enough to live near a beautiful recreation park with several bush walks, a small “forest”, swimming holes, trees and lots of “space”. We have it pretty much all to ourselves during the day with people at work or school. It has been a marvellous blessing. Sometimes when I’m feeling down and dispirited (which does happen!), I just take a walk through the park, and my heart is lifted up when I look at God’s beautiful creation, especially in Autumn. It is fantastic with golds, reds and yellows splashed everywhere like a masterpiece painted especially for me — and the sunsets in Wainuiomata are glorious!

Excess busyness, I think, is a curse of modern living, a device that Satan can cleverly use to ensnare many a Christian and homeschooler. You can be so busy “doing”, that you don’t have time for “being” and to “Be still and know that I am God” (Ps. 46:10). No matter what obligations or commitments we have, I make sure there is time everyday to “smell the roses” and to have “time to think”. I feel strongly that if we are to be “keepers of the home” as we are commanded in the book of Titus, if we are going to train our daughters to also carry on the mantle, then we have to be primarily in the home, focused on our husbands and families and training our daughters in homemaking arts. This is an area I did not do diligently enough with our two older girls (although our married daughter is coping admirably with motherhood and homemaking), and I am de-

termined to train my younger three daughters more Biblically and consistently. In fact, the Lord has used homeschooling to *help me* in these very areas of life, and I am now a lot more organised and disciplined in the area of homemaking and child rearing.

Some publications that are worth their weight in gold in giving valuable help in this area are “Doorposts” materials by Pam Forster. *Polished Cornerstones* is a manual full of suggestions and projects to train girls in homemaking and in developing Christian virtues. *Plants Grown Up* is a male version designed to be used by Dad with his sons in training them into godly manhood. I must mention that any book by Douglas or Nancy Wilson (no relation!) is excellent value. *Federal Husband* and *Fruit of Her Hands* clearly define male and female roles from a Biblical perspective, and we have found them to be most encouraging.

Let me now introduce our children to you:

Jordan: 21 years old and in his final year at Uni, is completing a double major in Math and Computer Programming for his Bachelor of Science. He has been a tutor and mentor for first year students for the last 18 months. He has taught music at a private boys’ school (having passed his grade eight piano exam in 1999). He works part-time at a conference centre as a waiter and *maitre de* and also with a furniture moving company every school holidays. I’m so proud of the way he has worked so hard to earn money and has still kept up successfully with his studies. He is a very private person: you have no idea how much effort it took getting him to agree to be part of this story! He plays club rugby and is also a gourmet cook!

Courtney: 20 years old, our social butterfly, flamboyant, artistic and musical (having passed her grade eight piano exam in 2000). She is in her second year at Uni doing a double degree (BA majoring in English and BMus majoring in Musicology). She has done very well and also teaches music part-time, does casual nannying and factory work during the holidays. Up until two months ago, she worked for a stationery shop in a part-time position that she had since she was 15 years old. She is also a leader in the local Girls Brigade Company. She was presented with the Queens Medal at Government House last year, and she was awarded the Wainuiomata Youth Award for Service to the Community in 2001. She is extremely creative with fashion and design and sews a lot of her own clothes.

Jesse: 18 years old, another quiet, private boy, very bookish: by age 10 he had read most of the works of Charles Dickens. In the last three years, he has developed a passion for Chess. Last year he won the national NZ Junior (under 20) Chess title and this year (in July), he travelled to Hamilton and competed in the North Island Chess Championship where he was duly bestowed with the title and returned with a trophy and a cheque for \$300. He turned 18 in June and will graduate at the end of this year. He is hoping to study either Commerce or Law next year, although he has a great love for History also. He works part-time at a stationery shop and also works some Saturdays at a wholesale

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

Parents who homeschool their children are more likely to vote, contribute money to political causes, contact elected officials about their views, attend public meetings or rallies or join community and volunteer associations (Smith and Sikkink 1999). This holds true even when researchers compare only families with similar characteristics including education, income, age, race, family structure, geographic region and number of hours worked per week.

What Is the Legal Status of Homeschooling?

Today homeschooling is legal in all states. State law generally requires homeschooling parents to file basic information with either the state or local education agency. Over half the states require some kind of evaluation under some or all of the homeschooling options available under state law. Usually, this evaluation involves testing of students, but some states accept portfolio evaluations or a teacher evaluation. Much less frequently states have education or testing requirements for parents. Some states require submission of a curricular plan. Parents do not need teaching certificates.¹

The United States Supreme Court has not explicitly ruled on homeschooling, though it is clear that reasonable regulations will be allowed. The Court has found constitutional problems with compulsory school requirements in *Wisconsin v. Yoder* (1972), a limited decision involving the Amish. Yoder has led some lower courts to extend more protection to homeschooling families with a religious orientation, compared with those with a secular orientation.

A new source of legal tension has emerged over requests for part-time access to public-school curricular or extracurricular programs. Much depends on the state’s legal and policy environment. Some state statutes mandate that local districts provide access for homeschoolers desiring to utilize curricular and extracurricular programs. Maine, for example, broadly mandates such access. Iowa mandates access to special-education programs for eligible homeschooling children.

What Resources Do Homeschooling Families Use?

Parents are, of course, the primary resource. Typically the mother takes the lead, though fathers usually pitch in. Perhaps as many as one out of ten fathers takes the primary responsibility.

Local and state support groups offer advice and assistance. Sometimes several families will share instructional duties. Local support groups form readily if there are a sufficient number of homeschooling families in an area. There is at least one state-level homeschooling association in every state, and in some states there are a dozen or more regional associations. Often parents may examine instructional materials at a book fair or association meeting.

Other popular resources include libraries, museums, colleges, parks departments, churches, local businesses and schools. Many large and small publishers offer curricular packages, books, periodicals and other materials for use in home instruction.

Public programs are growing. Alaska sponsors the Alyeska Central School where teachers in Juneau work with students all over the state via mail, the Internet, telephone and occasional home visits. In California, children can enrol in a public school’s independent-study program. Washington and Iowa laws require public schools to admit students part-time. Some public schools offer specialized homeschooling centers where families may obtain resources and instructional support or where children may take classes (Hardy 2001; Lines 2000b). An estimated 18% of children who are homeschooled enrol in school part-time; 5% enrol for nine or more hours per week (Bielick and others 2001).²

How Well Do Homeschoolers Perform Academically and Socially?

Researchers cannot tell whether the same children would perform better or worse academically in a classroom or at home. State testing data do not necessarily reflect all homeschoolers because not all comply with the testing requirement. Other testing efforts rely on volunteers.

Keeping that caveat in mind, where testing data are available, homeschoolers do well. For example, in Alaska, the state’s Alyeska Central School has tested its homeschooling children for several decades. As a group they usually score above average in any subject area and at all grade levels. The largest study to date, commissioned by the Home School Legal Defense Association, involved 12,000 students tested through the Bob Jones University testing services. The homeschooled children placed in the 62nd to the 91st percentile of national norms, depending on grade level and subject area (Rudner 1999).

At least one intriguing study suggests that student achievement for homeschoolers is not related to the educational attainment of the parent (Duvall and others 1997). This is consistent with tutoring studies that suggest the education level of a tutor has little to do with achievement of a tutored child.

College admission also may suggest success. Homeschoolers have reported admission to over 1,000 different U.S. colleges and universities (Bunday 2001).

People disagree about whether homeschooling helps or hinders a child’s social development. Homeschooling children spend less time with peers and more time with people of different ages. Most participate in scouting, church groups and other associations. Many volunteer in their communities. Some operate a business. There is no conclusive research suggesting that additional time with same-aged peers is preferable to more time with individuals of varying ages.

to the ground. In this case, when the butterfly emerged eight days later, the wings would probably be damaged, and the insect would perish. But in the flick of an eyelash, a black rod-like cremaster is thrust from the hind end of the blind chrysalis and into the silk. On its end is a bulb covered with several hundred microscopic hooks. This is the perfect device to hook into the button of silk on the first pass. Immediately the chrysalis twists the cremaster several times to screw it tightly into the silk. Now the chrysalis is securely attached to the twig, and the discarded skin falls to the ground. The whole dramatic transformation from caterpillar to chrysalis took only 60 seconds!⁵

So who invented Velcro? The Monarch butterfly invented it! Or did accidental, purposeless, unplanned evolution invent it? The author challenges the entire evolutionary science establishment to explain how evolution created this device and the coordinated instinctive behaviour. Remember that this highly integrated system of structural design and the sequence of instinctive behaviours must work without fail if the species is to survive. All the other marvellous mysteries of the creature become useless and impossible if the cremaster and the button of silk do not exist and if the chrysalis does not have the instinctive behaviour to use them correctly. What kind of system existed before this system was “invented” by evolution? What sequence of trial and error mutations and natural selection had to take place to perfect this system? How could the species survive while this was happening? There are no satisfactory scientific answers to these questions, no testable scientific theories. It is not the least bit “unscientific” for us to conclude that God created the Monarch and that God designed Velcro.

I am reminded of a conversation between two robots in the newspaper cartoon, “Frank and Ernest.” One robot is holding in his mechanical hand a copy of Darwin’s *Origin of Species*. He says to his associate, “Nuttier research and development program I ever heard of!”

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Home Education Research



An Overview of Homeschooling

by Dr. Patricia Lines

Homeschooling – educating children under the supervision of parents instead of school teachers – has grown steadily over the past several decades. In an earlier era many children studied at home. But by the beginning of the twentieth century, schools had become commonplace and (U.S.) states had adopted compulsory school-attendance laws. Only a few states allowed homeschooling as an exception to the attendance requirement. A few more required parents only to educate their children without specifying the means.

As a result, homeschoolers risked fines or jail sentences in most states. A few lived in jurisdictions that would not prosecute homeschoolers. Other families found protection in public or private schools that allowed children to enrol in “independent study” and then sent them home. Most families just hoped to avoid notice. Gradually, state by state, the legislature, a state court, an attorney general or a state board made homeschooling legal.

How Many Children Are Homeschooled?

The homeschooling population has grown from some 10,000 to 15,000 children in the late 1960s to perhaps one million children by 2001 (roughly 2% of the school-aged population). The National Center for Education Statistics, based on a spring 1999 household survey, estimated that from 709,000 to 992,000 children in grades K-12 were in full- or part-time homeschooling (Bielick and others 2001).

The rate of growth may be slowing. Examination of reports from eighteen states (Bunday 2001) suggests 11 percent growth per year from fall 1995 through spring 1998. That’s a sharp drop from an annual growth rate of 24% for the same states in the preceding three years. Assuming annual growth of 10%, from 943,700 to 1,320,000 children would be homeschooled by the school year 2001-02.

Families that elect to educate their children at home come from all major ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds and all income levels. However, homeschoolers are more likely to be religious, conservative, white, better educated and part of a two-parent family compared with the average American family. Homeschooling families tend to have more children and be middle-class (Bielick and others 2001; Henke and others 2000; Rudner 1999).

The Faith of Us Fathers

Controversies call for cool heads initially. Then they invite one to be decisive and take sides in the controversy. Two highly respected Christian home educators here express quite differing views. Please note, both have been shortened and edited by *Keystone*’s editor. Steve Schlissel’s piece originally appeared in the December 2002 issue of *Christian Culture*. It can be viewed in its entirety at: <http://www.messiahnyc.org/ArticlesDetail.asp?id=277>. Phil Lancaster’s full article was posted on 13 February 2003 at: <http://www.visionforumministries.org/sections/hotcon/ht/education/futureofhomeschooling.asp>

The End of Home Schooling

by Steve Schlissel



Don’t get upset with me over the title. You can read the word “end” as “goal.” That’s the way St. Paul used the word in Romans 10:4: Christ is the end, *i.e.*, the goal of the Law. In speaking of the end of homeschooling we are speaking firstly of its goal.

Yet there is more up our sleeve, we admit. Christ was the end of the Law as its goal *and* the one who ended (much of) its observance.

What has this to do with homeschooling? It provides a framework for us to ask about the end of homeschooling. Covenant (that is, Christian) community schools were nearly obliterated by public education. However, the spirit of these schools was kept alive by the homeschooling movement. And the movement will reach its goal with the revivification of covenant community schools.

But just as some Jewish Christians violently opposed the end of the Law, so we can expect some homeschoolers to militantly oppose the movement coming to fruition in a new (recovered and improved) norm. The purpose of this article is to encourage us to see homeschooling as a necessary but transitional phenomenon. It is also offered to encourage rejoicing, not consternation, at the thought of covenant community schools being the goal.

The homeschooling movement among Christians arose within a context. Though many families have chosen homeschool over Christian schools (often with cause), it became a *phenomenon* because of the Leviathan it was designed to escape: government-provided, Humanist education. In 1886, A.A. Hodge prophetically warned, “I am as sure as I am of the fact of Christ’s reign that a comprehensive and centralized system of national education separated from religion, as is now commonly proposed, will prove the most appalling engine for the propagation of anti-Christian and atheistic unbelief, and of anti-social, nihilistic ethics, individual, social and political, which this sin-rent world has ever seen.” The single greatest factor in the moral destruction of our civilization has surely been the propagation of the Lie by compulsory public education.

As Christians awoke to this fact, we properly were concerned less about the problems with homeschooling

The Future of Home Schooling

by Phil Lancaster



Those of us who home school tend to be found on the more strong-willed and opinionated end of the personality spectrum, and we are tempted to believe that home schooling as we practice it is simply the best way to raise children, period. However, we dare not presume that we have discovered the best, the final way of doing anything. We need to acknowledge that our first-generation efforts will undoubtedly be improved upon by those who come after and seek to follow in our steps.

Cooperative Home-Based Education

Rev. Schlissel is correct when he emphasizes the importance of Christian community. One of the chief sins of modern evangelicalism is individualism, and because home schoolers are cultural non-conformists, they are especially afflicted with this failing. But God wants Christians to live lives characterized by mutual dependence, service and love.

Cooperation in our educational endeavours makes sense as an expression of Christian community. The principle of the division of labour is a scriptural idea that is derived from the doctrine of spiritual gifts. Some form of interdependence would seem to be necessary and beneficial. However, it is a big leap to conclude that since we may benefit from having someone else teach our children chemistry, that we need to move completely beyond home education toward institutional schooling.

So while Rev. Schlissel’s emphasis on community is a corrective which most home schoolers need to hear, and while cooperation can meet some real challenges in the home education enterprise, there is no need to abandon home schooling altogether, and there are many reasons to stick with it.

The “Downsides” of Home Schooling

Pastor Schlissel’s “downsides” of home schooling seem to me to be insubstantial or nonexistent.

1.) First is “the dreadful inefficiency” compounded in “households with several children.” He must mean all these parent-teachers giving instruction to one child at a time, as compared with a classroom in which a teacher can teach thirty children at once.

This supposed weakness of the home schooling method

than with its benefits as an alternative to State-spread evil. Though not always thought of self-consciously in these terms, the *goal* of the homeschooling movement has been and is still the recovery and maintenance of the Antithesis, the indispensable predicate of the covenant. When God rescued our first parents from Satan’s grip, the rescue began with an imposed hostility: “I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and hers.” That “hostility” is the Antithesis. It is *meant* to divide the people of God from the people of the world. The covenant people would, from that moment, be defined by who they *are* in relation to God, and who they *are not* in relation to the world.

Education is, inescapably, an antithetically defined enterprise: education will serve to strengthen one side of the Antithesis and to compromise the other. When education is Christian, it will seek to confirm children in their covenant calling in the service of the God who created and redeemed them, and who defines all things. When education is not Christian, it will be anti-Christian. If the State sponsors education, while pretending religious neutrality, the State will portray itself as the definer of all and seek to direct children’s highest loyalties to itself.

Homeschooling has achieved, among its adherents, its first goal of recovering and maintaining the Antithesis. Thanks be to God! Of course, it boasts many other benefits. Contrary to ignorant public opinion, for example, homeschooled children are superior in social skills and adeptness. They are typically bound to their families with an intensity that could not have been otherwise nurtured. And they are either at or above the academic norm found in other educational environments. Other perks could be cited, but I trust readers of this organ are familiar with them.

But the downsides are no less real. Heading the list is the dreadful inefficiency of the homeschooling enterprise. In households with several children the inefficiencies are compounded. Further, homeschooling normal children requires a radical reorientation for all family members, but to educate super-gifted and/or special-needs children is a task so daunting as to thin the homeschool ranks where these demographics occur.

Related to this is the fact which refuses to go away: home educators cannot both live their lives *and* attain competency in all the sciences, all levels of mathematics and foreign languages. In addition, homeschoolers have had to show themselves deft and creative to deal with the absence of labs and gym and team sports facilities.

Homeschooling parents are the pioneering heroes of the last twenty years. They cannot be commended too highly. They have counted the cost and borne it. They have produced results. They have tested the limits of ingenuity and come up with solutions. Without the vision and courage of homeschoolers, the whole world would have become a worse place. I mean that.

But homeschooling cannot be the last word. Even now, cooperative education is becoming increasingly com-

is actually one of its greatest strengths: each child can receive individualized instruction from a person who has time to spend with them, is not just a hireling with a professional interest, but the child’s own parent. No one knows the child better nor cares more about his success. It is indeed inefficient to give personal attention, but it makes good educational sense. That’s why rich people have always hired tutors.

2.) “Homeschooling ... requires a radical reorientation for all family members,” especially those with “super-gifted and/or special-needs children.” So what exactly is the problem with having to radically reorient family life? What more important things do parents have to do than to see to the raising of their own children? Families have traditionally performed most of the occupations related to developing and caring for human beings: birth support, child training and education, marriage preparation, business development, health care and caring for the elderly and other needy folks. Let families return some of these functions to the home, reclaiming them from the institutions that have been formed to take over what were traditionally family responsibilities. This is a good thing, not a problem! Most families could use some radical reorienting.

3.) “Home educators cannot both live their lives and attain competency in all the sciences, all levels of mathematics and foreign languages.” We already acknowledged the limitations faced by any individual and the value of cooperation.

4.) Rev. Schlissel’s comments about home schooling being, among other things, dangerous for boys make no sense to me at all. It is the traditional school model that is dangerous for boys. For the classroom model to work efficiently, little boys need to act like little girls: “Be quiet, sit still, be neat.”

The home is the dominion headquarters for everyone, not just women. While the entire scope of a woman’s dominion task is home-centered, the man also must be home-centered in the sense that he must succeed at home or he cannot be a real success outside the home where he is also called to take dominion (1 Timothy 3:5). His dominion role does not end in the home, but it certainly begins there.

Boys can have home-based training and still have plenty of exposure to other manly environments. My sons are home schooled, but they have built houses, worked with tractors, volunteered to save lives on the rescue squad, dispatched wild dogs with two-by-fours and guns, and killed a deer with a knife. Their home-based schooling has had no lack of out-of-the-home dominion work. And, by the way, is the artificial environment of a school classroom the future “dominion headquarters” of boys?

Home Schooling’s Unique Benefits

Pastor Schlissel acknowledges the spiritual, social, academic and familial benefits of home schooling. So where is the evidence of the superiority of classroom schooling? The school model falls short in four important ways.

Exploring God’s Creation

Intelligent, Purposeful Design in Nature



Do drinking giraffes have headaches?

Darwin wrote in his *Origin of Species* that he had no difficulty in imagining that a long period of drought could have caused some hypothetical short-necked ancestors of the giraffe continually to stretch their necks higher and higher to reach the diminishing supply of leaves. He had no fossil evidence, of course, for such an evolutionary history. He also apparently was not aware of certain problems peculiar to giraffes which made his easy assumption of giraffe evolution even more difficult to accept.

The giraffe heart is probably the most powerful in the animal kingdom, because about double usual pressure is required to pump blood up that long neck to the brain. But the brain is a very delicate structure which cannot stand high blood pressure. What happens when the giraffe bends down to take a drink? Does he “blow his mind?” Fortunately, three design features have been included in the giraffe to control this and related problems. In the first place, the giraffe must spread his front legs apart in order to drink comfortably. This lowers the level of the heart somewhat and thus reduces the difference in height from the heart to the head of the drinking animal, thereby reducing the excess pressure on the brain.

Second, the giraffe has in his jugular veins a series of one-way check valves which immediately close as the head is lowered, thus preventing blood from flowing back down into the brain. But what of the blood flow through the carotid artery in the neck leading to the brain?

A third design feature is the “wonder net,” a spongy tissue filled with numerous small blood vessels and located near the base of the brain. The arterial blood first flows through this net of vessels before it reaches the brain. It is believed that when the animal stoops to drink, the wonder net in some way controls the blood flow so that the full pressure is not exerted on the brain. It is also believed by scientists that probably the cerebrospinal fluid which bathes the brain and spinal column produces a counter-pressure which prevents rupture or leakage from the brain capillaries. The effect is similar to that of *g*-suits worn by fighter pilots and astronauts. Leakage from the capillaries in the legs due to high blood pressure is also probably prevented by a similar pressure of the tissue fluid outside the cells. In addition, the walls of the giraffe’s arteries are thicker than in any other mammal.

Some careful investigations and measurements of

blood pressure have been made in live giraffes in action. However, the exact manner in which the various factors operate to enable the strange creature to function has still not been clearly elucidated. Nevertheless, the giraffe is a great success. When he has finished his drink he stands up, the check valves open up, the effects of the wonder net and the various counter-pressure mechanisms relax, and all is well. Not even a headache.¹

Bats “see” with their ears

Bat echo-location capabilities are well-known but bear another look. The small insect-eating bats are master sound technicians.² When hunting in the dark, they emit rapid sequences of ultrasonic chirps, for the most part inaudible to human ears. Each chirp lasts about two milliseconds and is frequency-modulated; that is, it begins at a very high frequency, around 100,000 cycles per second, and sweeps down to about half of the initial frequency. It is believed that this enables the bat to determine the size and other characteristics of objects which reflect echoes to the bat’s ears. The shorter wavelengths reflect better from the smaller objects. The bat cannot be fooled by a pebble but will only capture insects. The most recently reported research on this subject reveals something of the extremely sophisticated mathematical analysis of echoes which groups of neurons in a bat’s brain carry out with great rapidity. The bat is able to construct three dimensional “acoustic images” of multiple objects in space around the bat out to a distance of about 16 feet.³ This feat is duplicated repeatedly to give the bat an acoustic “moving picture” of insects in space around the bat, enabling the bat to locate flying insects accurately and catch hundreds of them per hour.

The butterfly that “invented” velcro

The Monarch butterfly is a bundle of miracles in its sequence of metamorphoses during development from egg to butterfly anatomy, behavioural instincts, trans-continental migrations and precision navigation.⁴ One anatomical structure which is essential to the survival of the species is the *cremaster* possessed by the chrysalis.

The four stages of development are egg, caterpillar, chrysalis (or pupa) and butterfly. In three days the egg, 1/20th inch long, hatches a baby caterpillar, 1/10th inch long. Stuffing itself with milkweed leaves for three weeks, the caterpillar sheds its skin three times and grows to a length of 1.2 inches. One day the handsome black, white and yellow caterpillar spins a little button of silk on the under surface of a twig. Then it marches along under the twig and attaches its two hind pseudo feet to the silk button. After a while it lets go of the twig and hangs head down from the silk button. Soon the caterpillar begins convulsing, and its skin splits at the head and starts to roll up so the light green shell of the chrysalis can be seen. In only about 45 seconds the skin has entirely rolled up, exposing the entire chrysalis.

Now the hind feet of the caterpillar, connected to the chrysalis only by the inside lining of the hind gut, provide the only connection of the chrysalis to the twig. If the skin should separate now, the chrysalis would drop

The Warings sum up their ministry focus in their mission statement: “To serve by encouraging, equipping, and educating families in an entertaining way.”

Our nutty, break-neck schedule only allowed us one night with the Warings from whence we traversed untold miles of more corn, soy beans, grazing land and then open prairie across North Dakota, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta . We finally caught sight of the Rocky Mountains at the border of British Columbia then carried on north into North West Territories, Yukon and Alaska. One night just north of the 60th parallel, with the bats flying around and the beaver splashing noisily in the lake by which we’d pitched our tent, a glow in the sky attracted our attention. It soon formed into those colourful curtains known as the Aurora Borealis or Northern Lights, but lasted only about four minutes. Alanson and I felt especially blessed by the Lord, for He had allowed the two of us to see the Aurora Australis or Southern Lights about two years ago at Foxton Beach.

Zach, Alanson & I would start each day with prayer and Bible reading; we’d sing the old hymns and psalms; we’d talk on all kinds of things; and we read and discussed *Education, Christianity and the State* by J. Gresham Machen; worked our way

through the Canons of Dort, the Belgic Confession and part of the Heidleberg Catechism; and got started on *An Introduction to Christian Philosophy* by Gordon H. Clark. As we travelled south we visited family and friends in British Columbia, Washington and California. Roared through hundreds of miles of desert and cactus all the way to the Gulf of Mexico.



L to R: C.S., James & Tracy McDonald

Just outside of Houston we spent an evening with a family we felt we mirrored in many ways: a lot of children, totally committed to very similar expressions of Christ’s church, a passion for home education, and we

both edit what are probably the largest circulating magazines for Christian home educators in our respective countries: James and Tracy McDonald, editors of *Homeschooling Today* (www.homeschooltoday.com). Again we were able to share the same exciting vision of how equipping Christian home educators with both the vision and the practical tools for being ever-increasingly Biblical in family life, in thought, word and deed would in time change our communities and even change our countries.

***Homeschooling Today*® Magazine** - A focus not only on the **mechanics**, but also the **mission** and **metrics** of homeschooling. Learning from the past with a vision for the future.



Adults L to R: Doug & Beall Phillips, C.S., Zach Smith, Alanson Smith.
Children L to R: Honor, Faith, Justice and Joshua Phillips.

San Antonio, Texas, home of the Alamo is also the home of Doug & Beall Phillips, their seven children and Vision Forum (www.visionforum.com). Doug and his team are really running with this multi-generational vision of what strong and independent Christ-centred families can accomplish for themselves, the church and the nation when each member is secure in his or her faith, committed to Biblical home education and rejoicing in his or her role of service within the Christian family. When our two families shared lunch at a restaurant right up to the moment I had to leave for the airport, we had trouble eating as we were so busy discussing strategies and ideas, me furiously asking questions and scribbling down notes.

Says Doug: “The defining crisis of our age is the systematic annihilation of the Biblical family. Our mission at The Vision Forum is to facilitate the restoration of the Biblical family.”

So, praise God for His guidance and timing that I could meet so many key people and be so thoroughly encouraged and edified by them all. We will definitely see some of these good folks out here: the Warings are coming, Lord willing, in January and I am confident others will not be far behind.

mon, if not a new norm. Participants use their core curriculum at home but gather weekly (or more often) to benefit from the competencies attained by others. They may meet for philosophy classes, calculus, SAT prep or catechism lessons. But they have discovered or have at least begun to suspect that homeschooling is not, cannot be, the end. It’s an “in order to” phenomenon.

In order to what? To produce a new breed of covenant community schools. I am thinking particularly of high schools. Our vision for the next educational wave must go beyond the emergency issues addressed by homeschooling. We must move on to cultural dominion. This will require Christian schools serving covenant communities with excellence.

Let me think out loud. We need to establish single-gender prep schools which will serve as feeders for Ivy League and la-di-da colleges. (Like it or not, such schools are where cultural leaders come from — if you want the culture, get the right kids into these schools.) The Christian prep schools ought to be single-gender because method must match presuppositions and goals. Men and women are different; this should be reflected in an educational process and environment that *honours* those differences.

Moreover, we should let the little secret out of the bag that homeschooling is far more fitting for girls than for boys. By learning at home, girls are in their future dominion headquarters; boys are not. The truth is that homeschooling can be *dangerous* for boys, keeping them from challenging male role models, narrowing their field of vision, stifling their godly instinct to be aggressive, a little messy and overtly and physically competitive.

I’ve often written about the absolute necessity of covenant communities. Homeschooling permits covenant communities; it might even incline toward them. But excellent covenant schools do more than encourage Christian communities: they require them. Hey — *they create them!* Yes, people — serious Christian people — will move to be near a serious Christian prep school. Imagine a high school with Christian faculty members of sterling character who have *earned* Ph.D.s from prestigious schools. Imagine a curriculum that provides rigorous education in the Bible, history, apologetics, the humanities, math and the sciences, languages, and that calls for *earning* community service credits. Imagine a high school where uniforms are standard equipment, cleanliness is prized and honour treasured.

These are the schools that government education destroyed. Homeschooling is the first step in their recovery. Homeschooling is not the end. It’s an “in order to” thing. For these schools can only be revived and perfected if people of incredible fortitude, vision, grit and determination are behind them. In other words, these schools can only come about when *homeschoolers* decide to build them. This vision is homeschooling’s *chief end*. May it come soon.

(Steve Schlissel is the pastor of Messiah’s Congregation in Brooklyn, New York. For nearly twenty years, Steve and Jeannie have been homeschooling. Their youngest, Esther Joy, 13, is in 10th Grade. Sarah Faith, their firstborn, completed high school at 15, St. Francis College (magna cum laude) at 18, and received her CPA and MBA by 21; she was married in March, 2002.)

First, God has assigned parents to be the teachers of their children (Proverbs 1:8; Ephesians 6:4). There is nothing like a school classroom in the Bible. While parents certainly have the liberty to delegate parts of the child-training task, Biblical data indicates they need to remain the key players in the educational enterprise.

Second, the Biblical method of education is discipleship, life-to-life and heart-to-heart training (Deuteronomy 6:5-7). If the aim were the mere instruction of the mind in abstractions, then a classroom taught by a professional might be the best model. But the Biblical aim of child training is a transformed person. A student becomes like his teacher (Luke 6:40) when learning occurs in the context of real life lived in community day by day. Discipleship cannot occur very well in the artificial environment of a school classroom.

Third, age-segregated mass schooling hinders Christian character development. “Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child” (Proverbs 22:15). So what happens when young fools are gathered together, daily, several hours a day, in the classroom situation? They sink to the lowest common denominator. “He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed” (Proverbs 13:20). At home children walk with the wise, their parents, and are allowed fellowship with a wide variety of ages not just their narrow peer group.

Fourth, traditional schools are the major offenders when it comes to separating family members from one another, fragmenting family bonds. Nurturing the bonds between parents and children and brothers and sisters is vital to the Christian mission. Scripture warns of dire consequences when the intergenerational bond is weakened and promises blessing when it is strong (Malachi 4:6; Luke 1:17).

Viewed from the historic angle, home schooling is the most promising effort at family institutional reconstruction undertaken in America during the last 150 years. — Alan Carlson

The effects of home education have gone beyond mere academics: Those engaged in this venture have often found their entire family life revolutionized for good.

A Christian community school model would sacrifice the principles of parents as teachers and the discipleship method of training, be a backward step in terms of socialization and would weaken family solidarity. In order to deal with a couple of challenges faced by home schoolers, Rev. Schlissel proposes abandoning a system that conforms well to the Bible’s revealed method for training children and adopting a model that conforms less well.

The Academic Excellence Fallacy

It is simply not Biblical to place academic excellence at the pinnacle of child training values and to sacrifice other important values in the process. But this error comes quite naturally to westerners who have breathed

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

Bits of Books

Public Schools

Article 2, Part 1
by Dr. Robert Lewis Dabney¹



In the third place this theory of universal education involves the absurd and impossible idea of the Leveler, as though it were possible for all men to have equal destinies in human society. It is a favourite proposition with the asserters of these so-called American ideas, that “every American boy should improve himself as though he might some day be President of the United States.” That is to say, the system supposes and fosters a universal discontent with the allotments of Providence and the inevitable graduations of rank, possessions and privilege.

It is too obvious to need many words, that this temper is anti-Christian; the Bible, in its whole tone, inculcates the opposite spirit of modest contentment with our sphere and directs the honourable aspiration of the good man to the faithful performance of his duties, rather than to the ambitious purpose to get out of it and above it.

It may be asked, does not the Bible recognize that fact, so pleasing to every generous mind, that the lower ranks now and then produce a youth worthy of the highest? Yes, David was taken from the sheep-folds to be Israel’s most glorious king. But the Bible-idea is (as David’s was a case precisely in point) that the humble boy is to exhibit this fitness for a nobler destiny, not by discontent and greedy cravings, but by his exemplary performances in his lower lot; and that Providence and his fellow-citizens are to call him to “come up higher.” For these instances of native merit, which are usually few, the State has no need to legislate. They will rise of themselves. They cannot be kept down, provided only we do not legislate against them but leave them the *carriere ouverte aux talents*; or, if they will be the better for any provision, it should be exceptional, as they are exceptional cases.

With this exception it is utterly false that every American boy may aspire to the higher stations of life. In the lottery of life these prizes must be relatively few — only a few can reach them. Nor is it right or practicable to give to all boys an “even start” in the race for them. The State, of course, should not legislate to the disadvantage of any in this race; but we mean that Providence, social laws and parental virtues and efforts do inevitably legislate in favour of some classes of boys in their start in that race, and if the State undertakes to countervail that legislation of nature by levelling action, the attempt is wicked, mischievous and futile. The

larger part of every civilized people is, and ever will be, addicted to regular, manual labour.²

The idea that [universal higher education will mean] that two or three hours’ work by the artisan daily will provide for the wants of all and leave the lowest labourer the larger part of his day for intellectual pursuits is a preposterous dream. [Knowing human nature] the hours redeemed from manual toil would be devoted, not to intellectual pursuits, but to wasteful and degrading vices. And these vices would soon rivet again the yoke of constant labour upon their necks or the fetters of the jail or house of correction. We repeat: The destiny of the major part of the human family is the alternative of manual labour or savagery.³

The man that works all day (usually) does not study. The nerve-force has been expended in the muscles, and none is left for mental effort. Hence, we care not how universally the State may force the arts of penmanship and reading on the children of labourers, when these become labouring men they will cease to read and write; they will practically disuse the arts as cumbersome and superfluous. This is a fact at which your enthusiast for common schools is very loath to look; but it is a stubborn one. The labouring classes in States which profess to give a universal education do not make any more beneficial use of letters than those elsewhere. Prussia has for more than a generation compelled all her peasantry to go to school; but she is full of middle-aged peasants who have forgotten how to read, and who, in fact, never read. In boasted Massachusetts herself the very superintendents of the free schools lament that the State has more than ever of labouring poor, especially among the agricultural labourers, who neither know nor care anything concerning letters, for themselves or their children. The deniers of these stubborn facts are only the flatterers, not the friends, of the labourers.

Our philanthropist will raise his out-cry, that if these views are admitted, they condemn more than half of our fellow-creatures to a Boeotian stupidity and mental darkness. But he forgets that the use of letters is not education but only one means of education and not the only means. The labouring classes find their appropriate mental and moral cultivation in their tasks themselves and in the example and influence of superiors for whom they labour.⁴ The plough-man or artisan cultivates his mental faculties most appropriately in acquiring skill and resource for his work. He trains the moral virtues by the fidelity and endurance with which he performs that work. He ennobles his taste and sentiments by looking up to the superior who employs him.⁴ If to these influences you add the awakening, elevating, expanding force of Christian principles, you have given that labourer a true education — a hundred fold more true, more suitable, more useful than the communication of certain literary arts which he will almost necessarily disuse.

So our own country presents an instance in the more respectable of the African freedmen. Tens of thousands of these, ignorant of letters, but trained to practical skill, thought and resource by intelligent masters and imitating their superior breeding and sentiments,⁴ pre-

into the future where Christ the King’s Lordship extends further and further. I won’t see it, but by God’s grace my children’s children will watch it happen in their children’s day!

Zach and Alanson have been working and travelling all over the USA for Rainbow Resource Center, a huge mail-order supplier to home educators far and near (www.rainbowresource.com). I enjoyed a warm welcome by Bob & Linda Schneider and their seven home educated children, mostly grown up, at their home in Illinois and camping near the sandy shore of Lake Michigan. This family enterprise started — and still operates — with the desire to supply home educators with the books and resources they’d like at really affordable prices.

“Our mission is to provide quality educational materials to home school families and private schools. Since last year we more than doubled the size of our warehouse



L to R: Mark Schneider, Alanson Smith, Bob & Linda Schneider, C.S., Zach Smith.

and office. This year the orders far exceeded our expected growth rate.”

One day I jumped into Zach’s 1989 Jeep Cherokee and drove (on the right-hand side of the road!) through miles and miles of corn and soy bean fields to the banks of the Mississippi River where I had the great pleasure of both meeting and sharing a meal with Harvey & Laurie Bluedorn, authors of *Teaching the Trivium*, their daughters Johanna, Ava and Helena, as well as sons Hans and Nathaniel who themselves have authored *The Fallacy Detective*. (See www.triviumpursuit.com.) These folks have taken areas most would shy away from — Classical Studies and Logic — and have thoroughly explained them for home educators from a thoroughly Christian worldview making these topics thoroughly accessible! The desire to see themselves and other Christians studying, understanding and discerning what the world of literature has to offer that is “of good and lasting value” — that is, commensurate with the Scriptures — kept the Bluedorns focussed on the task before them for many years. And now this former carpenter and his wife find themselves increasingly recognised as having a unique and comprehensive grasp on Classical literature and Classical languages as well as how “mere parents” can effectively impart these things to their own children at home.



L to R: C.S., Harvey & Laurie Bluedorn.

Says Harvey Bluedorn: “A good education is one which gives a student all the tools, so that if he were stranded on a desert island, he could re-build a civilization”

It was like home away from home when we drove into Spearfish, South Dakota, and met up again with the entire Waring Family: Bill, Diana, Isaac, Michael & Melody! There is nothing quite like meeting up again with good friends after an absence! Diana’s books *Beyond Survival* and *Reaping the Harvest* especially, as well as her many other unique resources (see www.dianawaring.com) have had a tremendous impact on New Zealand after their tour all around the country in 1999/2000. Doing school at home is a recipe for burn-out, but Diana’s advice about “taking the scenic route” has made the home education task just *so* much more enjoyable for many of us. And the Warings, Lord willing, are coming again to Kiwiland (Auckland, Christchurch and some other areas) in January 2004!



L to R: C.S., Isaac Waring, Diana Waring, Bill Waring

We also need to be aware of the worldview of the writer of the book we are reading. Sometimes we can read a biography of a person by two different authors, and it would seem that we are reading about two different people! This demonstrates that the worldviews of the authors, how they perceive, judge and value the elements of their subject's life, are radically different. Knowing the worldview of the author will let us know first of all whether we should be reading the book at all. It can also help us to be more discerning, to perhaps question some of the writer's statements rather than just accept them if we know he does not have a Biblical worldview. Three books that have helped me to be more aware of the different worldviews and how it effects my reading are: *Understanding The Times* or *Battle for the Truth* both by Dr David A Noebel and *Let Us Highly Resolve* by David Quine³

So by becoming discerning readers we will be able to keep going when the going gets tough. The reading we will be doing will be encouraging us, building us up, giving us new ideas for Home Educating our children, making us more interesting for our spouse and children, giving us new visions and motivation for Home Education, showing us how to train our children in the way that they should go and drawing us nearer to God where we can be refreshed/built up in our relationship with Him.

Notes:

1. *The Fallacy Detective* by Nathaniel Blueborn and Hans Blueborn. Available from: Home Education Foundation; see ad on page 18 or visit www.christianlogic.com
2. *Teaching The Trivium* by Harvey and Laurie Blueborn. Available from Home Education Foundation; see ad on page 18 or visit www.triviumpursuit.com
3. *Understanding the Times, Battle For The Truth* and *Let us Highly Resolve* are available from Christian Education Services, 55 Richards Ave, Forrest Hill, North Shore City, New Zealand. Ph/Fax (09) 410-3933 email: cesbooks@intouch.co.nz, www.cesbooks.co.nz

A blind, anaemic, weak-kneed flea on crutches would have a greater chance of defeating a herd of a thousand wild stampeding elephants, than the enemy has of defeating God. – Ray Comfort

CHomeS Roundup

A Multi-Generational Vision for Home Education Is Shared Internationally

The Lord organised a wonderful opportunity for me (*Keystone* editor Craig Smith, C.S.) to fly off to Japan, Canada, the USA and Mexico from 1 August until 10 September where I was able to meet up with a number of key figures in the Home Education movement as well as spend extended time with my sons Zach (21) and Alanson (19), both totally home educated. First I was given some Air Points that needed to be used by the end of this year. Then we noticed that if we refinanced our mortgage at the present (lower) rates, we could not only acquire what I needed while over there but could actually save money overall in the process!

Good friend Takeyuki Ozawa, Ph.D., lecturer at a private university in Tokyo, introduced me to Rev. Haruto Yoshii, a key figure among Christian Home Schoolers in Japan. On short notice, and during the holiday period, it was organised for me to speak about home education with Take interpreting. What a thrill to see a total



Standing, L to R: C.S., Migaku Hashimoto, Ryosuke Ida, Dr Shu & Chieko Suzuki (children Ray, Hannah & Marie), Julie Fujiwara (daughter Yuriko), Sumiko Ino (daughter Ruth).
Kneeling, L to R: Takeyuki Ozawa, Rev. Haruto Yoshii, Yuji & Megumi Akatsu (sons Mitsuteru & Tomoki, daughter Ai).

of eight family groups represented! Speaking with Rev. Yoshii afterwards, we discovered that the Lord had been impressing the same things on our hearts: how Christian home education was going to strengthen families and empower fathers especially; how Christian home education was going to revitalise the faith in ways not seen in years due to the (up until now seemingly inescapable) stultifying effects of compulsory state education; how Christian home education would eventually bring reformation to the Church and to society as a whole. This is a multi-generational vision out

sent, in every aspect, a far “higher style of man” than your Yankee labourer from his common school with his shallow smattering and purblind conceit and his wretched newspaper stuffed with moral garbage from the police-courts and with false and poisonous heresies in politics and religion. Put such a man in the same arena with the Southern slave from a respectable plantation, and in one week's time the ascendancy of the Negro in self-respect, courage, breeding, prowess and practical intelligence will assert itself palpably to the Yankee and to all spectators. The slave was, in fact, the educated man.

Our strongest argument: the common (state) schools create a numerous “public” of readers one-quarter or one-tenth cultivated; and the sure result will be the production for their use of a false, shallow, sciolist⁵ literature, science and theology, infinitely worse than blank ignorance. The creation of this large reading (but not truly educated) public spurred the book and newspaper trades to publish a multitude of speculations on the most dangerous subjects. No mind can be prepared to deal with such subjects until it is very thoroughly trained and informed. That thorough mental discipline and full learning the common schools can never give to the masses.

Formerly literature was for the educated; it was their occupation, and they formed the constituency for whom the producers of literature laboured; consequently the literature of the civilized nations was characterized by all that was most decent in manner, elevated in sentiment and thorough and just in argument. The unlettered classes used to receive their ideas of literary, political, philosophical and theological subjects from their social superiors,⁴ through social channels. This was a source much safer than the present “literature for the millions,” because it was much higher, purer and more disinterested. (That is, they shared their ideas for the love of them rather than for the profit motive.) The unlettered once reflected the opinions, sentiments and elevated tone of the uppermost stratum; now they reflect the thinking of a class lower and more sordid than themselves: the sensationalist press.

Thus the Southern overseer, who read little but his Bible, had a judgment infinitely better trained, a moral tone far higher and a social political and religious creed far sounder than the modern alumnus of your “common school” with his Leveller's arrogance and envy and his armful of cheap newspapers. The overseer had the landed gentry who employed him as his instructors and models and through them drew his speculative opinions from the noblest minds of the South. The common-school alumnus has the wretched sciolist and theological quacks who drive their sordid trade in cheap periodical literature.

The smattering which State education has given the masses has but been to them the opening of a Pandora's box. It has only launched them in an ocean which they are incompetent to navigate. They have only knowledge enough to run into danger without having a tenth part of the knowledge necessary to teach them their danger and incompetency. They are an easy prey to the most destructive heresies, social and reli-

gious; and their condition is far more unwholesome and volcanic with a more terrifying prospect of social dissolution, anarchy and blood-shed than was ever presented by the ignorance of the “middle ages”. So obvious was this tendency to thoughtful minds thirty-five years ago that the great historian Heerea, with his intimate acquaintance with all the defects of mediaeval society, announced the deliberate opinion that the art of printing was destined to be more a curse than a blessing to Europe.

A little learning is a dangerous thing,
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring ;
For shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
But drinking deeply sobers us again. — Pope

When the State interferes in the work of common school education, it inevitably does not enough or too much.⁶ What she does give usually prepares the victims for the literary seducers.

(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*; “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. This kind of talk really strikes us modern folk in the wrong place. First notice: Dabney reckons “that Providence, social laws and parental virtues and efforts” are the determining factors of a child's future. I don't think many really disagree with any of these: the hand of God, the way society operates and what parents build into children. Now this last item is what our modern society is striving so hard against: the NZ Ministry of Education is spending ever-increasing millions through a myriad of programmes to overcome the perceived shortcomings of parents. Dabney is here saying that this tinkering by the State is wicked. This has been the historical Christian position regarding state intervention right up until the depression years of the 1930s. He also says it is futile, for most people are “addicted to regular, manual labour”. Dabney by this phrase does not mean mindless, unskilled toil: he's talking about anyone working with his hands, “artisans” he says in the next paragraph, as opposed to those few (such as President of the USA) who work mostly with their intellect and in the realm of ideas.
3. Assuming basic literacy skills, is it not true that most jobs could be performed admirably with only a couple of months' training instead of adding this training at the end of 10 years of compulsory school attendance?
4. This kind of language is really off-putting. It should help to realise that in Dabney's day — before compulsory schools did all the socialising of society — it was common for employers and slave-owners (and Dabney would say it was especially true in the South) to feel a responsibility to set a good example for their employees and slaves, to mentor them in society's accepted standards of “taste and sentiments”, standards which the employee may not have learned from his parents or his peers. In this way, mentoring through families and extended households which then included slaves and employees (and not through compulsory state secular schooling), Dabney says the overall standards of society are raised.
5. Sciolist = only partly educated; not fully developed.
6. Today we see this: not enough basic literacy skills but way too much political correctness.

Learning Disabilities



Foetal Alcohol Syndrome and Foetal Alcohol Effects, Part 1

by Linda Dillon

Parenting and teaching a child with FAS or FAE is one of the biggest challenges you will ever face, yet your child will reward you with love. With consistency and patience your child will learn and can become a helpful, delightful member of your family. The FAS/E child can be sweet, caring, affectionate, creative, love animals, have artistic and musical talent and have a desire to please.

The challenge lies in the fact that these children may have cognitive and behavioural problems stemming from prenatal alcohol exposure. They may be impulsive, hyperactive and distractible. They may have poor social skills, difficulty with memory, difficulty understanding cause and effect relationships, lack of conscience, poor judgment, sensory processing dysfunction and learning disabilities. They are usually immature for their age, have difficulty waiting for their turn and do not perceive social cues from others. When frustrated they may have angry outbursts or temper tantrums. They may lie and steal. They may have an IQ that is lower than normal. They may have health problems and be small for their age.

According to the University of Washington Diagnostic Guide for Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, FAS is defined by four things: growth deficiency, a specific set of facial characteristics, brain dysfunction and prenatal alcohol exposure. The FAS facial features include “short palpebral fissures, an elongated midface, a long and flattened philtrum, thin upper lip and flattened maxilla.” However, the most significant disability for children exposed to prenatal alcohol is brain dysfunction and the resulting cognitive and behavioural challenges.

Not all children exposed to alcohol in the womb have FAS. If there is evidence of brain damage but no growth deficiency or FAS facial features, the child may receive a diagnosis of Foetal Alcohol Effects (FAE) or Alcohol Related Neurobehavioral Disorder (ARND). It is estimated that this occurs three or four times as often as FAS.

We have eight children; five are biological and three are adopted. In 1997 we set out on our great adoption adventure and brought home two very cute little boys from an orphanage in Russia. Valeriy (Val), and Eugeni (Gene), were six and four years old when they arrived in our home speaking not one word of English. (Our 5-year-old son, Paul, was thrilled to get two new brothers almost his own age.) We learned that their biological mother had died of liver problems related to

alcoholism. However, we knew nothing about FAS/E at that time, and we honestly had no idea what we were getting into. Our younger Russian son, Gene, exhibits many more of the behaviour problems associated with FAS/E, but both boys have the common FAS/E learning difficulties. We took our son Gene to the University of Washington FAS Clinic for testing. He was given a diagnosis of Alcohol Related Neurobehavioral Disorder. He had prenatal alcohol exposure and brain dysfunction, but no growth deficiency, and had only “mild” FAS facial features. His overall IQ test score was 87, which is the “low end of normal.”

Why Homeschool?

So by now you are wondering, why would anyone want to homeschool an FAS/E child? My mother always encourages me to put my son Gene into a public or private school “so I can have a break from him each day.” However, the outcome of FAS/E children that are educated by the public school system is often an unhappy one. One article I read says, “The girls get knocked up, and the boys get locked up.” Of FAE adults, 60% will have trouble with the law, between 50% and 70% will have alcohol and drug problems and many will end up in mental institutions or become homeless. By homeschooling our boys, we are hoping for a better result.

The book *Fantastic Antone Succeeds* explains that public school was too over-stimulating for 8-year-old Antone, a boy with FAS. Each week of school was like a roller coaster ride. On Monday he came home from public school happy, willing, focused, affectionate, sympathetic and was able to complete tasks independently. As the week wore on his behaviour and ability to focus would go sharply downhill. By Friday he was “resistive, scattered, inattentive, unable to follow even simple, single command instructions independently.” He would make sharp, repetitive sounds at inappropriate times, would repeat phrases and lose his train of thought “like a stuck record.” However, during the weekend at home he “became himself again.” Sunday was described as a honeymoon day for Antone, when he was back to normal and was delightful to be with. This weekly pattern grew worse as the school year went on.

Unfortunately, the book never mentions homeschooling as a solution for little Antone. Homeschooling gives your child more individual time and attention than a regular classroom setting would be able to give. Lessons can move along at your child’s pace, and lessons can be taught throughout the day in real-life situations. For example, while riding in the car you can work on learning right and left as the car turns in different directions.

I have spoken to other mothers of FAE children, and they agree that their child is somehow drawn to the worst-behaved child in any social situation, such as playing at the park. Because of immaturity, poor judgment and a desire to please their new “friend,” they may join in inappropriate behaviours. The book *Fantastic Antone Succeeds* tells about a boy who took a short cut through the school property on his way to a

this quest of learning logic are breaking out of the mould, and this takes courage. It also takes humility. But most of all it takes self-discipline.”

Nathaniel and Hans wrote this book so we parents could improve our thinking and reasoning skills and could then teach these essential skills to our children. They’ve put together 36 lessons on how to recognize bad reasoning. Once through the lessons we should be able to:

1. Put a high value on good reasoning;
2. Know how to spot many forms of bad reasoning;
3. Know how to avoid using many fallacies in our own reasoning.

Discernment Skills

In *Teaching the Trivium* Harvey & Laurie Bluedorn draw a distinction between “humanist classics” on the one hand and a broader definition of “classics” on the other. The former are generally understood to be “noted works and authors of ancient Greek and Roman literature.” The broader definition includes anything that “is of good form and lasting value – regardless of the time period.” Consequently you will find for yourself good, edifying reading material – “classics” – among the Greek, Roman, Medieval, Renaissance, Reformation as well as Modern time periods. The Bluedorns point out that because the two criteria for a classic piece of literature, “good form and lasting value”, are so subjective, no one can be said to have the final word on what should be counted “in” and what is “out”. Ultimately, as good stewards of all Christ has given us to use for His glory – our time, our own and our children’s hearts and minds – each of us needs to take responsibility for what works of literature we determine constitute “good form” and which ones we determine constitute “lasting value”.

The Bluedorns give further liberating advice regarding what other people recommend: “You will find numerous lists of classics, great books, recommended reading, desired reading for college, required reading for cultural literacy and so forth. We would collapse in financial and emotional bankruptcy if we read all of the books on these lists. Some suggest that we should at least be familiar with the substance – the plots and characters, the themes and contents – of all the books on these lists. It is not possible for the ordinary person to do that and also have a life.” As the Bluedorns suggest, perhaps we need to come up with our own lists. What criteria do we use to place a book on the list or leave it off? “In the end we must bring all classics into obedience to serve Christ, or they are useless. If we cannot use them to promote the Biblical standard with the Biblical worldview, then we cannot use them.”

Harvey and Laurie tell how they got themselves weaned off of depending on lists provided by others. “We were using a curriculum which required the reading of Greek mythology. Our children observed that it was full of immorality, and they did not think they should be reading it. We had never read it, but we trusted the curriculum and suspected that they wanted

to escape the assignment – until we read it! We repented. It did not agree with our principles on how to evaluate literature. Require your child to read those classical works which agree with your family’s principles and forget the rest. There are a large number of classical works which are good reading, and there is only so much time in the day.

“When the Israelites entered the Promised Land, they were commanded to wipe out all of the Canaanite literature (Numbers 33:51,52). In the New Testament the repentant Ephesians burned their books of sorcery (Acts 19:19). It does not say that they burned all of the books there were but only that there were some books which, regardless of their worldly worth, were better burnt. Likewise, there may be some things which the world considers of ‘literary value,’ but which, because of their ability to cause little ones to stumble, we are better off leaving alone until a mature age, or, in some cases, leaving alone altogether (Matthew 5:29,30). We must be willing to give up everything of this world before we can redeem any of it back for the Lord’s use (Luke 14:33). The world’s values cannot be our values.”

Teaching the Trivium goes into detail on each of these Ten Principles for choosing what to read:

1. Do what is pleasing to the Lord (Colossians 1:10, Hebrews 11:6).
2. Do not follow the world (Romans 12:2).
3. Do not allow the world to follow you (James 1:27, Proverbs 4:23).
4. There is only so much time in the day (Colossians 4:5).
5. Older does not necessarily mean better (Colossians 2:8).
6. Is this profitable? (1 Corinthians 6:12,13, 1 Timothy 1:8).
7. Does this promote good habits? (1 Corinthians 6:12).
8. Will reading this further my education? (1 Corinthians 10:23; Proverbs 4:14,15; Ephesians 5:11,12).
9. Does this material have lasting value? (1 Corinthians 7:31).
10. When in doubt, leave it out (Romans 14:23).

“We all recognise that it is necessary to draw the line somewhere, but sometimes it can be difficult to see where that line should be drawn. There is no rule book which gives us exhaustive directions. Different situations call for different judgments, and those judgments must be made in a mature way by applying sound principles.” The Bluedorns go on to explain some of the borderline areas where lines will need to be drawn:

1. Between the sacred and the profane.
2. Between the godly and the ungodly.
3. Between the decent and the indecent.
4. Between what is appropriate for children and what adults may be able to tolerate.
5. Between the worthwhile and the worthless.
6. Between the good and the best.
7. Between the best and the best.

behaviour and eating skills, teach serving one another. We have found that by having a formal dinner once a week, complete with candlesticks and tablecloth, etc., we are teaching them socially acceptable behaviour as well as having a memorable meal for the family. The children love it and feel so special as we treat them as our guests and include them in the preparations. Financially there is a cost to hospitality, but there are many inexpensive recipes that go a long way. Look for recipes that feed a larger number than normal. Here is a bit of hard-earned wisdom: Don't try anything new when you have invited people to come: believe me, it's embarrassing having to serve dried up meat kebabs and burnt sauce. But it is also amazing how laughing at yourself will help ease the situation and make the rice seem more appetising. Remember too that people are coming to see you not your house. A friend of mine once said, "If you want to see me, come right 'round; if you want to visit my house, give me 45 minutes." If you are welcoming, friendly and interested in the people who come, they won't even care about the chipped china and frayed carpet. If your house is a bit messy, a bigger smile is all that is needed to cover it all up. It's the fellowship that people will remember.

The Children's Involvement

How can we involve the children?

- * Serving.
- * Observing.
- * Participating in conversation.
- * Encourage them to ask questions.
- * Get them to know the guests without being precocious. Precocious children take over the conversation and keep it to themselves without letting others talk or interact.
- * Actively listening. Everyone has a story to tell: we just have to listen.
- * Reminding them (beforehand) that they are representatives of the family name.

Hospitality-oriented socialisation is socialisation that happens in your home, under your supervision and control. Children will learn by observing you and the way you socialise with others. Sometimes it may not go as well as you had hoped. That may be due to trying to impress others, pride, tiredness, busyness or thinking it is for other more talented people. However we encourage you to keep trying. You *will* see your children develop those needed social skills. Socialisation in its fullest meaning covers a much broader idea that just peer socialisation. It is any and all social contact with other people. For our children's sake we need to do this in a safe and secure place: and what better place than in our own homes.

(David and Jenny Waldron have seven children whom they educate at home near Palmerston North, New Zealand. David is a self-employed computer software consultant, and he is currently studying for a theological degree. Together they present workshops about marriage and other issues concerning families, both to support Christian families and as an evangelical outreach.)

Over A Cuppa



Keeping Going When the Going Gets Tough — Part 6

by Craig and Barbara Smith

Choosing What to Read

In part 5 we looked at Parental Reading, how it is one of the most important aspects of Home Educating our children. It follows after: developing an attitude of glorifying God and enjoying Him forever; working on our marriages so that they reflect the relationship of Christ and His Church; and the need for us to be consistent in the way we discipline our children.

Realising that the reading habits of us parents are so important, we now need to look at what we parents read. It should be obvious that some books are better than others. What isn't so obvious are the guidelines one should use to decide what's worth reading and what's not and whether we should use the same guidelines for ourselves as we use for the children's reading.

I had difficulty with this at first. Once I started reading in earnest, I ended up buying way too many Historical Fiction novels. These are OK in small doses, but we need to learn to be more discerning. We need to ask questions like:

1. Are all Christian books good?
2. Are all Classical books good?
3. Are all Non-Christian books bad?

The answer to all three questions is, "Definitely, no!"

Two books that helped me understand the issues here are *The Fallacy Detective* by Nathaniel and Hans Bluedorn¹ and *Teaching the Trivium* by Harvey and Laurie Bluedorn.²

Reasoning Skills

Why did the Bluedorn brothers, sons of Harvey and Laurie, write *The Fallacy Detective*? "We see a need for Christians to strive for a higher standard of reasoning. We believe God wants His people to become aware of their lack of discernment, and logic is an important part of the science of discernment. For instance, many Christians adopt beliefs and practices without properly evaluating the arguments which are used to support them. We need to rediscover the way of the Bereans, who searched the Scriptures daily to see if the apostles' teachings were true (Acts 17:10-11)... We will never be as logical as the Lord Jesus Christ was, but we must work at it... Logic is the science of thinking the way God thinks – the way Jesus taught us to think. Remember, most people never study good thinking skills. So people who take on

friend's house. He noticed some boys throwing rocks and breaking the school windows. So he joined in the fun and broke windows with them. He did not have a natural conscience to tell him that these boys were behaving bad and that he should stay away from them.

They also learn the worst language that surrounds them. Our son Gene has the uncanny ability to learn the only objectionable phrase in a perfectly cute G-rated movie for children. This has happened several times. For example, we watched the movie *Babe* about the pig that learns to herd sheep and wins a sheep dog contest. At one point in the movie the animals look in the window and see the farmer and his wife eating a goose for Christmas dinner. One of the animals says, "Christmas is carnage." My son Gene went around saying that phrase over and over for months, even after we explained that carnage means bloody death, slaughter and massacre.

We believe that if our son Gene were to attend public school, he would make friends with the worst-behaved children there and learn inappropriate language and behaviours. We hope to teach Christian values to all our children, raise them to love and obey the Lord and have a saving faith in Him. Homeschooling parents can use day-to-day living to teach their children about right and wrong choices, good and bad attitudes and Biblical truths. Homeschooling parents can protect their children from inappropriate friends and set up social situations where their children will come in contact with children who are a good influence on them. Homeschooling parents can protect their children from objectionable movies, computer games and other activities that might teach inappropriate beliefs, attitudes and behaviours to their children. Children with FAS/E need this close parental supervision much more than other children because of their inability to make good choices for themselves. Strangers easily approach these children, and they are sometimes victims of kidnappers, abusers and molesters. Homeschooling parents can keep a close eye on their children and on those with whom they come in contact.

Advice for Parents

My first and most important piece of advice for homeschooling parents of FAS/E children is to pray without ceasing. Pray that guardian angels will watch over your child night and day to keep him from harm, since he is often not able to judge what is safe and what is right. The behaviour of an FAS/E child would test the patience of a saint. So also pray for yourself, for

wisdom in parenting your special child, for unending patience and for the Holy Spirit to keep you from anger and hardness of heart towards your child when he behaves very badly.

My next piece of advice is to have some scheduled breaks from your children. I'm so happy to see my children after I've had a few hours away from home conversing with adults. Have some activities you do outside the home with your husband or your friends.

You will need a good grandma, older child or baby-sitter who understands something about FAS/E. Every mother of an FAS/E child has some baby-sitter horror stories to tell! I took my children to our pastor's house so the pastor's teenage daughters could baby-sit them during the women's Bible study at church. When I got back, all the children were playing games in the living room except Gene who was nowhere in sight. I asked where he was, and the baby-sitter said, "I don't know. He was here a minute ago." Uh, oh! So we went looking for him. He had locked himself in the boys' bedroom and was busy tearing all the toys and games out of the closet! He wanted to see what toys there were to play with, and he had gone into the bedroom secretly and alone to get into things that did not belong to him without the permission or knowledge of the girls who were baby-sitting him. The teenage girls didn't understand the level of supervision that is necessary for a FAE child.

(Continuing.)

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Tough Questions People Ask

So Exactly How Do We Socialise Our Children if We're at Home All Day?

by David and Jenny Waldron

Why is it that when people find out we are homeschooling our children, their primary concern is socialisation? Grandparents, relations and friends are concerned that our children will turn into “nerds”, social freaks, loners or children who — shock, horror — don’t know how to play with others. In our experience, 99.9% of all children seem to innately know how to play with other children. Even homeschooled children who have seemed not to prefer other children’s company have grown up to be normal outgoing adults: often they are just waiting for someone sensible to talk to!

Socialisation is “concerned with the mutual relations of human beings” to quote the *Shorter Oxford Dictionary*. Safe or positive socialisation is where the interaction of human beings is carried out in a safe and positive environment with upbeat, lively and effective interaction.

However, anyone who reads the newspaper or watches TV News can see the result of the sort of socialisation that is happening to children in today’s world. We are being so continually bombarded with sexual images, violence and “alternative” lifestyles that our communities are no longer the safe places they used to be. For us as Christian home educators, this means we have to ask the question: “Can our children and youth interact with others in such a way that their not-fully-developed and still vulnerable spiritual, physical and emotional states remain safe and secure?”

Christian children are regularly put into danger by being left to face situations that for years we have considered perfectly safe. Examples of such scenarios include: a friend stays overnight and, in the darkness and privacy of just the two of them in the room, tells your precious child the facts of life (and usually it’s a rather warped version!); a girl collects the paper-round money and is sexually abused by a pensioner; your son starts playing with a neighbour and becomes totally absorbed with guns and violence; your daughter goes boarding with a Christian family and is raped by someone there.

We have found that all peer-play should be supervised. We discourage relationships that we know are not good for our children or restrict the contact to our place only (like when our child is friendly with a worldly neighbour). Over-night stays are either supervised all night long, or the children are separated at the time for sleep. In general we tend to discourage over-nighters unless necessary. Any visiting to places outside the



home should be supervised or done with other siblings. This means one of us will sit in on music lessons, etc.

Socialising with **only** children of their own age is very limiting for any child. All too often it ends up being a largely negative experience where children are frequently pushed to conform to the morals and standards of the peer group. They often have to disregard the morals and standards of their family and/or church if they want to fit in. This doesn’t just relate to young children but perhaps more especially to our youth. They may readily accept the standards of the world, which are far removed from Biblical standards, in order to be accepted, to be “cool”. Many young people we have met, who have been “socialised” by their peers, are unable to make conversation with others outside of their own peer group. They are not prepared or trained to communicate with adults with anything more than silence or monosyllables, and they treat others younger than themselves with contempt.

Children need to learn to socialise with people of all ages. This helps them to become caring of smaller, younger members of society and helps them to extend their experience, vocabulary and knowledge by encountering people from all walks of life. You will probably find that your closest friends are not the same age as you. When our son Josiah was six he struck up a friendship with Zach Smith who was 19 at the time. These two home-educated children would spend hours talking about model aeroplanes. However, this is not meant to be a treatise on socialisation by peer pressure but how we can, as home educators, positively answer the critics and positively socialise our precious children.

Hospitality

We’re already home! So, why not invite people into our home for socialisation to happen. By bringing people of all walks of life into our homes, children can learn all sorts of skills that would normally be out of reach if they were just socialising with their peer group. And from the host home educator’s point of view, this has to be *the safest* social environment! If a child is shy and introspective, especially around adults, this is an ideal way for them to learn and observe social skills in a non-threatening way, on their own “turf.”

Social Skills

The skills that our children need to learn to become effective members of society are:

- * How to communicate and converse with others of all ages;
- * How to listen to others’ points of view;
- * How to learn about other cultures, lands and languages;
- * How to serve;
- * How to be polite and well-mannered;
- * How to be generous, tolerant, compassionate and respectful;
- * How to verbally articulate themselves well.

(Continued on page 19)

(Continued from page 14)

With Whom Should We Socialise?

In general, the answer is anyone who we come in contact with. Our children will learn primarily by observing us parents and how we relate, communicate and serve others. If you are shy and find it difficult to relate and converse with others, then you can learn too. Jenny used to be very shy, whereas David was and is really good at making casual conversation with people. So Jenny has learnt from him. Though still hard at times, Jenny has found that if she has something to do, it is easier to make conversation: e.g., serving dinner.

Remember this is your turf! If you do things that make you comfortable, you will be comfortable around your guests. Start small and with the familiar, such as your extended family and friends, and then you can branch out to total strangers. Pray that God will bring people across your path and that your eyes will be opened to the opportunities.

So, who to invite? Here is a sample of some of the people we have invited over the past few years:

- * Missionaries and visiting speakers.
- * Hitchhikers and travellers.
- * Mental health sufferers.
- * Criminals. One boy was unable to spend Christmas with his family because he had been convicted for sexual abuse, so we invited him to spend it with us. We explained the boundaries to the children, and we supervised the whole dinner closely, but we all had a wonderful time, and our friend learnt what proper family interaction was like. He came back the following Easter and Christmas too, again closely supervised but enriching his and our lives.
- * Drug users. This was closely supervised again but a great way to discuss drug abuse: in fact our guests warned our children not to start!
- * People of different social standing, culture and beliefs; e.g. international students.
- * Visiting Canadian University Professor and his wife.
- * Families in the community and neighbours.
- * Dental nurse, the real estate agent, and other people you come into contact with.
- * People from work.
- * Foster children.
- * Barefoot Maori who knocked on our door at midnight looking for a place to stay.
- * Visitors to church and lonely members from church.
- * People whose vehicle broke down outside our house; this happened with monotonous regularity when we were living near Mt. Ruapehu.

Character Growth

We are sure there are people on this list that you may have qualms about inviting into

your home, especially with your children present! By introducing your children to a wide range of people, they develop skills that enable them to relate and empathise with people from all walks of life. A Christian couple once asked us how to reach out to people to spread the Gospel. We do this mainly through showing hospitality to whomever the Lord brings across our path and by doing it as a family. In this way we can be in the world but not of the world. We can widen our children’s horizons but in a safe, nurturing environment where our standards, morals and convictions are in evidence. We can show “the world” (preferably only small numbers at a time, please!) what a Christian family looks like, and we can shine Christ’s light into the lives of those who come. We have enjoyed so many great meals and conversations with such a diverse range of people, we wouldn’t have missed it for the world! And our children have a wonderful understanding of other people that they would not have otherwise. It can be a great time of growth in the characters of the children as they learn to serve and empathise with others.

Preparation

Preparation is the key to successful hospitality-oriented socialisation. The idea of hordes of people coming in through the front door can be rather daunting, especially if they were to come right now! So, we can practice. First we pray about the people we have invited, or whom we may invite. Teach your children to clean and tidy the house to *your* standard, teach acceptable social

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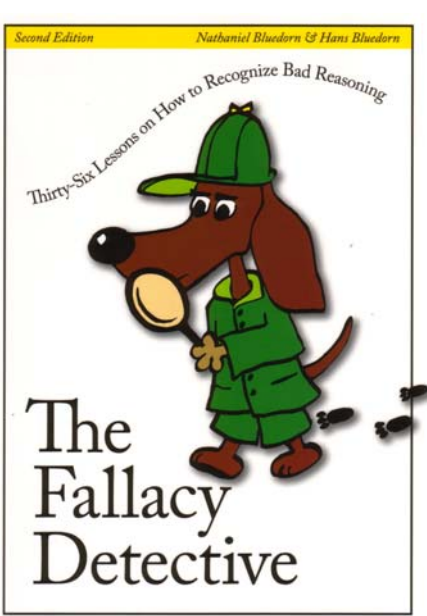
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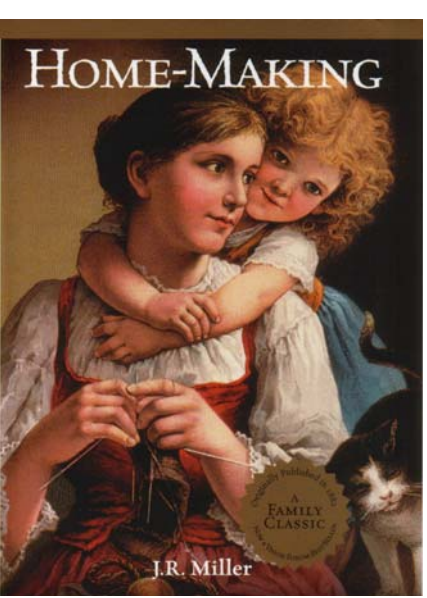
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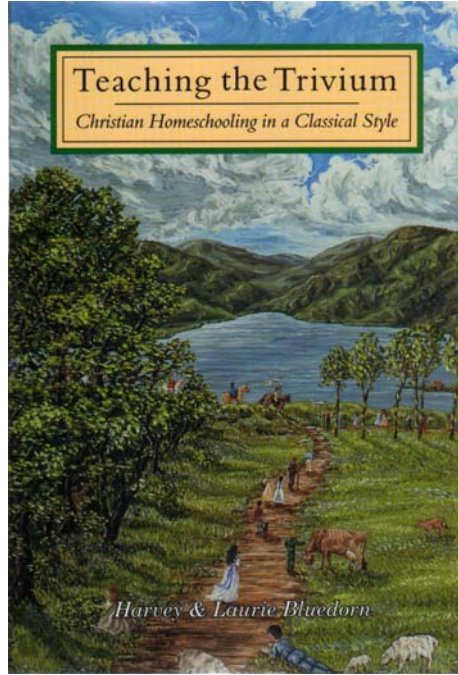


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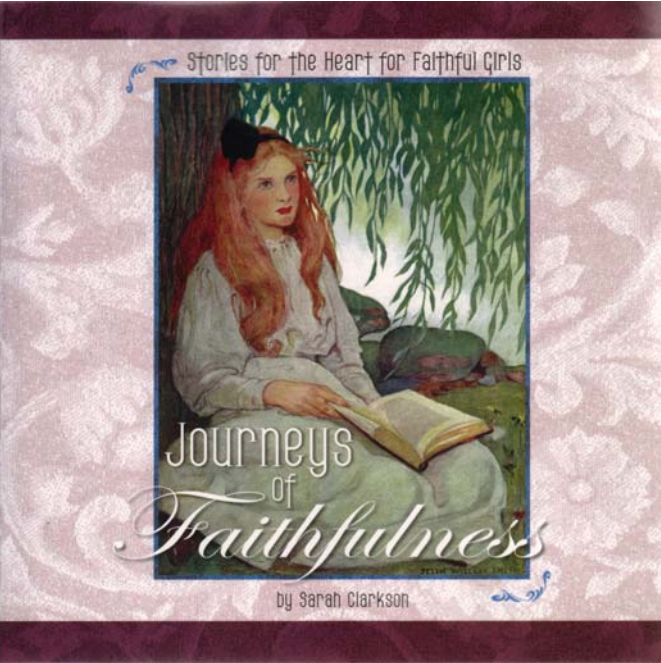
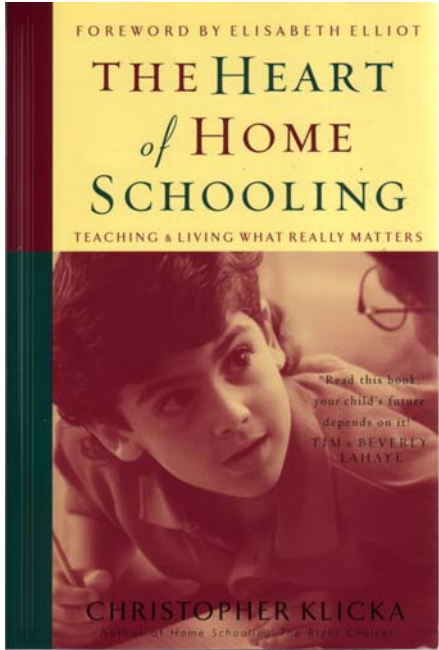
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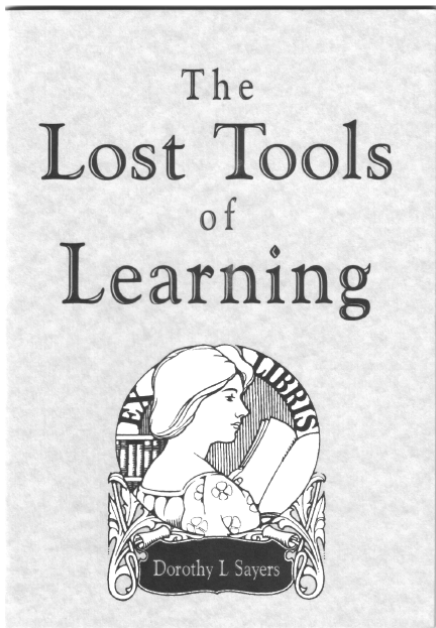
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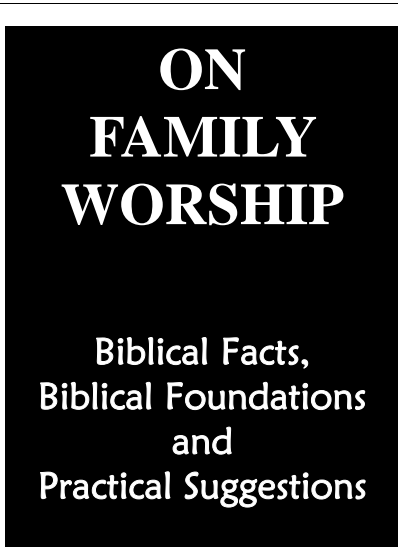
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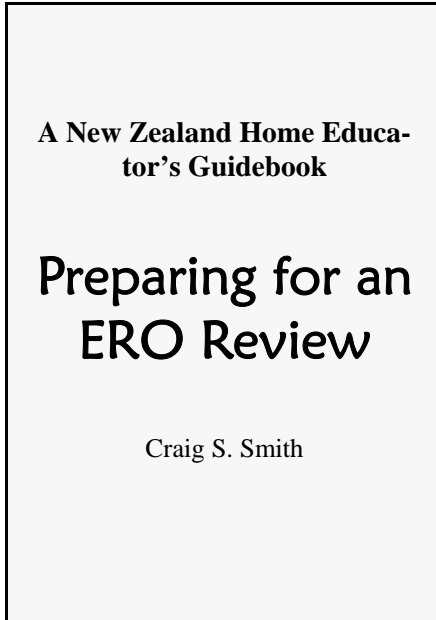
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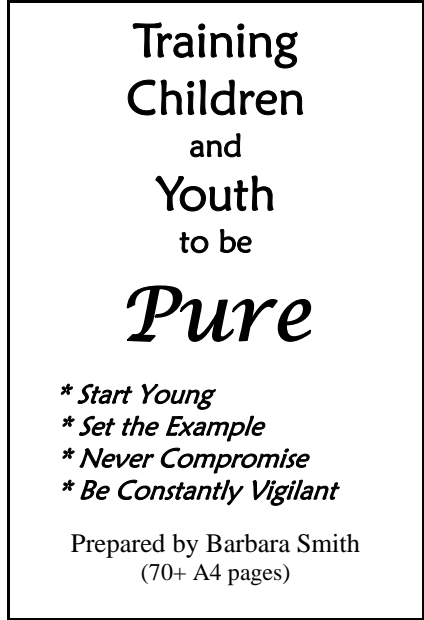
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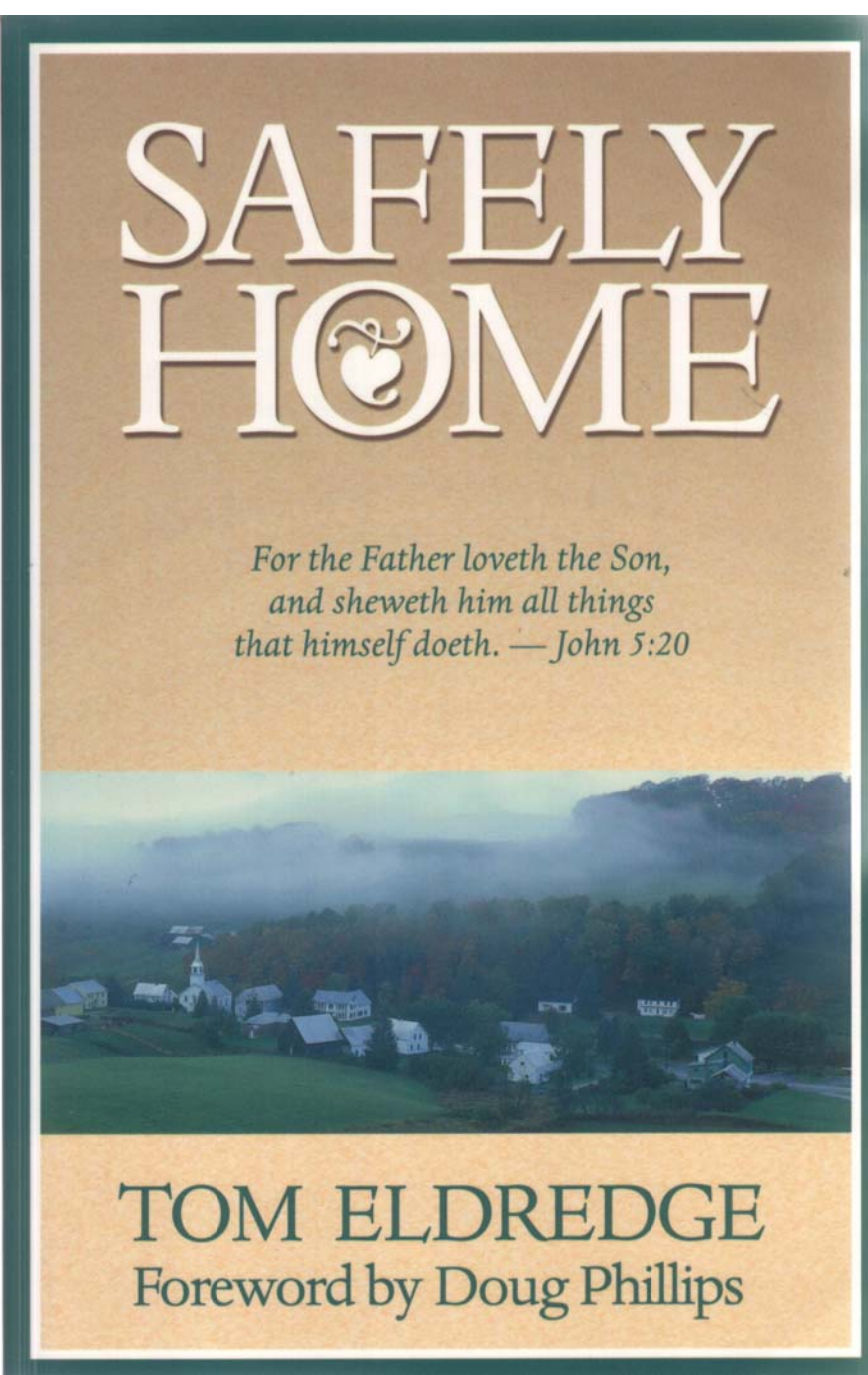
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