

# FAMILY TIMES

A Home-school Newsletter for New Testament Christians  
Edited by Bev & Dave Hewitt and Karen & Dave Pratte

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## FAMILY TIMES WWW SITE FOR CHRISTIANS

by David Pratte

Great news! Home schooling among faithful Christians has taken another step forward. Family Times has just opened a WWW site devoted specifically to faithful Christians who are interested in home schooling! The address is:

<http://www.best.com/~dwattsjr/familytimes>

Those of you who have web servers, check it out and let us know what you think. Here are some things you will find:

- \* Information about hslst, the e-mail list for Christians who home school.
- \* Information about *Family Times*.
- \* Advantages of home schooling.
- \* A list of books and other resources for home schoolers.
- \* Reviews of curriculum and Bible class materials (taken from posts to hslst).

Dave Watts, Jr., has set up this site for us using material I provided. He owns the site, but any comments or questions should be directed to Dave Pratte, 841 Hillandale Dr., Antioch, IL 60002; Ph: (847)395-8937; e-mail DEPratte@juno.com.

Please give me your feedback on the site. If you have material you would like me to consider for posting on the site, please send it to me and we will consider it.

## THE EARLY DAYS

by Dave Pratte

Recently I was asked: "How was it back in the dark ages when you first begin to home school?" Well, we are now in our fifteenth year of home schooling. That may not sound long, but it is the experience of a lifetime, and the changes we have seen in the home-school movement are awesome and exciting. So much has changed that I don't remember all the differences, but here are a few:

\* When we began, we did not personally know *anyone* who was home schooling, let alone anyone in the church. Fortunately God blessed us with the Hewitt family, in our local church, who were willing to take the plunge with us. We have been through a lot together.

\* There were no such things as home-school support groups in our city (Ft. Wayne, IN) or anywhere near. If you home schooled, you did it on your own, folks. However, we helped start a support group, and today Ft. Wayne has several large support groups with hundreds of families involved.

Soon after we started, we received a visit from some people in Indianapolis who were interested in home schooling. It turned out one was married to a judge! They started a state-wide home school support group. Now *every* state has a state-wide support group, and so do most large cities. If you have a question now, there are hundreds of people to give you answers.

\* At that time we almost never just happened across someone else who said, "Oh, yes, we are home schoolers too!" or "Oh, I have a sister (daughter, cousin, neighbor, etc.) who does that." And no one in the Lord's church was saying things like that. Now we hear it so often we just smile...

\* In those days, there were no such things as *Teaching Home*, *Practical Home Schooling*, *Family Times* or any newsletters or magazines to give ideas or encouragement. There were no home-school seminars, no Gregg Harris, no books of any kind about home schooling. However, not long after we began, Raymond and Dorothy Moore began a small but encouraging newsletter, and later they wrote some books. Their books are generally out of date, and I rarely hear of the Moores these days, but they were a wonderful encouragement back then.

\* There were no book fairs then, no *Mary Pride*, no *Big Book of Home Learning*, and no sources of any kind to give suggestions or guidance about what curriculum to use. You did your own research, found what was available, and made your decisions.

\* On the other hand, there wasn't much need for a book to review alternative curricula, because there were practically no alternatives available anyway! Generally, publishers sold only to schools, and they said we were not a school. A Beka sold their curriculum guides only to private schools in those days and flat refused to sell to us. We were legally incorporated as an academy, but that did not count because we taught our own children! In recent years, an A Beka representative has voluntarily come to our house every year to sell books to us and other home schoolers! There are so many different choices of publications now that I feel sorry for folks just starting out — it has to be confusing having so many people after you to buy their products!

\* In those days, legal problems were a major concern. If you weren't sure about the views of other people, you just did not mention home schooling to them. Practically no state had a law expressly permitting home schooling. There was no such thing as the Home School Legal Defense Association to protect home schoolers who were confronted, harassed, or sued by school officials or child "welfare" agencies. HSLDA has been a blessing from God that most modern novice home schoolers will never appreciate fully. Today any home schooler can have full provision of experienced legal defense through HSLDA.

But even more wonderful, modern home schoolers rarely have to worry about legal hassles because every state now permits home schooling in one form or another. Most state laws directly mention home schooling, but others allow it as a private school. Not one state today requires home school parents even to have a teaching certificate. This is the result of the work of HSLDA along with thousands of home school parents who fought long and hard for these rights. But above all it is a blessing from God.

\* Some folks we knew back then, whether in the church or out, strongly objected to our choice to home school. Actually, the public schools gave us little trouble. While we were in the public schools, we had so much conflict over sex ed, evolution, Values Clarification, feminism, etc., that by the time we left, they were glad to see us go! The last thing they wanted to do was oppose our leaving!

Yet opposition came from elsewhere. My heart still bears the scars from the letter I received from a close college buddy, a member of the Lord's church who, after we began to home school, wrote to tell me he considered me to have departed from the faith and I was no longer welcome in his home. He did not even tell me why he felt that way. I surmised it was because we were home schooling, but he refused to answer my letters asking what I had done to alienate him. Years later we were able to communicate, he confirmed that he was alienated by our home schooling, and he apologized. But the pain at the time was immeasurable.

Many other folks took a "wait and see" approach. Some of these, years later, have told us they weren't sure about the decision when we began, but as they saw our kids develop, they realized we had made a good decision.

But many other friends, relatives, and Christians were very supportive, especially and above all, my parents and Karen's parents. They have been among our cheerleaders from the outset. As they have watched our children develop, they reassure us repeatedly that they are glad for our choice. Words cannot express how much that means.

\* Now we are working with others to change the way colleges receive home schoolers. That will change too. Like all the other changes that have occurred, we just have to work and be patient.

Do we pioneers pity ourselves for the problems we have endured? On the contrary, we faced the hardships with all the excitement and adventure of the early American settlers. Every battle fought and won was cause for major celebration. Many barriers have fallen, but the war is not over — it may have just seriously begun. The home school movement is so large and influential now that the NEA and cohorts cannot ignore us. Major confrontations await. But we have many recruits now to join us in the battles.

As I think back over the years, in many ways I feel like I do when I read the *Little House on the Prairie* books. The Ingalls faced incredible hardships — I'm glad I don't have to face them. But they found ex-

citement and joy everywhere despite the hardships. In the same way, next to being a Christian, a husband, a father, and a gospel preacher, some of my greatest blessings have come through home schooling. If I could do it over again, I could avoid a few mistakes. But nothing on earth I can think of would make me want to do it any other way.

## **GROWING UP IN THE LORD: A STUDY FOR TEENAGE BOYS**

Reviewed by Tina Meade

This book is written by Jeffrey W. Hamilton. It is based on the author's knowledge and understanding of scripture with regard to puberty, and beyond, in the lives of boys.

Jeff does not mince words, and this book is not for the squeamish. It is a practical, down-to-earth guide to adolescence. The book deals quite frankly with the physical aspects of puberty and human sexuality and also explains the spiritual aspects of such. Jeff urges young men to be pure and upright. He makes the subject seem like any other subject — he is not embarrassed to discuss sexuality with his readers and he helps the boys reading his book to feel the same way. In fact, he offers to discuss any questions with anyone who reads the book, and gives his address at the back. Jeff seeks to build self-confidence in young men.

It is my belief that the book would be most appropriate for older teenagers — those who have matured to a point that they are thinking of looking for a wife. Jeff suggests dating several girls in order to learn what to look for in a wife.

It is obvious that Jeff Hamilton understands young men, and in his book, *GROWING UP IN THE LORD: A STUDY FOR TEENAGE BOYS*, he hopes to help them understand themselves.

You may purchase a copy of the book from Jeff at: Jeffrey W. Hamilton 915 Michael Dr. Papillion, NE 68046. Jeff's e-mail address is: jeffh@watson.ibm.com

[Editor's note: The author Jeff Hamilton is a home-schooling dad and a gospel preacher working with a faithful church of Christ.]

## **AS WE CONTEMPLATE THE ELECTION**

The following quotes pretty much summarize our view of the national elections:

### ***The Republican platform on home schooling:***

Mark Mayberry submitted this excerpt from the Republican Platform:

"We encourage a reform agenda on the local level and urge state legislators to ensure quality education for all through programs of parental choice among public, private, and religious schools. That includes the option of home schooling, and Republicans will defend the right of families to make that choice."

### ***Bill Clinton's influence on homosexuality:***

The following quote is from Marsha Scott, a lesbian columnist [speaking to her homosexual/lesbian audience] in *The Advocate*, 1/23/96. It was quoted in the *Citizen*, 3/25/96:

"If you want to see the real difference that a Clinton government brings, talk to your many proudly open [homosexual] friends who work within the Administration and compare their stories with those of your mostly closeted friends who live in fear of being outed in their congressional jobs."

## **MOTION PICTURE CODE**

Copied from the *Good Tidings*, bulletin of Westview Church of Christ, Youngstown, Ohio  
edited by Paul Blake.

The following is gleaned from "Don't Touch That Dial: The Impact Of Media On Children & The Family," by Barbara Hattermer and Robert Showers. [It is a description of the code used as the standard for the motion picture industry until it was changed in 1966. Consider the difference comparing then to now.]

THE MOTION PICTURE CODE, 1930-1966.

"The sanctity of the institution of marriage and the home shall be upheld. Pictures shall not infer that low forms of sex relationship are the accepted or common thing.

"Obscenity in word, gesture, reference, song, joke, or by suggestion (even when likely to be understood only by part of the audience) is forbidden.

“Many scenes cannot be presented without arousing dangerous emotions on the part of the immature, the young or criminal classes. Even within the limits of pure love, certain facts have been universally regarded by lawmakers as outside the limits of safe presentation ... Children’s sex organs are never to be exposed.

“Seduction or rape ... should never be more than suggested. And only when essential for the plot, and even then never shown by explicit method.

“Adultery and illicit sex, sometimes necessary plot material, must not be explicitly treated or justified, or presented attractively. Pictures shall not infer that low forms of sex relationship are the accepted or common thing ... Sex perversion or any inference of it is forbidden.

“The technique of murder must be presented in a way that will not inspire imitation. Brutal killings are not to be presented in detail. Revenge in modern times shall not be justified ... The use of firearms should be restricted to essentials.

“Dances suggesting or representing sexual actions or indecent passion are forbidden. Dances which emphasize indecent movements are to be regarded as obscene.

“Methods of crime should not be explicitly presented ... There must be no suggestion, at any time, of excessive brutality ... Action showing the taking of human life, even in the mystery stories, is to be cut to the minimum.

“Mankind has always recognized the importance of entertainment and its values in rebuilding the bodies and souls of human beings. Motion picture producers recognize the high trust and confidence which have been placed in them by the people of the world ... They recognize their responsibility to the public because of this trust and because entertainment and art are important influences in the life of a nation.

“When right standards are consistently presented, the motion picture exercises the most powerful influences. It builds character, develops right ideals, inculcates correct principles. If motion pictures consistently hold up for admiration high types of characters and present stories that will affect lives for the better, they can become the most powerful natural force for the improvement of mankind.

“Law, natural or human, shall not be ridiculed, nor shall sympathy be created for its violation. So, correct entertainment raises the whole standard of a nation. Wrong entertainment lowers the whole living condition and moral ideals of a race.”

## **THE RIGHT CHOICE, BY CHRISTOPHER KLICKA**

A book review by David Pratte

The complete title of this book is: *The Right Choice: The Incredible Failure of Public Education and the Rising Hope of Home Schooling*. It is written by one of the primary lawyers working for home-school freedoms in the Home School Legal Defense Association. Some supplemental chapters were written by Gregg Harris.

This is the best book I have read giving a general overview of the home-school movement. Klicka is in a unique position to observe the movement and document what it is really about. As a result, his material is an excellent introduction to the subject.

He begins with several chapters documenting the problems in public education (as I read this section, I quoted excerpts to my wife from nearly every page). Next he describes the advantages of home schooling, showing how it is superior to public schooling. The chapters by Harris then give guidance for beginning to home school.

Later sections show how home schooling has been attacked by the educational establishment and social workers. Then Klicka reviews the successful work done to defend our parental freedoms, summarizing the legal issues involved. Finally the book has several appendices, including lists of resources for people seeking to learn more.

I suspect some skeptics might view some comments in the book as overstatements. Nevertheless, as a lawyer, Klicka carefully documents virtually every major point. A few statements are religiously unfounded, but these concerns are minimal.

Overall I found the book to be excellent and would highly recommend it as an introduction to anyone wanting to learn about home schooling. It would be good for people considering home schooling or for friends or relatives of home schoolers who want to understand why we have chosen this approach. It also is very reassuring to those of us who are home-schooling, helping motivate us to continue.

## **EDITORIAL NOTES**

This issue begins another school year for all of you and a new year of publication for *Family Times*. As always, we are very grateful to all of you who submit material for the newsletter.

In particular we want to thank Whit Sasser for his review of Calvert School, and also the Hollingsworths for their family profile. Thanks to the Dows for the information about their book sales company, and to Tina Meade, Jeff Hamilton, Mark Mayberry, Paul Blake, and Cindy Shaver for their helpful information.

The high school transcript is a sample you are free to reproduce and use as you see fit.

We always need new material. We continue to encourage our readers to submit reviews, family profiles, or any material of interest. Thanks again! — The editors.