

FAMILY TIMES

A Home-school Newsletter for New Testament Christians
Edited by Bev & Dave Hewitt and Karen & Dave Pratte
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December, 1999 – February, 2000

FLORIDA COLLEGE HOME-SCHOOL SEMINAR

by Joe Rose

Dave Pratte has informed me that he will not be able to attend the Florida College lectures in February, and I agreed to put together the short seminar that he and Mark Mayberry and others have done for the last few years. Lectures are scheduled for February 7-10, 2000. The home-school meeting is currently scheduled for Wednesday afternoon from 3:00 to 4:30 pm.

I would welcome any input and suggestions any of you have about the meeting. For example, what do you think is important for such a seminar? Should we deal with issues or challenges for those who are currently home schooling? Or should we direct the session toward those who might be considering home schooling in the future and want to learn more?

I took the opportunity to ask Harry E. "Buddy" Payne, Academic Dean and Vice President of Florida College, to consider attending and addressing the session. He eagerly agreed. Dean Payne is, in my opinion, an enthusiastic supporter of home education, and optimistic about future opportunities for home schoolers' transition to Florida College. Thus, I think we will definitely carve out a portion of our short time for Dean Payne to provide information specific to Florida College admissions and policies, with the opportunity for a question and answer period.

Finally, I would welcome any of you sending me your personal "bibliographies" of books, web pages, etc. that you think would help those investigating home schooling get started, or which might address some issue that continues to challenge home educators (e.g., socialization issues, college entrance information, legal questions, learning styles, etc.). I will try to put together a handout for those who attend.

[Additional note from the editors: Those interesting in giving input to Joe can email him at [<4buds@gte.net>](mailto:4buds@gte.net).

The college always tries to include the home-school meeting in the official schedule for the lectures. If you are able to attend, be sure to check the printed schedule for specifics about time and place. If you need further information as time draws closer, you can call Dave Pratte at (847)395-8937.

We are very grateful to Joe for agreeing to host the meeting, and we hope many of you will be able to attend.]

EDITORIAL NOTES

We again express our sincere gratitude to everyone who has contributed to this issue of *Family Times*. As always, Mark Mayberry has contributed thought-provoking material. We also thank the Cascairos for their family profile. And we thank Joe Rose, Mark Bingham, and Rhonda Bosworth for their articles. Once again this issue we have continued our series on raising children.

We encourage those of you who are able to consider submitting articles for the benefit of our readers. The best way to submit an article is by email; otherwise, please feel free to mail material to us at the address in our heading. Thanks again.

Please tell your friends about *Family Times*!

POINTS TO PONDER

By Mark Mayberry

In the context of the recent wave of school shootings comes a rather odd story from the small town of Ponder, Texas. It seems that Christopher Beamon, a 13-year-old seventh-grader, was held in juvenile detention for several days on suspicion of making terroristic threats. What prompted the authorities to take such drastic measures? He wrote an essay.

It seems that his teacher had made a Halloween horror-story writing assignment. Students were given a relatively generic beginning for an essay and asked to finish the story. Young Christopher dutifully wrote his essay. He received a grade of 100, plus extra credit for reading it aloud to the class. However, there was one small problem: In his essay, Christopher described killing a teacher and several fellow students.

Parents of the students named in the essay called the school principal, expressing concern that Christopher might harm their children. The school district responded to the potential threat by asking the local juvenile authorities to intervene. A sheriff's deputy was dispatched to take the child to the County Juvenile Court where a judge ordered that Christopher be detained for 10 days.

Christopher was released after his mother, Jan Beamon, hired an attorney. Describing this sequence of events as something that might happen in Russia, the lawyer said that the boy's confinement was "insane." Faced with a possible lawsuit and howls from the media that the authorities had over-reacted, the local District Attorney said that he does not plan to prosecute the case.

What should we make of all this? Well, it's hard to say. On the one hand, it looks like Christopher was doing what the teacher told him to do. On the other hand, reports indicate that this child was a persistent discipline problem for the school. I can fully understand the concern of the parents whose children were named in Christopher's essay. It would have been prudent for them to call the principal and ask that he talk with the boy. But throw him in jail? It does seem that the official reaction was rather heavy-handed.

Nevertheless, there is another aspect of this story that has been largely overlooked. Let's stop focusing on young Christopher for a moment, and think about his teacher. The authorities detained the wrong person. They should have arrested his teacher for giving him a grade of 100 on the essay. His paper was filled with more grammatical errors, misspelled words, and run-on sentences than you could shake a stick at. As they say here in Texas, "They was thick as flies in a garbage dump." Here are a few excerpts from Christopher's essay, as reprinted in the Dallas Morning News:

My flashlight went out and I heard someone right behind me and I turned in a very slowly scared way and boom the lights came on and the door bell rang. I walked very slowly and creepy and turned the knob ding dong the door bell went again. I said just a minute and I will be right there and I looked through the little hole in the door and Robin said Boo. I told him to come in and have a seat and we both wated and wated for Ismael because he was supposed to bring the (ounce) so we could get high but half an hour later still no Ismael so I got the idea of freeon and we grabbed a bag and a knife and ran out back to the airconditionar. We through the bag over the nostle and covered it tightly and used the knife to press the voly. We started to hear something after we got high so we ditched everything we quickly run to the door to see who it was and there wasn't anybody there then we heard someone at the back door I thought it was a crook so I busted out with a 12 guage and Ismael busted out with 9 mm and we step off the porch and this bloody body dropped down in front of us and scared us half to death and about 20 kids started cracking up and ... me off so I shot Matt, Jake, and Ben started laughing so hard that I accsedently shot Mrs. Henry. Ismael saw somebody steeling antifreeze so Ismael shot over ther near the airconditonar and hit somebody (indecipherable word) also scattered out and went home and my mom drove up and everything was back to normal but they didn't have any heads.

In recent years, school districts across the nation have implemented new, higher academic criteria. Yet, many of these standards, adopted in a spirit of educational reform, are now being dumbed-down. Supposedly rigorous graduation requirements are being eased, as evidence mounts that many students are falling far short of the higher expectations.

The case of young Mister Beamon illustrates the problem. Many children who graduate from government schools are barely literate. They are woefully deficient in the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic. Christopher knows next to nothing about writing, spelling and proper punctuation. However, you can rest assured that his self-esteem is intact. Endless gold stars, happy faces, easy tests, and inflated grades have seen to that.

If the tragic specter of violence and death is not reason enough for parents to seriously consider alternatives to government schools, perhaps the aforementioned example will serve as a reality check about just how much politically correct, public schools are really teaching our children.

FAMILY PROFILE: THE CASCAIRO FAMILY

The Cascairo Family is sold on home schooling. When our oldest child was five, we had just relocated to Texas where kindergarten was mandatory at that age. Our reasons for home schooling then reflected more of a reluctance to “abandon” our child at such a young age, and also a desire to minimize change, since our move was already a shock for all of us.

We were afraid of failure, thinking our efforts couldn’t match that of the “professionals.” But to our wonder and surprise, Caleb actually learned to read! We also knew two families in our congregation who schooled at home. They were some of the pioneers of home schooling in that area and provided invaluable support.

Today, Caleb is almost 12, Jeremiah is 9, and Abigail is 4. Our reasons for schooling our children at home have taken a much more radical turn. Sure, there are the benign reasons, like time efficiency, flexible scheduling, and individualization of learning styles. But we now place ourselves in the category of what Mark calls the “militant home schooling families.” That is, we do it, because we think it is far and away the right thing to do, and we would nearly become physically ill, if not combative, if we were forced to place our children in a public or private school setting.

Home schools are right, in our opinion, because of a parent’s duty to take responsibility for the training of his children. I am speaking especially of fathers. In the current social environment, we believe much of the input provided by outsiders is seriously contradictory to a child’s training in righteousness. The bombardment of ungodly influence comes not only from public schools, but from our libraries, museums, newspapers, televisions, peers, etc., etc., etc. In the past, most of these sources of influence and information (except perhaps peers) were more complimentary of godly principles taught by parents. However, the current moral and philosophical climate results in such an overwhelming volume of UN-training material for a child, that we believe protective measures are in order.

Since society is out of control, we feel compelled to take control of our children’s environment. Home schooling is the only reliable way we can see to insure that the outside influences will be properly filtered through a godly perspective. We believe, in any other schooling format, the weight of opposing influences, measured in time exposure and sheer numbers, will seriously threaten the godly training of our children, and ultimately their souls.

As many readers can probably relate, our views are not shared by many in the body of Christ. This is a great concern of ours. We have seen so many young people leave the church in the past, and many of the young children and teens currently attending are sporting attitudes and behaviors which are pointing them in the same direction. This is in spite of good training on the part of their parents, and for the most part, in spite of good parental examples. On the other hand, children who are home schooled manifest good behavior and attitudes. Many such children are found, in our experience, not in the Lord’s church, but in denominations. Those who are in the Lord’s church are often ridiculed by their “church peers” for not being “cool”, and are often viewed by the adults with mixed admiration and concern for their extremely sheltered upbringing.

All Christians are likely to believe the proverb, “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is grown, he will not depart from it.” All Christians probably believe they are training up their children in the way they should go. Our question is, “Why doesn’t it look like more children of Christians are going the way they should go?” Our answer is, “There is a lot more training taking place than that which the parents provide, and that training is erasing the input from the parents.” The sooner we, as Christians, recognize the war has escalated, the better for ourselves and our children.

In our home, the television is almost never on. Only educational programs and carefully selected rented movies (usually old classics or historically relevant films) are allowed in our home. There is no Nintendo or Sega. We feel they are imagination killers. Computer games are even discouraged, but some of the more educational ones are allowed on a limited basis. Movies are usually a special treat on a weekend night, with the parents present for commentary. We try to develop family hobbies, like camping, tennis, and biking. Though our boys have occasionally participated in team sports, we try to avoid schedules that demand much of our time, especially at younger ages. School usually lasts half a day, with chores,

free time, or an outing in the afternoon. Our evening priority is daily prayer and family Bible study. Often we read a portion of a good book in the evenings.

Mark is a pediatric ophthalmologist and sees each day in his office families who obviously have no clue about child training or discipline. He can spot a home schooling family by the good behavior of the children in the waiting room and by their courtesy and ability to communicate with adults in the exam area. That is a sad commentary on our nation's modern parenting trends.

Mark is the history, geography, Bible and sometimes science teacher. He is a convert from a denomination and enjoys preaching on occasion.

Our home is a happy and interesting place. Laurie finds the schooling extremely interesting and wishes she had learned this much when she was younger. She primarily employs KONOS, a unit study curriculum, but also utilizes Saxon Math and Learning Language Arts Through Literature. She is known on a first-name basis at many local branch libraries as a frequent flyer. Many interesting outings are incorporated into the learning. In addition, she places emphasis on chores around the house as part of good training in taking responsibility. The house is orderly, but very comfortable, with lots of nice touches to make it the favorite place for all of her family members.

Caleb is extremely artistic, detailed, responsible and sensitive. He is an organizer (very helpful to his mother) and provides most of the comic entertainment around our house. He is a natural in his sign language class. We very regularly receive compliments about him as he often shocks adults he meets with his courtesy and politeness.

Jeremiah is our action dude. He enjoys everything fast, is a people person, and lives passionately - things are either awesome or terrible with him. He is quick to pick up HARD math problems in his head, he's a natural at spelling, and he has quickly progressed in piano.

Abigail brightens our home with lots of smiles and giggles. She loves her brothers who love her dearly, her speech skills have already surpassed those of her father, and we are sure she will be reading before age 5. Her two kittens receive more attention than any other animals in the world.

All of the above is said to illustrate what we consider to be a healthy, functioning family with children who are ALL doing fine academically and socially. Neither are the parents social recluses or paranoid isolationists. But we often feel we are suspect.

We are SO happy to have contact with other Christians who home school. We wish there were more. We feel nothing can assist Christians more in the godly training of their children than to take back control of the training environment. Christian fathers should realize they cannot bring up their children in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord" if their children spend much more time in the nurture and admonition of the world.

BACKYARD SCIENTIST

Written by Jane Hoffman

Reviewed by Rhonda Bosworth

The Backyard Scientist series is a group of 5 books which guide children (and their parents) through a multitude of experiments. The books are written directly to the children, but adults are expected to supervise. Each book is spiral-bound, has whimsical black and white illustrations, and can be found for under \$10.00. Because each book is slightly different, specifics about each are listed below.

The Original: 10 chemistry/physics experiments for ages 4-12; 56 pp.

Series 1: 25 chemistry/physics experiments for ages 4-12; 52 pp.

Series 2: 25 chemistry/physics experiments for ages 9-14; 52 pp.

Series 3: 25 life science experiments for ages 4-12; 52 pp.

Series 4: 24 experiments for the entire family; 52 pp.

Each book has a diverse selection of experiments; if you or your children are interested in doing science experiments, any of these books might be suitable. However, because these books are lacking in overall organization as a group, as a series they do not lend themselves well as a resource to assist you in investigating topics you might have become interested in apart from the books. And, while a few families may actually have on hand all of the items required to do some of the experiments, realistically most families will need to plan in advance to shop for or round up from friends and neighbors the one or two items they will be lacking for most of the experiments.

Biblical Applications: This is a paperback companion volume to the above books. A verse of scripture is offered along with a brief discussion of how the experiment (and resultant learning) can be correlated

with concepts taught in the scriptures. The ideas presented in this book are really a stretch, however. For example, in attempting to match the experiments with principles found in God's Word, Jesus is compared to a magnet in one place and Paul is compared to cornstarch in another.

In conclusion, these books are fun if doing experiments are what your children enjoy doing, but as a resource they are not useful. And the Biblical Applications book does little to enhance the physical or the spiritual aspects of God's creation.

USBORNE BOOKS

Reviewed by Mark Bingham

It may not be wise to introduce yourself to Usborne books by glancing through the catalog. The catalog packs about 800 titles into about 90 pages, and the effect is daunting and discouraging. There are books for children of all ages, from board books for the very young to "Atoms and Molecules" and "Electricity and Magnetism" for those beginning to fancy themselves mature. There are storybooks, consumable workbooks, books on history, science, geography, grammar, hobbies, arts, sports, etc. The catalog overwhelms; you're better off thumbing through some of the books themselves.

When you do, you'll begin noticing right away the features that will captivate your children. Open the book "Things People Do," for example, and you'll find each large page opening an arresting display of scenes from a workplace. The illustrations are vivid and appealing, with something of the allure of comics, drawing your eye to the generous captions. On the pages which offer a glimpse of things people do in a hospital, for example, you meet Doctor Penny Sillin. As she makes her rounds, you meet an anesthesiologist, a radiologist, nurses, and a midwife (Linda Hand!). In the illustration of the doctor scrubbing before surgery, you may notice the bar of soap flying through the air; the recovery room shows the patient's fellow firemen signing his cast. Both text and pictures are informative and consistently witty.

Peter Usborne set out, during the late 1970s, to produce children's books that would be engaging enough to rival television and comics, but that would provide solid educational value, both by packing information into small books and by packaging that information in a visually stimulating presentation. His books offer more than visual stimulation, however. They exploit and encourage the child's natural curiosity, by raising the questions parents often dread, question like these: What does a midwife do? What makes a car go? Why do tigers have stripes? What causes a volcano? What did Vikings eat? The books help children learn, and they reassure children that learning is fun.

Whatever title you pick up next, you'll find constant reminders that the publisher has parents' and children's interests in view. In most of the preschool activity books ("Starting to Count," "Shapes," "Colors," "Ready for Reading," etc.) and in the many early readers, "Notes to Parents" offer advice on getting the most educational value from the books. The Starting Point Science series offers parents help in answering questions children may raise after completing the simple experiments the books describe.

In the "Farmyard Tales" series for beginning readers, each page has two sections of text. The line at the top of the page is limited to the simplest vocabulary so that children can "help" with the reading. In the same series, as in nearly all the books for younger children, the beautiful illustrations by Stephen Cartwright include a hidden duck for children to find. There are true/false puzzlers scattered throughout the Mysteries and Marvels of Nature books, with a page of answers and explanations to satisfy the curiosity.

Several series of puzzle adventures (some for as young as age three, others for ages 12 and up) encourage reading and exercise logic skills by giving readers mysteries to solve and offering visual and verbal clues with which to solve them. The books in the First Nature series supplement the vivid illustrations and fascinating facts with puzzles and activities (such as hidden pictures) and with drawings in the corners, drawings which become moving pictures as you flip the pages depicting, for example, a butterfly in flight or a bud flowering.

Then there's the Great Search series, which I think of as "Waldo Goes to School." "The Great Animal Search" and "The Great Undersea Search" offer magnificently illustrated scenes of natural habitat as visual puzzles, asking readers to locate the animals in their habitat and offering information about both. In "The Great History Search," scenes from life in various historical periods are packed with fascinating details. On the page opening which depicts the marketplace in Athens around 450 B.C., for example, readers are challenged to find (among other things) the stall where oil lamps are being sold, three actors (carrying masks) on their way to rehearsal, three children playing with hoops, six sets of balance scales, and a man who hates his new haircut. In the factory town (circa 1850) we are to find vendors selling coal and

milk, the rat-catcher making his rounds, three chimney sweeps, and a man pumping water from a pump in the street. Then there are the Chinese party scene from the sixteenth century, the medieval English village scene, the Mesopotamian city (5000 B.C.), the Assyrian battle scene (700 B.C.), and several others, all illustrated with fascinating detail, all offering insights into life and culture in distant times and places.

Usborne books are not written or published by Christians, so some special cautions are in order. Among the 800 titles is a handful of books in a series called "Spinechillers." I call them "Usbumps," because they are clearly intended to compete with the popular Goosebumps series, pandering similarly to a fascination with the occult. We don't recommend them; our children don't read them. Also, there are a handful of books on prehistory, and a larger selection of history and science books on a broader scale which include brief sections on prehistory. They present the evolutionists' view of the origins of the world and of life. We find the brief sections in the books with a broader scope useful sites for teaching our children the claims made by those who don't believe God's account. Less important, but annoying nevertheless, is Usborne's occasional nod toward politically correct gender roles. The farmer in the Farmyard Tales series is Mrs. Boot. Her husband gives her a hand once in a while, but she's the farmer. As I say, this sort of role shifting is occasional, not nearly so obnoxious and distorting as it seems to be in most public school texts.

Having offered those disclaimers, I want to offer a final example of the Usborne knack for satisfying parents and children. In the Starting Point History series, the little paperback "Who Were the Romans" offers page after page of insight into life in the time of the ancient Romans: What kinds of houses did they live in? Where did they do their shopping? What kind of schooling did they have, and what did they do for fun? What did they do when they were ill? What was life like for a Roman soldier? Did Romans believe in God? It's a small paperback of only 32 pages, priced at \$4.95, packed with fascinating information—for kids and adults alike. The Romans become people like us, people whose houses were different, but whose needs and interests were the needs and interests people have always had, the needs and interests we share. Their lives become, not stale academic exercises, but lively explorations.

Many of the Usborne titles are available in a choice of bindings, either inexpensive but durable paper or an extra-sturdy library binding. They are printed on acid-free paper to last years without yellowing. Most of the paperbacks range from \$2.95 to \$7.95. Many are also available in economical "bind-ups" in which three or four related titles are bound together in one volume. For example, the hardback "World History" (\$24.95) combines six paperbacks, each priced at \$6.95: "The First Civilisations," "Warriors and Seafarers," "Empires and Barbarians," "Crusaders, Aztecs, Samurai," "Exploration and Discovery," and "The Age of Revolutions."

About two years ago, our oldest son, Joseph, then nine years old, went with me to spend a couple of weeks on the Navajo reservation in Arizona. We spent several spare hours at the library in Tuba City. There Joseph found the Usborne "World History" book. To my surprise (although I knew he was precocious!), he pored over that 200-page book tirelessly, unintimidated and apparently unaware that he was reading about something weighty and dull enough to put tenth-graders to sleep for a year. These books do a remarkable job of capturing kids' interest in reading, exploring, experimenting, and learning. You might say that they make learning fun. Or you might just say that they help kids and parents remember what fun learning should be.

LEGAL VICTORY

From the HSLDA@Capitol Hill E-lert Service

YOLO COUNTY, CA - Social workers are bound to obey the U.S. Constitution when investigating child abuse cases, said a unanimous three-judge panel of the Ninth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals in an opinion handed down Thursday, August 26, 1999.

"This opinion will have a nationwide impact. With respect to the Fourth Amendment, the Ninth Circuit settled the social worker question once and for all. No longer can social workers enter a home without either a warrant or probable cause of an emergency," said Michael Farris, lead attorney for the plaintiffs. "Child Protective Services agencies have too many times behaved as if there is a social worker exception to the Fourth Amendment's prohibitions against illegal searches and seizures," Farris explained, but there is no such exception, according to the Ninth Circuit ruling in *Calabretta v. Floyd, et al.*

The Fourth Amendment rights case was originally filed February 24, 1995, by Robert and Shirley Calabretta in the Eastern District of California federal court, after a Yolo County policeman and social worker illegally entered the Calabretta home and strip searched their three-year-old daughter. District

Court Judge Lawrence K. Karlton ruled that unless there is evidence of an emergency, a social worker and police officer investigating a report of child abuse must have a warrant. The Ninth Circuit panel unanimously affirmed that decision in Judge Andrew J. Kleinfeld's opinion.

Kleinfeld wrote that forcing the mother to pull down the three-year-old's pants "invaded ... the mother's dignity and authority in relation to her own children in her own home. The strip search as well as the entry stripped the mother of this authority and dignity. The reasonable expectation of privacy of individuals in their homes includes the interests of both parents and children in not having government officials coerce entry in violation of the Fourth Amendment and humiliate the parents in front of the children."

"It's the best possible opinion for the Calabretta family and for the rest of the country," Farris said. "The family won on every point we raised. Police and social workers cannot force their way into private homes. They were wrong to strip search the three-year-old daughter. This ruling erases the possibility that the law is not clear in the rest of the country."

TEST RESULTS AFFIRM HOMESCHOOL SUCCESS

From the Family Research Council's Ed Facts

The most recent test scores from the American College Testing (ACT) exam demonstrate once again the quality of education received by a majority of home-schooled students. As a group, homeschoolers tied students in Rhode Island, whose scores represent the highest state average in the nation. Across the country, traditionally educated students averaged a score of 21, while home school students averaged 22.7. Such achievement demonstrates the merit of homeschooling as an option for parental choice in education.

Seven Keys to Raising Godly Children (a series continued)

KEY #5: AUTHORITY

We continue giving reasons why authority is important.

C. AUTHORITY ALLOWS CHILDREN TO BENEFIT FROM THE PARENTS' WISDOM & EXPERIENCE.

By reason of experience, parents generally have more wisdom than children.

Proverbs 29:15 — A child left to himself (unsupervised) will cause shame. But the rod and reproof will give him wisdom (gained from the parents).

Proverbs 4:10-12 — Because of his parents' instructions, the child is wiser and can live without the troubles that he might otherwise have. He can avoid problems and mistakes.

This gives children a sense of security.

Children generally know their parents are wiser than they are. They know they need guidance at times. They may act confident, but often behind the false front are deep insecurities. Parental guidance gives the child a sense of assurance that he is doing what is best. As a result, children actually have greater respect for adults who make and enforce fair rules than they have for permissive parents.

To illustrate, consider driving a car across a bridge over a deep chasm. If there were no guardrails, we would be very fearful. With guardrails, we are confident, even though we may be just a few feet from the edge. So the limits set by parents give children security. They know their parents will not let them do anything that would be seriously harmful.

D. AUTHORITY MOLDS CHILDREN'S CHARACTER AND HABITS.

Training children develops character they will maintain even when older.

Proverbs 22:6 — Properly trained children will not depart from their training even when they are old. The way people act depends on their character and habits. We tend to continue to live as we have in the past. If we can motivate our children to develop good character and habits, they will probably maintain those habits. But habits come by repetition. So parents must motivate children to practice good habits.

How can parents get children to practice and develop good habits?

Reasoning with children, by itself, will not always work, even if parents have a good relation with their children. Sometimes the child is simply too young to appreciate and understand our reasons (cf. 1 Cor. 13:11). But if we wait until he is old enough to understand, it will be too late to start ingraining the proper habits.

1 Samuel 2:22-25; 3:12,13 — Note that Eli **told** his sons they were wrong — he instructed them. But it wasn't enough. They would not obey. God rejected Eli's house because Eli did not **restrain** his sons. He spoke but he exercised no authority.

Authority — proper enforcing of rules — is necessary to restrain the child and require him to practice good habits and good character qualities. These qualities and habits will tend to stay with him even when he is mature. Then he will understand and appreciate what his parents did for him.

E. PARENTAL AUTHORITY TEACHES CHILDREN PROPER ATTITUDES TOWARD ALL AUTHORITY.

Adults must regularly relate to all kinds of authority.

We earlier discussed how authority is needed to produce organization and cooperation when people work and live together. This is why authority is needed in the government, on the job, and in the home. To become well-adjusted adults, children must learn how to relate to authority — how to submit to others who have authority, and how to exercise authority when they themselves have it.

One major responsibility of parents is to prepare children to be well-adjusted adults. How can parents teach children the proper way to relate to authority so they will be prepared for it when they grow up? The best way is by developing a proper authority relationship between themselves and their children. This teaches children how to properly submit to authority, and they see by their parents' example how to use authority properly.

Many “psychologists” teach the opposite of this. They say parental exercise of authority makes children maladjusted, destroys their self-image, etc. Drivel! The truth is the opposite. Too many children today grow up unable to submit to authority, simply because they have so rarely been required to submit to it. If they don't get their own way, they just rebel against the whole “establishment” — parents, government, employers, church, and God.

The reality is that parents are the primary authorities that children must relate to for their first twenty or so years, and they are practically the only authorities that children will relate to for their first five years. If children do not learn how to get along with parental authority, most likely they will always have difficulty relating to authority in general, and they may never learn how.

People must especially learn how to relate to the authority of God.

If children do not learn respect for authority, especially for God's authority, while at home, it is very likely they will never learn it. Consider this quote from Dr. James Dobson:

Respect for the parent must be maintained for another ... important reason. If you want your child to accept your values when he reaches his teen years, then you must be worthy of his respect during his younger days. When a child can successfully defy his parents during his first fifteen years, laughing in their faces and stubbornly flouting their authority, he develops a natural contempt for them ... His parents are not deserving of his respect, and he does not want to identify with anything they represent. He rejects every vestige of their philosophy. This factor is important for Christian parents who wish to sell their concept of God to their children. They must first sell themselves. If they are not worthy of respect, then neither is their religion or their morals, or their government, or their country, or any of their values. This becomes the “generation gap” at its most basic level — *Dare to Discipline*, p. 12.

Yet another point to consider is that God Himself is an “authority figure.” We must obey Him to receive eternal life (Matt. 28:18-20; 7:21-27; Ecc. 12:13; Heb. 5:9; 1 Pet. 1:22; etc.). But if a child grows up without learning respect for authority, if he always does as he pleases without restraints, he will naturally rebel against God's limits. Like Eli's sons, children grow up to disrespect God if their parents do not restrain them (1 Sam. 3:13).

Clearly, proper exercise of authority is not something the parents do to please themselves, but something they do for the good of the child. It teaches lessons that will benefit the child both now and for eternity.

by David Pratte (to be continued)