

FAMILY TIMES

A Home-school Newsletter for New Testament Christians
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YEATER FAMILY PROFILE

Greetings from the hills of West Virginia! Residing near the community of New Martinsville, which is along the beautiful and historic Ohio River, we are the Yeater family: Kevin and Sarah with our children Eliza (7th grade) and Andrew (6th grade). I, Sarah, am the author of this family profile which highlights the events and thoughts that brought us to home educating our children. May this article be an encouragement to those who are new to the experience of homeschooling or may be considering it.

Our family began homeschooling five years ago when Goals 2000, Outcome-Based Education, and School-to-Work were making headlines. It was always my husband's desire that we would homeschool from the beginning. But, I, having a degree in education, was the reluctant one. How can I pull my children out of the school system that I previously had been an employee? And I was hoping to one day return to the classroom and continue what I did in my BC days (Before Children).

However, when I saw our children's desire to go to school wane, I knew I had to give the issue of homeschooling some diligent thought. Too many situations had transpired, and I realized that if I wanted my children's love for the Lord to be nurtured, they would need more time with Kevin and me and less with the world.

Eliza and Andrew, then in second and first grades, were good students. Eliza excelled in all subject areas and was bored with the pace. She quickly finished work and got to become the "teacher's helper" – she helped those that didn't understand the work. Her father and I would have preferred to see her spare time used for some more challenging work. Andrew was an average student, but he was falling through the cracks with the Whole Language reading system adopted by the county. Phonics was an end-of-the-day class that wasn't taught in relationship to reading. Hence, Andrew had no decoding skills. If he had not learned the "whole" word as a sight word, he did not have a clue to what it was. He would sneak books home for me to help him.

Aside from the educational standpoint, the "socializing" among their peers became a nightmare and probably the driving force to our homeschooling. Eliza and Andrew despised the school bus ride because of the behavior of some of the riders. I had to explain some topics that I didn't expect for a few more years, because of the students' worldly behaviors in route. Eliza was the victim of a second grader's punches and falsely accused of lying – by one of her teachers. Second grade also brought her first experience of being blackmailed. Andrew, not the sports-type, was always the one being chased on the playground. His teacher taunted him for not eating hot lunch. Both children were shown PG-rated movies at school. And, then there was the pit --the pit in my stomach every morning when I sent them to school. Something had to be done.

Kevin and I made our decision to homeschool in the spring of 1997. We decided to let the children finish the year in public school and did not announce our plans until the final grades were determined. In West Virginia, you must give a two-week notice before homeschooling. We did not want Eliza and An-

drew to have to answer questions at school and felt that we could stick it out until June. It gave us time to research more about homeschooling, choose our curriculum, mentally prepare, and pray.

I don't think I'll ever forget Eliza and Andrew's response when I told them I would be their teacher next year. They were elated beyond what words could express. Their outward joy told me that we had made the right decision and with their enthusiasm and ready acceptance of the idea, I knew we could make it work.

Family members were probably our biggest obstacle. They weren't hindrances, but it was obvious they were concerned about our choice. It wasn't until this past Christmas, when Kevin and Andrew sang "The Twelve Days of Homeschooling," which appeared on the Homeschoolers List, at a family gathering that one grandparent announced that it answered a lot of her questions! Both sets of grandparents have attended activities that the children have participated in – Science Fairs, Cultural Fairs, and music recitals. All of these we do with other homeschoolers, so it has been good for the grandparents to see that "Yes, other families do this, too."

Homeschooling has been a good experience for us. I believe I have learned as much, or more than the children – I had to "un-school" this previous public school teacher. Not every problem on every page is completed. If I think it is "filler" and of no additional value to our lesson, we skip it. It's okay to be on different grade levels in different subjects. Not every reading assignment has to be educational. It's okay to talk about God in school and we can pray. Just because a curriculum is expensive doesn't make it good; the Dollar Store sells some great math manipulatives. There's more to learning than worksheets. Hands-on activities create a more permanent learning and it's okay to laugh in school.

Kevin and I make every effort to follow the guidelines for homeschooling in our county and the laws of the state. We, according to Home School Legal Defense Association, are one of the more strict states for regulations. We figure if we can keep our paperwork current and our letters of intent to homeschool filed early with the local board, we will create the impression we desire: that we do have our act together and know what we are doing. However, to back us up, we are members of the Home School Legal Defense Association and would recommend it to other families. We appreciate that through *Family Times*, we can qualify for the discount.

So, in closing, this former public school teacher confesses that she wishes she had homeschooled her children from the beginning. Our children are now being raised and taught in an environment pleasing to their well being – both physically and spiritually. Kevin and I thank the Lord for the opportunity and pray that our efforts will yield faithful servants in His kingdom.

THE AMERICAN ADVENTURE SERIES

Reviewed by Sally Anne Perz

Barbour Publishing, Inc., publishes this set of 48 historic fiction books, written by various authors. We found the entire series at our local religious bookstore, purchasing a few at a time. We read the books in order, two each month, as our daily family read aloud.

The books give a very interesting overview of American history from 1620-1945. Reading the series peaked our children's interest in American History and they often branched off on their own to research topics we had touched upon during our reading. Though the main characters in each book are fictional, there are several historic figures introduced in each book.

While the literary quality is not highly impressive, we felt the moral quality was excellent. The books are wholesome, with bad behavior condemned rather than excused. The few exceptions to this would be occasional false doctrines slipping in from time to time, which were easily recognized by even the smallest of our children. The families are usually happy, church going, and have parents in traditional roles. In the last few decades the attitudes became a bit more 'modern' than we would have liked to see in our own children, but it is rather minor compared to any other literature we have read. While nothing clearly ungodly appears, we found a few hints of feminism that made us raise our eyebrows a bit.

Our entire family thoroughly enjoyed these books. Our two oldest children liked the series enough to read it on their own once we had finished it. Reading it this way takes considerably less time, they breezed through the books, enjoying them just as much the second time around!

Parents can allow children to read this series on their own without having to fear any bad content. While they are recommended for ages 9-12, our seven year old read them without any difficulty, and we know a few teenagers who also enjoyed reading them. We highly recommend them for the entire family to read together, as even our toddler was able to follow along and enjoy the books.

SOLOMON RESOURCE GUIDE

Reviewed by Karen Walker

The "Solomon Resource Guide," published by Solomon Publishing Company at 5830 Sovereign Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45241, is a two-volume set dealing with science subjects from animals to weather. It takes a main topic and divides it into chapters to cover areas related to the main topic. Within the two volumes are topics like the solar system, plants, human body, and others. Each chapter is divided into five sections: Teaching Resources (books which give information about the subject); Reading Selections (fiction books related to the subject); Activities (experiments and hands-on projects to help reinforce the lesson); Creative Writing; and the Arts (art projects to reinforce also).

These two volumes cover kindergarten through eighth grade, dividing into the Primary (K-2); Intermediate (3-5); and Upper Level (6-8). These divisions are used mainly in the Teaching Resources section. Volume one has a test with an answer key for each level at the end of each chapter for those who wish to use the guide as a complete science curriculum. I don't use these for textbook teaching so I have never used the tests.

I have always wondered how I ended up teaching the two subjects in school that I either did not like or did not feel I was good in — science and art — so I like using these guides for the activities and art sections which I use to reinforce what Wayne teaches from the textbook (A Beka Science). Plus it saves many hours at the library searching for the right books. I still look up the books listed to see if they are available (the librarian does that for me most of the time now).

Another plus about these volumes is that the child doesn't just sit and listen to science being taught or do a workbook but gets involved and sees how science is at work in everyday life by reinforcing what he/she has learned. One of Mark's favorite questions is, "Why is this so important to learn?" He can see why when he works on the activities from these guides.

One setback to these volumes may be the cost. I have been using them since Mark was in third grade, and I do not remember what we paid for them. I am thinking that they were \$85 for both, and I believe that this was a special offer at a home-school convention.

Another setback I've found is that the Reading Selection material is mainly for primary level. Mark enjoys reading, but I've found little in the way of reading material for him the last two years (4th and 5th grades).

I will continue to use these volumes with Mark for science activities and art, and use it all with our youngest, Jeremy, who will be starting first grade soon.

MINNESOTA HS COOP

by Joan Elder

Our family belongs to a local HS coop here in the metro Minneapolis area. There are about 23 other families of varied denominational backgrounds in the Coop with children from young infants up to about 7th grade. Our tuition is about \$115.00 per semester and we have 2 semesters in a year. The classes are held every other Thursday from 9:00 AM until 12:00 PM.

Children are grouped as Kindergarten and First, Second and Third Grade, and Fourth through Seventh Grade. Each school day the children have 3 classes lasting about 55 minutes each. They have Creation Science, taught by a paid teacher who teaches locally at several Coops, Gym class also with a paid teacher who teaches at other local Coops, and a Geography class taught by any parent who volunteers and is reimbursed for materials and time (about 50 dollars a class). I have taught 2 Geography classes.

There is a preschool and nursery option for about 15 dollars. The preschool is taught by one of the mothers each week and the nursery is assigned to different moms weekly. Each school day the parents have assignments as an aide in a class. Parents are encouraged to participate as much as possible, but the bulk of the organizing is done by the parents who are in charge.

Our children benefit from being with other children in an organized structured class where they have to learn to take turns asking questions and listening to the instructor. While I was teaching the Geography class I was constantly interrupted with odd questions and distracted with all the chatter between the children. I assumed this was because teaching in our homes allows our children to have our attention without having to share it with 10-15 other children. The children genuinely enjoy the time spent together and the common bond they share with other children who are taught at home by Godly parents; many have developed wholesome friendships outside of our meeting on school days.

Almost all the families have religious convictions that we are challenged by and would conclude are not consistent with the teachings of the New Testament or the simple Gospel taught in the first century. Nevertheless, most all of these families show great commitment to their responsibility in teaching godliness and the Bible in their homes and are open to Biblical discussions. Sad to say, but many of these good people are more convicted about teaching the Bible to their children than many of the good brethren we assemble with in the Lord's church. I have had the opportunity to have Biblical discussions with several of these moms and only once was it a tense situation. It is refreshing to find godly people who are not offended by Biblical discussions, yet I always remind myself that I cannot assume we share the same beliefs about doctrinal issues. This has caused me to work on how I present the truth and work on avoiding the temptation to be argumentative. I need to apply the truth in 1 Peter 3:15 always ready to give an answer "But do this with gentleness and respect." The other challenge for me is to avoid assuming that these good people are good enough or that they do not need the gospel. I pray for opportunities to plant seeds of truth and need the boldness to seek out these opportunities.

REVIEW OF DR. JAY WILE'S EXPLORING CREATION WITH CHEMISTRY

Written by Apologia Press

Reviewed by ???

After almost a semester using Dr. Jay Wile's *Exploring Creation With Chemistry* first year high school chemistry curriculum, I can say that generally I like this curriculum very much with some reservations. It is very home-schooler friendly. The text reads smoothly and clearly without throwing in a lot of additional information that may serve more to confuse rather than help the student. Dr. Wile provides good explanations for all questions and problems, enabling home-school teachers with less science background to adequately teach the curriculum. Additionally, Dr. Wile offers a free internet/email Q & A service for those using his curriculum. He has responded very quickly to inquiries I made.

The problems with Dr. Wile's curriculum can be worked around and may be corrected in future editions. One problem is an almost total lack of pictures in the text. There is a supplemental CD available which includes some pictures and interesting experiments, but even this resource could be richer in visual images in my opinion. However, there are books available with good pictures which can be used to augment Dr. Wile's text, e.g., the DK *Eyewitness* or Usborne *Illustrated Science* book series.

Another problem with Dr. Wile's curriculum is that the experiments included in the text could be a bit more robust. One very simple experiment is used several times to teach different concepts. This is not bad, but it does make the labs less interesting to me. Supplemental science experiment books can be used to enhance the lab experience. The reasonably priced lab equipment set that Dr. Wile makes available is complete enough to do the experiments in his text but not complete enough to familiarize the student with very many different pieces of laboratory equipment. However, if a student takes college science courses, he/she will easily learn about any needed equipment there.

In *Exploring Creation With Chemistry* Dr. Wile tries to bring the reader to as complete an understanding of basic chemistry concepts as possible. I believe he accomplishes this goal. If the student consistently does all the problems, questions, tests and labs in addition to the reading, the student will have a good college-preparatory foundation in first-year high school chemistry.

TEACHING THE TRIVIMUM

reviewed by Wayne S. Walker

A new resource is now available for homeschoolers. It is called "Teaching the Trivium: Christian Homeschooling in a Classical Style." The authors are Harvey and Laurie Bluedorn of New Boston, IL, who are the parents of five children, ages 17 to 25, who have always been homeschooled. The Bluedorn family operates a homeschooling business known as "Trivium Pursuit," and they are proponents of what is commonly called a "Classical Christian Education."

Before going any further, it might be good to explain the concept of "Classical Education," because the term means different things to different people. There are those who advocate a type of education based on the Renaissance classical curriculum derived from ancient Greece and Rome, which includes reading Homer, Plato, Caesar, and Virgil; studying the philosophy of Aristotle and Seneca; and learning to speak like Demosthenes and Cicero. The Bluedorns identify this as a Classical Humanist Education.

However, using a similar model, there has arisen a movement, especially among those from a Reformed background, to establish Classical Christian Schools. Also there is a Classical School movement

among Catholics as well. And there are homeschool programs based on these concepts as well. The Bluedorns define their concept of a Classical Christian education more narrowly to include that which is of good form and lasting value (classical) and which conforms to a Biblical standard within a Biblical worldview (Christian).

In 1947 Dorothy Sayers delivered an essay entitled “The Lost Tools of Learning” at Oxford University. In it, she advocated that education return to what had worked in the past, and specifically applied the three subjects of the formal medieval Trivium — Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric — as an educational model or philosophy and as a teaching medium or technique. Rather than studying the actual classical curriculum, the model suggests that each child passes through these three stages of development and the method indicates that each subject can be taught through these three stages of development.

The Bluedorns then show that this Trivium model/method is actually based on Biblical principles. “For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding” (Proverbs 2:6). The grammar stage, which involves the accumulation of facts, is knowledge. The logic stage, which involves seeing the relationships between facts, is understanding. And the rhetoric stage, which involves the practical use and expression of what has been learned, is wisdom. They generally identify the stages of child development with grammar through age 12, the logic being ages 13-15, and the rhetoric being ages 16-18 (others divide it slightly differently).

The book investigates different methods and approaches to homeschooling in the light of the Trivium and makes suggestions as to various activities that can be pursued during each of the stages of child development. In addition to discussing several other issues that are of special interest to homeschoolers, the book has two appendices. One consists of a number of very interesting articles on education, and the second is a resource list for those who are interested in pursuing a classical style of homeschooling.

Cathy Duffy, author of “The Christian Home Educator’s Curriculum Manual” (two volumes, one for elementary grades and one for junior/senior high), wrote:

The Bluedorns are true pioneers in classical Christian education. For years, they’ve been sharing what they’ve learned through their research as well as through their experience teaching their own children, and through interaction with thousands of other parents across the country.

They share a growing enthusiasm for classical education, but they temper their enthusiasm with cautions about pagan content. Rather than buying into the ‘Great Books’ model of classical education, the Bluedorns apply the methodology while carefully selecting resources that support a biblical Christian worldview. Some of those resources are among the Great Books while others are not.

The Bluedorn’s philosophy of education is presented at length in the first part of their new book, “Teaching the Trivium.” However, they also address broader issues such as government control of education and its conflict with biblical principles, problems with classroom-style teaching, arguments for teaching Latin, Greek, and Hebrew (as well as some ‘how-to’ information), charts showing ‘classical’ sources for teaching ancient history for each time period, and discussion of various homeschooling methods and how they can be adapted (or not) to classical education. This is one of the rare places where the contrasting ideas of Dorothy Sayers and Charlotte Mason for elementary education are addressed. All through this section, I especially appreciate the Bluedorn’s flexibility; they suggest numerous ideas for content, presentation, and timing but leave it to parents to decide what makes sense for their own children.

Chapters eleven through fifteen get into very specific suggestions for teaching the various subjects at different age levels. Also, flip back to the last forty pages of the appendix for extensive resource lists that identify curriculum and resources that fit the Bluedorn’s methodology. In addition to the resources list, the Appendix features sixteen articles that address more specialized topics such as Dorothy Sayers’s ‘The Lost Tools of Learning;’ ‘Ancient Education: Hebrew, Greek, and Roman;’ and ‘The Trivium in Scripture.’

‘Teaching the Trivium’ is a valuable contribution to the discussion regarding classical Christian education. The Bluedorns have been writing, speaking, and sharing online for years, but it is wonderful to have so much accumulated wisdom finally collected in one volume. This is an opinionated book, reflecting the strong convictions the Bluedorns have developed over the years. They approach their subject from a serious Reformed perspective, relying on Scripture as the ultimate authority. Even those Christians who might not share the Bluedorn’s theological perspective should find this book helpful if their goal is to use the classical model of education by drawing from it that which is worthy, while staying true to biblical principles.”

I purchased the book at a special pre-publication price, but it lists for \$27.00. There are other resources for a classical style homeschool education, such as “The Well Trained Mind” by Jesse Wise and Susan Wise Bauer (though not from a biblical perspective), the Covenant Home School Curriculum, Veritas Press, and the Sept./Oct., 1997, issue of “The Teaching Home,” among others. Even if one does not specifically plan to follow what is generally identified as a classical model for homeschooling, there is much worthwhile information in this book that he should find interesting, relevant, and beneficial. The address is PMB 168, 139 Colorado St., Muscatine, IA 52761, although I am beginning to see the book listed in homeschool catalogues now.

Here is a quote from the *Bluedorns* that itself is almost worth the price of the book. “Those Christians who have resisted Homeschooling look at it as a short-lived aberration in history. They smirk, and wait for homeschoolers to wake up and join the real world. They will be waiting until the end of the world. Homeschooling is an even more fundamental philosophical culture-shift than what took place when the parochial Christian school movement began in the 1960’s. Homeschooling is here to stay, because it answers questions that Christians have been asking ever since God began to put the desire in the hearts of parents to pass on their faith to their children.” To which I add a hearty AMEN!

HOW DID WE GET A FEDERAL CURRICULUM?

by Phyllis Schlafly, February 13, 2002

Behind frequent protestations by public officials about local control of the schools, a federal curriculum has been quietly imposed by law. All the pieces are now in place for this major goal of the Clinton Administration.

Elementary and secondary school education used to be organized around subjects such as reading, math, history, geography, language, and science. While smatterings of those subjects are still taught, the focus has been shifted from academic subject matter to teaching attitudes, beliefs, values, themes, behaviors, and job skills.

This is indoctrination, not education. Leftwing professors write the textbooks and the teachers unions control the public schools, so the ideology is what those groups deem politically correct.

And it’s all hiding behind that good conservative word “standards.” Who could possibly be against standards?

Two of the three 1994 Bill Clinton laws, Goals 2000 which defines the goals and School-to-Work which prescribes the shift from academics to job skills, were touted as “voluntary.” The third 1994 law, the appropriations reauthorization (known to many as H.R. 6), tied the knot, warning that schools would not get any federal money unless they conform to the other two laws.

In a remarkable inclusion of special-interest legislation, the third law named and funded a private organization, the Center for Civic Education (CCE), to develop the national standards for teaching civics and government. This cozy relationship was reconfirmed in the 2002 education law called Leave No Child Behind and means that CCE is empowered, with the force of federal law and a stream of taxpayers’ money, to decide what is taught in our nation’s schools about civics and government.

CCE produced a 180-page volume called “National Standards for Civics and Government,” plus textbooks, teacher’s guides and other materials for elementary, middle, and high school levels. This great quantity of words is short on facts but long on inculcating attitudes.

CCE’s textbook called “We the People: the Citizen and the Constitution” admits a peculiar aversion to facts: “The primary purpose of this text is not to fill your head with a lot of facts about American history and geography. Knowledge of the facts is important but only insofar as it deepens your understanding of the American Constitutional system and its development.”

“Deepens your understanding,” that is, of a prescribed worldview without cluttering your mind with hard facts about American history and what’s actually in the U.S. Constitution. For example, the fact that the U.S. Constitution contains a Second Amendment doesn’t exist in the book called “Standards.”

This is curious because, while the federal law was vague about the content of the standards CCE was empowered to write, the law was very specific in demanding instruction on the Bill of Rights. Many pages of “Standards” are devoted to the Bill of Rights but, funny thing, the Second Amendment is completely censored out.

The 180 pages of “Standards,” of course, contain much that is informative, but the information is peripheral to the selling of a political agenda designed to change the student rather than educate him. The book admits that “Standards” is trying to teach “certain dispositions or traits of character.”

One major theme is a put-down of allegiance to national sovereignty. Professor Allen Quist of Bethany Lutheran College made a word count and discovered that the book contains only 8 references to national sovereignty, but 17 references to the environment, 42 references to diversity, and 42 to multiculturalism.

When “Standards” listed the seven “fundamental values” of the United States, national sovereignty didn’t make the cut, but diversity did.

Six of the eight mentions of national sovereignty use the same curious wording: “The world is divided into nation-states that claim sovereignty over a defined territory and jurisdiction over everyone within it.”

Do we only “claim” national sovereignty, or is it a historical fact that we won our national sovereignty in a War of Independence and we jolly well need it to protect ourselves against foreign aggressors. The words “divided into” imply that maybe it would be better if we were not “divided” into countries, phrasing that is a favorite of those who advocate global government.

CCE’s “Standards” puts two government purposes on equivalent levels: “the protection of the rights of individuals and the promotion of the common good.” The words “common good” are repeated over and over again in this book, but they are not in our Constitution.

“The common good” can mean whatever a totalitarian government wants it to mean. Our Founders never would have ranked “common good” as an equal value with our Creator-endowed individual rights.

The last page of “Standards” gives its final advice to the students: Citizens have “the ability to reaffirm or change fundamental constitutional values.” Is that what a federal curriculum is all about — changing our constitutional values?

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Seven Keys for Raising Godly Children (a series by Dave Pratte)

Key #6: Motivation (continued)

IV. GUIDELINES FOR PROPER USE OF PUNISHMENTS AND REWARDS – PART 1

To be effective and Scriptural, punishments and rewards must be administered according to certain rules. The mere fact you use spanking (or other punishments) and rewards, does not of itself guarantee parental success.

A. NEVER INFLICT LASTING DAMAGE TO A CHILD.

Remember that your purpose is to punish the child for his good, not for his harm. We seek only temporary pain to change the child’s conduct. To inflict lasting harm is not an act of love, does not accomplish the purpose of punishment, and violates the principle that we are not to discourage our children (Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21).

Yet many parents do harm their children. Child abuse is a very definite problem in our society. Literally thousands of children every year are beaten to death by their parents, left abandoned, or otherwise inflicted with lasting harm. All such conduct neglects parental responsibility and violates Scripture.

B. CONTROL CHILDREN BY ACTION, NOT BY SCREAMING, THREATS, ETC.

Some parents find themselves constantly harping at their children: “What’s the matter with you, Son. You never do what I say. What am I going to do with you? It seems like you’re always getting into something. Why can’t you do what you’re told? Other children obey their parents, why can’t you? Etc., etc., etc.” “This is the last time I’m going to tell you that this is the last time I’m going to tell you!” Generally, we get louder and angrier until finally we end up having to spank anyway.

Dr. Dobson gives this example:

I knew of a family with four of the world’s most undisciplined children. These youngsters were the terrors of their neighborhood; they were disrespectful, loud, and aggressive. They roamed in and out of garages, helping themselves to tools and equipment. It became necessary for neighbors to remove handles from outside water faucets, because these children enjoyed leaving the water running when the families were gone. It was interesting to observe the method of discipline used by their mother, because whatever it was, it didn’t work. Her system of controlling children boiled down to a simple formula: she would rush out the front door about once every hour, and scream: “I have had it with you; I have had it with you children!” Then she would turn and go back into the house. The children never even looked up at her. If they

knew she was there they gave no indication of it. She apparently felt it was sufficient for her to come out like a cuckoo clock and remind them that she was still on the job — *Dare to Discipline*, pp. 9,10.

All of us know such methods are ineffective. The child gets used to our scolding, and simply turns it off. If he learns that you always go through fits, threats, and scolding before you do anything, he will always push you to the limit. He will wait till you reach the fever pitch where he thinks you are about to take action before he pays any attention.

Furthermore, our verbal barrage toward the child often results in a return barrage. We scold; he argues and fusses. We scold louder and longer; he argues and fusses louder and longer.

The solution is to use **action** to motivate. We need to talk enough to be sure the child understands what is expected. If he is old enough to understand our reasons and if circumstances are such that we can explain our reasons, then do that too. But if he understands what we want and he just does not **want** to obey, it is time for action, not words.

Arguing begets arguing; action begets action.

C. ALWAYS CONTROL YOURSELF WHEN DISCIPLINING.

When we become extremely angry and agitated with our children, there is always the danger that we may make decisions that are bad for the child, and we may even lose control and do acts of serious violence and harm. So everyone really knows we should keep ourselves under control, and administer discipline calmly. But how do we accomplish this?

Interestingly enough, the answer is the same as the last point: **Take action early, before the situation gets out of hand**. Obtain action from the child by taking action yourself. He is not likely to do what you say until he thinks you will take action if he does not. So don't keep postponing the action. When the child does something that you will eventually punish him for if he does not change, warn him calmly once or twice. If he does not obey, calmly punish him.

Consistent application of this approach will lead to less arguing, less anger, less upset, less threatening — this should all be obvious. But the result is also **less punishment**, in the long run. Why? Because when the child learns that you mean what you say, he will learn to act when you tell him to instead of agitating till you have to punish him. By punishing more promptly, you end up punishing less frequently. Greater commitment to action leads to decreased need for action. More is less.

Yes, you can learn to punish children calmly, and you should learn. Remember it: Arguing begets arguing; action begets action.

CONSIDERING PRAYER A CURSE

From the Family Research Council's Ed Facts

Stephanie Vega, a 16-year-old student at Santa Fe High School in Texas elected by her peers to speak at her high school's football games, decided not to lead classmates in prayer because of "too much pressure." She said, "I do not want to be expelled from school for using the word 'God' in a reverent manner." The less-than-reverent words of Superintendent Richard Ownby played a role in her decision. Ownby warned that any student who leads prayers at today's (9/3/99) football game "would be disciplined as if they had cursed." The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, which has jurisdiction over Texas, ruled this year that, while students may lead prayers at events like graduations, students may not pray before football games, because the games aren't "serious" enough.

[Editorial comment: Let me see ... Can't pray at ballgames because it isn't serious enough ... But can't pray in class — that's not serious enough? ... Oops! No, someone might be there who seriously doesn't believe in God ... And prayer is sort of like cursing ... but from what I hear and read most schools have plenty of that ... Anyway children can't pray in school pretty much at all, right? ... What are we missing here? DP]

EDITORIAL NOTES

Thanks again to all our contributors: Sarah Yeater, Joan Elder, Sally Anne Perz, Karen and Wayne Walker, and anonymous (I tried to find out who wrote it, but nobody so far has claimed it!). Unfortunately we were not able to print an article this month from Janet Metzger — her computer crashed! We hope to be able to hear from her again next time, along with other regular contributors.

We look forward to receiving more contributions for our next issue. Your contributions are what makes *Family Times* a success. Please keep them coming! If you have a topic that you believe needs to be discussed, please email us at truth@gospelway.com.