

FAMILY TIMES

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December, 2006 – February, 2007

Punctuality and the Home Schooler

By Sally Anne Perz

One of the favorite freedoms for most homeschooling families is the freedom to march to the beat of their own drum. For those who approach home education as a lifestyle, there may be a struggle with activities that do not have leeway with regard to time. Quite frankly, many families do not value punctuality. Most think they value other's time highly, but they also value their freedom to come and go as they please.

Of course, there are always occasions when being on time is impossible. Accidents, road construction, sickness, and other factors often result in even the most punctual family being tardy. In cases such as these, only the most rigid stoic would dare voice a complaint. However, in the case of pre-meditated tardiness, some valuable lessons must be learned.

Pre-meditated tardiness may seem like a harsh term. However, consider that most cases of tardiness are avoidable. If one does not make plans to be on time, one is likely to be tardy simply due to a lack of diligence. One may simply be too busy, this is really another issue altogether. If you are too busy to be on time, perhaps you have one commitment too many. If you cannot get out of the house on time, perhaps you need to evaluate your organizational skills (or lack thereof). Punctuality takes pre-meditation. One must be organized. One must plan ahead. One must not over schedule. One must train one's children to obey (be ready, load the car, etc.). One must value punctuality.

Many fail to realize that when others are waiting for them, and they are late, their actions are saying, "I don't value your time," or even "I consider my time more valuable than your time." This may be extreme, but it is the truth. It may not reflect your thoughts, but it is what your actions say! Punctuality in the business world is not often tolerated without rebuke. It is considered unprofessional.

Even the most lackadaisical person can learn to be punctual. Perhaps it comes easier to some, but it is a learned attribute nonetheless. As home educators, we need to be careful what non-verbal messages we are sending. We may not be inconsiderate at heart, but when we are late for an appointment, a study, a meeting, an activity, or an outing that has a set starting time,

we may be sending a message that we do not intend to send. We may be saying, "I am too busy or too important to be hedged into your time constraints..."

We need to respect others' time, we need to consider that people can be easily offended by our lack of punctuality. Furthermore, we need to be particularly careful when dealing with those outside of the homeschool community. They will see our tardiness as a negative reflection on home education. Let us be mindful of how our actions may be construed!

Consider the following quotations:

Men count up the faults of those who keep them waiting. French Proverb

Promptitude is not only a duty, but it is also part of good manners; it is favorable to fortune, reputation, influence, and usefulness; a little attention and energy will form the habit, so as to make it easy and delightful. Charles Simmons

Unfaithfulness in the keeping of an appointment is an act of clear dishonesty. You may as well borrow a person's money as his time. Horace Mann

Few things tend more to alienate friendship than a want of punctuality in our engagements. William Hazlitt

Better three hours too soon than one minute too late. William Shakespeare

Punctuality is the politeness of kings. Louis XIII of France

HSLDA Launches Online Curriculum Market

Home School Legal Defense Association has launched a new site, HSLDA's Curriculum Market, for the sale of new and used curriculum and materials specifically related to homeschooling. HSLDA created this site in response to our members' concerns about the policies of other auction sites that do not allow the sale of teacher or instructor materials (e.g., anything with an answer key). The new site is at <http://market.hslda.org>.

Anyone can sell materials on this site. You can sell through auctions, multiple item auctions, bartering, and fixed price sales. And if you have a lot to sell, you can upload the auction listings in bulk.

Since we are offering this resource as a member benefit, only HSLDA members will be allowed to buy. This also helps ensure that teacher materials are being sold only to teachers. If you have items to sell, whether or not you are an HSLDA member, please join us as you will have a potential market of over 80,000 families.

To set up an account, go to <http://market.hslda.org> and use the "register" link on the left-hand menu (under "membership"). If you are an HSLDA member, make sure you sign up as a member.

HSLDA currently charges no fees for use of this site; all the profits will go to sellers. The same as other such sites, sellers will have profiles and the services they provide will be rated by their buyers.

Our hope is that this service will be a blessing to you, allowing you to save money on curriculum purchases and recoup some of your costs by selling used curriculum.

Parents Are Right; Math Experts Are Wrong

Sept. 27, 2006 by Phyllis Schlafly

It took parents 17 years to overturn the tragic 1989 curriculum mistake made by the so-called education experts who demanded that schools abandon traditional mathematics in favor of unproven approaches. The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics finally reversed course on September 12 and admitted that elementary schools really should teach arithmetic, after all.

The new report called "Curriculum Focal Points for Prekindergarten Through Grade 8 Mathematics" is a back-to-basics victory that rejects the type of math curricula that parents had derided as "fuzzy math" or "rainforest math." The experts preferred such hoity-toity titles as "New

New Math,” “Connected Math,” “Chicago Math,” “Core-Plus Math,” “Whole Math,” “Interactive Math,” or “Integrated Math.”

Whatever the title, these curricula imbedded the notion that estimates are acceptable in lieu of accurate answers to math problems so long as students feel good about what they are doing and can think up a reason for doing it. Fuzzy curricula were big on discussion, coloring, playing games, and early use of calculators.

The 1989 report (which gives the word “standards” a bad name) flatly opposed drilling students in basic math facts, taught that memorization of math facts was bad, and failed to systematically build from one math concept to another. Children were encouraged to “discover” math on their own, construct their own math language, and flounder around with their own approaches to solving problems.

This silliness is based on the false notion that children can develop a deeper understanding of mathematics when they invent their own methods for performing basic arithmetic calculations.

Despite widespread parental opposition, in October 1999 Bill Clinton’s Department of Education officially endorsed ten new math courses, based on the 1989 “standards,” for grades K-12, calling them “exemplary” or “promising.” Local school districts were urged to adopt one of them, and were baited with federal money inducements.

One of these department-approved “exemplary” courses, “MathLand,” directed the children to meet in small groups and invent their own ways to add, subtract, multiply and divide. It’s too bad the kids weren’t told that wiser adults have already discovered how to do all those basic computations rapidly and accurately.

It wasn’t only parents who quickly sized up fuzzy math curricula as subtracting rather than adding to the skills of schoolchildren. On November 18, 1999, more than 200 prestigious mathematicians and scholars, including four Nobel Laureates and two winners of the Fields Medal (the highest math honor), published a full-page ad in the Washington Post criticizing the “exemplary” curricula.

But Clinton’s Education Secretary Richard Riley refused to back away from the Department’s endorsements and the 1989 “standards” adopted by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics.

With such vague parameters for courses in math, trendy instructors began advancing their political agenda by injecting ethnic studies into math textbooks. Some taught what Diane Ravitch calls “ethnomathematics,” the far-out notion that traditional math is too Western-civ and therefore students should be taught in ways that relate to their ancestral culture.

The diversion of math into the teaching of political correctness was illustrated by the “anti-racist multicultural math” curriculum adopted by Newton, Massachusetts. It’s no wonder that test scores dropped after this “math” curriculum’s top priority became “Respect for Human Differences.”

Fortunately, during the Fuzzy Math era, a few students were fortunate enough to have teachers who dared to be heretical. Some 300 public schools adopted Singapore Math and those students are turning in good scores. Homeschoolers are very successful with Singapore Math, too.

The new National Council report tries to finesse its dramatic switch back to memorization by recommending that the curriculum focus on “quick recall” of multiplication and division, the area of two-dimensional shapes, and an understanding of decimals. It takes a pompous expert to avoid admitting that memorization of multiplication tables is the best way to have “quick recall.”

Before the 1989 mistake, U.S. students ranked number-one in international mathematics tests. Since then, U.S. students have dropped to fifteenth, far behind the consistently high performance of Singapore and Japan and behind most industrialized countries.

Added to the humiliation of international tests is the appalling percentage of college students who must take remedial math before they can enroll in college courses. That means the taxpayers have been paying twice to teach students the same material.

Another dirty little secret that has finally emerged as front-page news is the small number of college students who graduate even after six years. Graduation rates at 50 four-year public universities are below 20 percent, and below 50 percent at many more universities.

Since it's likely that nearly all these students attended college using financial aid, the obvious conclusion is that the taxpayers are being ripped off by the racket of colleges pretending to teach and students pretending to learn.

Eagle Forum, www.eagleforum.org, PO Box 618, Alton, IL 62002

Make It Your Ambition

Author: John Notgrass

Reviewer: Wayne S. Walker

Age level: Intended for teenagers

Price: \$15.00

Publisher: Notgrass Company, TN; 1-800-211-8793; www.notgrass.com

John Notgrass graduated from high school at home in 1997. He now works as a partner in his family's publishing business and enjoys reading good books, making music, and maintaining an active interest in civic affairs. A featured speaker at homeschool conventions and support group meetings, and a regular columnist for Home School Digest, John lives with his parents, four sisters, brother, and grandfather in Middle Tennessee. This book was written primarily for homeschooled students, especially young men, to encourage them to live for God's glory, but it is suitable reading for all young people who want to please Christ in their lives. It would be my suggestion that parents and their teenage children sit down, read it together, and discuss the material.

Different chapters deal with making plans and preparations on how to honor parents, gain an education past high school, make a living, be different from the world in lifestyle, look for a suitable marriage partner, raise one's own children, become involved in civic affairs, and serve God as a member of Christ's body. I especially liked the chapter on "Why I Plan to Train My Children at Home." Because people have different backgrounds, everyone may not find each specific suggestion useful. However, the author himself says, "I do not expect you to do everything the same way I do, but I do expect you to think about the issues, make conscious decisions, and live them out confidently."

The passage of scripture upon which the book is based is, "Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; so that you may conduct yourself decently toward outsiders, and have need of nothing" (1 Thesalonians 4:11-12). The book does an excellent job of providing interesting information and advice that will help young people accomplish this aim in their lives. I especially appreciate the emphasis that the author places on using the scriptures as the absolute standard upon which we must make the choices and decisions that face us in life. John identified himself as a member of the Church of Christ and says that he appreciates his "restoration heritage."

New Study Shows Excessive Media Screen Time Affects Kids' Grades

By Ed Thomas October 5, 2006

(AgapePress) - There's a new study out that verifies what parents and teachers have been saying to students for years — that they need to turn off the TV and other media devices and concentrate on their school work.

Data from New York's Albert Einstein College shows some negative effects on school performance in middle school students in relation to their media exposure. But one spokesman for

an organization that promotes media restraint says that is something a lot of concerned advocates already knew and have been saying for years.

Robert Kesten is executive director of the Center for Screen Time Awareness in Washington, DC. The group is part of the TV-Turnoff Network, whose mission, he says, is to empower people to take control of the electronic media in their lives.

The Einstein College study, which found that adult media exposure adversely affected schoolwork among 4,508 middle school students aged 9-15, is not the first study to demonstrate that effect, Kesten points out. "It is clearly known within the scientific and medical communities that screen time has a reverse impact on the way a student will do in school," he says.

And that impact includes the students' ability to read and comprehend their work, the Center's spokesman emphasizes. For students exposed to an inordinately high amount of media "screen time," he suggests, "instead of studying, instead of doing your homework, or instead of focusing on those two things, your mind is elsewhere."

There are a myriad of electronic distractions that compete for students' attention; however studying, learning and otherwise working on homework take time, focus and concentration, Kesten contends. "And if you're watching television or you're IM'ing [i.e., sending instant text messages to] your friends, or you're surfing the net, or you're playing with your iPod or you're watching a movie," he insists, "you're not focused and concentrating on what you need to be."

After monitoring how different amounts of television, movie, and video game exposure — and different types of content — affect the school performance of middle school students, the two authors of the recently published Einstein College study are recommending that adolescents be limited to no more than one hour of media screen time per weekday. The researchers also recommend that teens' access to cable movie channels and R-rated video and movie content be significantly restricted.

Kesten says the results of that study agree with previous research that shows greater media exposure leads to poorer academic performance. Also, he notes, all these kinds of studies highlight the importance of parents' involvement in supervising their children's media exposure and schoolwork.

Ed Thomas, a regular contributor to AgapePress, is a reporter for American Family Radio News, which can be heard online.

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David Gresham on Home Schooling

The following was submitted to the Homeschoolers' List by Wayne Walker:

(You may not know who Douglas Gresham is, so I will tell you. He is the step-son of the famous author Clive Staples (C. S.) Lewis, who gave us "The Chronicles of Narnia" series. A professional counselor who works with child abuse and other family issues, he did an interview with Amelia Harper for *The Old Schoolhouse* magazine which appeared in the Fall, 2005, issue. Amelia asked him, "In earlier conversations with you told me that you were an ardent supporter of homeschooling. What is your opinion of homeschooling and how did you reach that opinion?" His answer follows.)

Homeschooling and why I advocate it is not a matter of whether the schools are good or bad, though obviously I would rather children went to good schools than to bad ones, if go to school they must. It is that, as someone who has been trained and works in the field of post-childhood abuse trauma, and has devoted considerable thought to the matter, I have formed the opinion that the entire concept of school is flawed. In fact it is a terrible mistake.

Look what we do: we observe what God has designed, a pair of parents, one of each sex, and two pairs of grandparents, often with a few aunts and uncles thrown in. In fact, a Family. This is the unit designed by God Himself for the specific purpose and ministry of raising each new generation.

Then what do we do? We take the child and remove him from this carefully designed support group of parents and close family members, all of whom share a genetic bond with the child, and plunge him into a mass group of his peers, all of whom are as ignorant and as demanding as he is, with one adult stranger supervising. In terms of the psycho-emotional development of the child, this is complete madness.

A child is best nurtured by having the one-on-one attention from each of the two parents for a specific period of time each day. Ideally, a child should be homeschooled by both parents sharing the task equally, though I do realize that this is not always possible. Bear in mind that I am not referring to idiotic parents, criminal parents, drug-addicted parents, or self-indulgent, self-obsessed parents, nor to anyone else who should never be graced (in my view, not God's, of course) with progeny in the first place. I am referring to normal, well-adjusted, good parents. And with our modern habits of sending children away from their home and families for the better part of every day, these [well-adjusted parents] are becoming more and more scarce as the vast majority of people are damaged or scarred emotionally and intellectually themselves by being exiled from their home and parents and placed in the hands of strangers at a young age.

It is a trans-generational progression exacerbated by the fact that those who are damaged very often are not even aware of it. If I had known back then what I know now, my children would never have gone to school until they were at least 18 years old. Satan hates what God loves and God loves us, Mankind. The basic unit of Mankind is the Family, so Satan has targeted the Family, and he has been pretty successful, mostly by using "good intentions." I think that "School" is one of his very clever inventions. As far as I am concerned, schools are for fish.

[Editorial note: Obviously Gresham here expresses his strongly held opinion regarding schools. We do not believe it is sinful to send child to schools, per se, provided the school teachers and administrators will follow the parents' will regarding instructing the children. However, Gresham expresses some thoughts well worth considering regarding the wisdom of the school arrangement.]

Buried alive

Written by Jack Cuozzo
Reviewed by David Pratte

Cuozzo is an orthodontist and a strict creationist. He has used his expertise to study the skulls and especially the jaws of Neanderthal remains in various world museums. This book states his results.

The book is important because evolutionists claim the Neanderthals were a step in the evolutionary development of men. They generally believe the Neanderthals were probably human but a different species of human than we are. They are believed to be inferior to modern men, so they supposedly give evidence that men are evolving upward.

Three main conclusions stand out in Cuozzo's book:

(1) Cuozzo documents a number of instances in which evolutionists' claims regarding the Neanderthal men are simply untrue or even deliberately falsified.

We are not surprised that "evidence" from Neanderthal remains has been misinterpreted by evolutionists, but Cuozzo proves that often the evidence itself is just flat wrong.

Sometimes this may occur because "scholars" approach the remains with evolutionary preconceptions, so they simply reject any possibility that the actual evidence could contradict the "truth" of evolution. But other cases simply cannot be explained on any basis other than deliberate, intentional falsification - i.e., lies!

One example would be measurements of dimensions of skulls. These are clearly factual matters - the skull either is a certain size or it is not. But the figures cited to the public are sometimes simply wrong and inexcusably so. And these "errors" always favor the evolutionary theory, in that they make the shape of the skulls appear to be more ape-like than they really are.

Other examples include skulls which are reconstructed so as to make Neanderthals appear much more apelike than they were. This includes jaws clearly misaligned so they jut out in ape-like fashion. Yet as an orthodontist, Cuozzo shows that the jaws conclusively fit properly into a position that is unmistakably different from what “scholars” have positioned them. In the proper position they appear completely human.

Other such examples are cited. In short, “evidence” published about Neanderthals is often simply false. This may be deliberate or may be caused by false presuppositions. But either way, the information put out to the public is often biased, and always in favor of evolution.

(2) Similarly Cuozzo demonstrates that much evidence about Neanderthals is simply hidden from the public and especially from creationists.

“Scholars” claim that these remains are so valuable that they must be protected. So they usually hide them under lock and key in the back rooms and basements of museums. There they can control who can and cannot have access to them.

Usually the public is shown just diagrams or reproductions, not the actual evidence itself. The public is given an “interpretation” of the evidence in a way that supports evolution, but evidence against evolution is withheld or ignored.

Furthermore, investigators are refused access to the fossils, if it is suspected that they might not “toe the party line.” Cuozzo was able to access many remains and make some amazing discoveries. But whenever people found out his creationist views or that he might publish facts that were embarrassing to evolution, doors suddenly closed that had been open. Promised opportunities suddenly were no longer available, etc.

What is worse, Cuozzo at times was openly harassed, ridiculed, and even physically threatened. The book describes times when he was followed, chased at high speed, and people even attempted to break into his room and destroy his research.

One does not have to read long in this book before his faith in the “objectivity” of modern scientists is thoroughly shaken, at least as regards the subject of human origins. I was amazed to see the obvious attempts at “censorship” and even actual persecution carried on in the name of science. And all this was done by the kind of people who say we should reject the Bible account because it is not based on “scientific evidence.”

(3) Cuozzo theorizes that the Neanderthals were not inferior to modern humans at all, but simply lived longer than we do under difficult circumstances.

He shows that nearly all unique characteristics of Neanderthal skulls would be explained if they simply lived to ages of 150-400 years of age, if they likewise matured more slowly than modern humans do, and if they lived under primitive conditions.

Cuozzo’s theory is that these may be remains of the people who lived shortly after the flood and after the tower of Babel. People in those ages still lived much longer than we do, and probably matured physically at a slower rate than we do. They did not live as long as people before the flood often did. But they would still have many of the physical advantages (such as immune systems) that people before the flood had. However, they faced a greatly changed world, including different atmospheric conditions, much greater radiation, etc. Those who were scattered from Babel would have lived in new areas without the advantages of civilization, etc. This might compel them to live in caves, hunt for a living, etc., like the Neanderthals did.

As time went by, Cuozzo theorizes, changed conditions on earth would lead people to live shorter lives, till finally life spans stabilized to the ages people commonly live today. As a result people today never develop many of the unique physical features that come from living to such great ages.

Cuozzo does not attempt to explain how Bible miracles occurred. But he does try to show how the remains of the Neanderthals would harmonize with Bible accounts. And he claims that this is a much better explanation for those remains than evolutionary views. The conclusion

would be that, although the Neanderthal were different from us, that does not mean they were inferior to us, but that in many ways they were superior.

I must point out, however, that Cuozzo's documentation for his views is highly technical and at times confusing and somewhat rambling. The last 2/3 of the book is very difficult reading, unlike the first part which is interesting and even exciting at times. I am not convinced Cuozzo has conclusively proved his theory. But he has definitely shown that there are explanations for the evidence which harmonize with the Bible and with fit the physical evidence much better than evolution does.

Editorial Notes

Thanks again to Sally Ann Perz and Wayne Walker for the articles they submitted for this issue of *Family Times*. We appreciate so much their help in maintaining quality material for our readers. We encourage our other readers to send us material for future issues.

Besides actually writing articles for us, you can help by submitting articles that you may read from other sources. Most of you read home-school articles from various other publications. If you see an article that you consider to be worthy of being reprinted for our readers, please forward it to me. If you can send it in e-mail format, that would be ideal. But even articles in print would be helpful.

I am not looking for the typical newspaper or magazine article about home schooling in general - the kind that gives an overview about home schooling and interviews 2 or 3 families. Those kinds of articles are becoming quite common. But any article that gives new information or helpful suggestions that would benefit the kind of readers we have. In short, we are looking for any article that you read that you find especially helpful as a home schooler or a parent. If you can be our "eyes and ears," you can help us very much by forwarding such articles to us. Be sure to include the name of the author and the source of the article, so we can give credit. And even if the article is copyrighted, if you think it is really good, send it to us anyway, but we will need an address to contact to ask permission to reprint it.

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