

The Christadelphian Advocate

SPECIAL ISSUE

*Train Up
A Child*



*In The
Nurture
And
Admonition
Of The
Lord*

NOVEMBER 2007

Introduction – An Heritage of the LORD	307
The Scriptural Role of Mothers and Fathers	310
Our Children At Home	312
Our Children At School	316
Our Children In The Ecclesia	323
Our Children In The Community	328
Our Children In Our History	333
Discerning Entertainment Choices	334

A monthly magazine in defense of the “Things Concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ” as embraced in The Hope of Israel with a view to “Taking Out A People For Yahweh’s Name”

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FRONT COVER PICTURE — The day's work is over and a place on the workbench is cleared for the scroll. By the light of a lamp the child is tutored in the statutes and judgments of the Lord that he might *learn them, and keep, and do them* (Deuteronomy 5:1). We might imagine that this image reflects a scene played out countless times in Israel through Abraham and Isaac, Eli and Samuel, or perhaps Joseph and Jesus. This cover picture was chosen to reflect the teaching and attention to the law of the Lord that our Heavenly Father commanded be observed and passed on to our children and our children's children. We are to instruct our sons and daughters and help to mentor our youth while their minds are receptive, instilling and reinforcing God's precepts, guiding and encouraging them through the temptations and uncertain years that lie ahead. Our prayer is that this special issue will assist in this loving endeavor.

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SPECIAL ISSUE

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Introduction

An Heritage of the LORD

Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD

Our children are one focus of our love and joy in this life. Becoming a parent changes our priorities and interests as our children's well-being and development becomes a passion. We instruct, we struggle and we worry as we seek to raise them to healthy and honorable adulthood. But more than a blessing to us, our *children are an heritage of Yahweh* (Psalm 127:3). The family is God's gift to mankind. He established that a man should *leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife, and they should be one flesh*. They were to *be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth* and their seed was to be God's heritage, brought up *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord* (Ephesians 6:4), from which would be derived a people for His name. Thus, our role as believing parents takes on greater responsibility. Indeed, what greater joy is there in this life than a son's or daughter's decision to be baptized and serve the Lord, or what greater heartbreak than when one we have raised rejects or leaves the Truth?

Train Up A Child In The Nurture and Admonition of the Lord is the topic of this Special Issue. Our intent is to address those dangers facing our children and families that threaten belief and draw us away from the love of God. During our lifetimes we have seen the community of believers diminishing, members leaving the ecclesia for the world reflecting the sad development of a Laodicean luke-warmness within members and ecclesias. We live and work in a secular and sinful environment that erodes faith and we must be proactive in recognizing and countering these harmful influences. Our children, in their inexperience and innocence, face many dangers today, making common the parental admonition to "be careful" when they leave our sight or the home. We worry about the daily risks of injury, sickness and disease and we protect and warn them to beware of danger. But there are many subtle and spiritually dangerous influences in everyday life that should raise similar concern. These practices, attitudes and influences are in our neighborhoods, in sports, in the schools, in entertainment and in our communities. They are appealing and commonly held by our children's acquaintances. It is our responsibility to educate and prepare our children to protect them against the world's influence, for they will receive Godly instruction only in the home and the ecclesia. Parents have the responsibility to *train up a child in the way he should go*, and that training must be in example as

well as in word. Children are trusting and eager to learn; open receptacles waiting to be filled. If parents do not fill them with the necessary understanding and instruction forming their character and identity, their friends, schools and society will!

Dangers outside the home: We live in a wilderness of sin where children particularly are at risk of abuse and neglect. Due to “busy” or inattentive parents, many children end up raising themselves, tutored by other children and television. They are at the mercy of the unscrupulous and they grow up in a culture of sex, drugs, alcohol and violence. Much of this is attributable to the breakdown of the family. Married couple families have slipped into the minority of American households. Last year it was reported that 37% of U.S. births were out-of-wedlock. Beyond the growing disdain for “religious” based moral values, the message of sexual abstinence is mocked as impractical and unrealistic by a culture that actively promotes abortion, birth control, casual sex and homosexuality while ignoring the consequences of these practices. Sexual images are prominent throughout society in advertising, entertainment and media. Pornography has grown increasingly common due to its unregulated prominence on the world-wide-web. Children today have access to it through their computers. These sinful practices are today promoted and defended: we must not assume that our children will not be influenced! Carnal enticements appeal to the natural man in all of us, requiring an enlightened determination and spiritual maturity to overcome them. Without the moral compass of the Word of God, children have little hope of overcoming these harmful influences.

Multiculturalism, ecumenicalism and humanism drive the beliefs and values of society. “Old fashioned” absolutes have been replaced with relativism. Schools and institutions play a contributing role in supporting these values while discouraging and labeling “Christian” values as judgmental and harmful to society. Though some parents have chosen home schooling, which has documented superior results, we see increasing government regulation to discourage home schooling and integrate all children into the public schools of humanism.

There are dangers in our homes that we must be aware of – dangers brought into our homes without adequate attention and safeguards to eliminate or minimize their capacity to do harm. Some are material things such as TV’s and computers, which consume an inordinate amount of time and attention that would be better spent on the Word of Life. The philosophy and values of the world are conveyed through these various forms of media, and researchers tell us that Americans spend more time each day occupied by our TV’s, computers and other media than we do sleeping. Though it is not uncommon for children to have TV’s and computers in their rooms today, we must remember that children are naturally curious and rebellious and require supervision.

We are blessed to live in a time and place that has easy access to comforts and abundance, and perhaps we have all, at one time or another, contrasted the materialism of today's generations with that of previous generations. We live in a wealthy country in which many children have and expect their heart's desire in designer labels, electronic toys, trendy cell phones and expensive cars. Recent studies find college students more narcissistic and self-centered than previous generations, as well as more obsessed with becoming rich. In this materialistic atmosphere, parents seem to have an allergic reaction to their children being unhappy, spending by some accounts much more on children today than only one generation earlier.

There is danger in the influence of the world creeping into our homes and ecclesias. Some believe the current generation of believers' children is not as well informed about scripture as earlier generations. Competing for their attention and their hearts within their homes are TV's, computers, DVD's, home movies and video games. These alternative sources of stimulation have relegated reading into a third rate activity for many children. Is the trend towards declining attendance, experienced by the churches around us, taking its toll on our Sunday Schools also? Are our activities, work and social commitments leaving our families less than adequate time for the things of the truth?

What shall we do? We love our children and would not intentionally do anything to harm or turn them from God, but do we do enough to instill the love of God in their lives? As we age we may reflect back on our efforts to influence our children's current attitude in regard to the Truth, but such reflections come after the fact. Now is the time for deliberate action and it must begin with parents, the family and the ecclesia. Though the determination expressed by some to "do anything for their children" may be viewed as noble, that determination must be tempered by a responsibility to and love for our Heavenly Father. One of the reasons given by psychologists to explain the widespread acceptance of homosexuality today is the reaction of parents to learning their child or a family member is gay. They indicate that most parents in such a situation found it difficult to "regard them as a sinner, because parents want their children to be happy." Sometimes love (and particularly "tough love") hurts, but the example of fidelity to God may help turn wayward children back some day, while abandoning the commandments threatens both the child and parent for eternity. The Truth is a great divider of persons, and our Lord warned us that the Truth would *set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother* (Matthew 10:34-36). The "gospel of peace" which our Lord taught will not find fulfillment until that glorious age when there will be universal "peace on earth."

Our children are receptive and trusting, and that trust goes first to the parents. Children look to their parents for instruction and example. It is our actions, more so than our words, that teaches the importance and impact of faith in our

lives. If we don't take our children to gatherings and Bible Schools, if other activities take priority over the ecclesia and ecclesial functions, if we don't "speak (the scripture) often one to another" (Malachi 3:16), can we expect our children to do differently? Israel was instructed to *train up a child in the way he should go* (Proverbs 22:6) and to *teach diligently* (Deuteronomy 6:6-7) His commandments. We have examples of the results of childhood teaching in Samuel – who *let none of God's words fall to the ground* and Timothy – who *from a child* knew the Holy Scriptures. We must likewise instruct our children, not just to teach them the Bible, but to establish the spirit word into their lives, to endear them to that which is able to make them wise unto salvation.

We pray the treatment of this subject will be helpful and beneficial to our parents, families and ecclesias. Our children are indeed precious, and the dangers and trials that threaten them are deadly serious.

The Christadelphian Advocate Publishing Committee

The Scriptural Role of Mothers and Fathers

Honour thy father and thy mother, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee.

When we put our hand to the plow at baptism it is with the realization that we are now bond-slaves to the Most High God. In other words, our will and labor are subject to His revealed edicts and whatsoever our hand finds to do we must do heartily as to our Master. Many opportunities for service will come our way over the course of a lifetime, but none give such scope for character building and practice of true 'agape' as that of being a parent. It is a most challenging, trying and rewarding service we perform for our Master, and it is truly in His service, for it is our sacred duty to raise up a righteous seed to the Lord. The joy we gain from this service of parenthood is really a by-product of our progress in this endeavor. In other words, the more we put into it the more we get back in every aspect of our efforts. This is not in line with the common philosophies expounded by the world's authorities on this subject (which tell us it is quality and not quantity of time that matters), so we must be careful that our methods are God-centered and not the current trends that change from generation to generation.

The minute a child is brought into our lives, everything we think, say or do will have an impact on this new life. We have, by becoming parents in the truth, essentially agreed to do all in our power to see that this small being is given every opportunity to be part of God's redemptive plan and the kingdom of God on earth, Lord willing. Any other goal or aspiration we may harbor in our hearts must be recognized as secondary, temporary and altogether unimportant in comparison. Sports, hobbies, higher education also, must be in keeping with

this inviolable rule of the house. God must come first on every occasion from the daily schedules to major life choices. Even one exception opens the door for further temptation that can lead to mixed messages in the mind of a child. They are looking to us as a spiritual and moral compass in their lives.

With this responsibility as a 'given', we soon realize that there are many distractions offered by the world which form a veritable mine field to navigate. How fortunate for us that God has given us some very sure footsteps to follow in the pages of His word. We see Abraham as an example, about which God said in Genesis 18:19, *For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment.* The examples throughout scripture are for our admonition and are abundant. They can engender an attitude in us that is pleasing to the Lord and nourishing to a growing family.

Although there is probably no position more maligned and devalued in our society than that of motherhood, the sister in Christ should be impervious to this foolishness. She understands from God's word that the role of caretaker of God's inheritance is a blessed position to attain. Like Hannah with Samuel, there is a realization that these children are lent to us from the Lord and our time of influence and administration is very short. But imagine the joy of witnessing the baptism of this dear child, first with water and at Christ's return with spirit nature. Nothing achieved monetarily or socially could ever compare to that lovely vision, and without that vision for our family and ourselves, we like Israel are subject to perish.

It falls to the mother to regulate the schedules and patterns that form the family dynamic. She should strenuously protect those times set aside for spiritual direction, such as family dinners and daily readings. This is much easier for those sisters who are 'keepers at home' and all efforts should be made to make this possible for as long as possible. Admittedly this is harder than ever in the world we inhabit but the stakes are also higher than ever. If the world is difficult for us, how much more so for our young children should they have to spend precious formative years under the guidance of one unfamiliar with the high calling we attain unto. We must examine ourselves, honestly evaluate our temporal needs and be willing to sacrifice a tremendous amount for the spiritual health and well being of our children. Wouldn't we make any sacrifice necessary to see that they got the best medical attention should they need it? How much more should we invest in their eternal lives?

Fathers are called on to make great sacrifices in constantly providing for and nurturing those for whom they are responsible. It is often a daunting task and the flesh tells us we deserve a break. How happy we are that our heavenly Father is long-suffering to usward and never sleeps or slumbers. His char-

acter as revealed to us in Exodus 34:6-7 is *merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.* The spiritual edification, constant example and temporal provisions needed everyday by a growing family is a big job for any young man to take on, but the Bible assures us that the rewards are plentiful both in this life and the age to come, if we strive earnestly to manifest our Heavenly Father's character in all we say and do. We read, *A wise son maketh a glad father* (Proverbs 10:1); *Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing;* (Psalm 92:13-14) and *As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them* (Psalm 127:4-5).

We can think of no other arena of our lives so near at hand and vital in which to attempt to manifest the Father, than in being fathers ourselves. God manifestation is something we all aspire to, in part during the days of our sojourn and ultimately in the kingdom age. We are in fact daily in training and longing for the age to come when all the children of the earth will be brought to the ways of Yahweh.

With these thoughts in mind, how important it is for each of us as parents, grandparents and elders in the ecclesia to step up to our responsibilities, recognizing the fleeting nature of all worldly accomplishments. We are compelled to put forward our best effort to labor diligently at that most sacred responsibility to bring our children up *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*

Dan and Becky Stanton, Orlando, FL

Our Children At Home

*Train up a child in the way he should go,
and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*

Anyone who has experienced the birth and subsequent homecoming of a newborn baby can quickly call to mind that particular memory in rich detail. The deep emotions, the immense gratitude to God, the intense caring of all those we know, the broad smiles of happy grandparents, aunts, uncles, brothers and sisters, are all easily recalled. Perhaps even more easily felt in looking back, is the new love the parents feel for this tiny helpless creature. There is nothing comparable to the love parents feel for their children.

Soon the pressing reality of parental responsibility begins to make its mark on the young couple and the daily routine becomes exhausting. Thus, it is impera-

tive for expectant mothers and fathers in the truth to have a carefully thought out child development plan in place before their baby is born. The first step and most effective part of that plan should be prayer. We have been given a 'pearl of great price' - that priceless gift of knowing the Truth. If we value that pearl as we should, we will do whatever it takes to pass that most valuable possession to our children. More than anything, we should want our children to have a part in God's kingdom. This is how we truly demonstrate our love for our children. This is our ultimate goal in the child-rearing process. Psalm 78:4-9 tells us, *We will not hide them (the commandments of God) from their children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.*

Is it ever too early to arise and declare the things of the kingdom to our little ones? Modern child development experts all agree that reading to very young babies is advisable for language development. There are also many books available, written in the simplest language to teach Bible stories. There are also books, without added text, where Mom and Dad can add their own words. Babies are great imitators and will soon add God, Jesus, Moses, Goliath, etc. to their word list.

We have scriptural examples of children who were well schooled before they reached the age of five. Think of Moses, whose mother, Jochebed, was hired to nurse him until he was old enough to be weaned and go to live in Pharaoh's palace. His parents must have spent every waking hour teaching that child the Truth so that *when he was come to years, (Moses) refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter...Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward* (Hebrews 11:24,26).

Another example is Samuel. Hannah prayed for and was given a son. She promised that she would give that child to the Lord all the days of his life. 1 Samuel 1:24 tells us, *And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her... and brought him unto the house of the Lord in Shiloh: and the child was young.* Hannah faithfully kept her promise and left this very young child with the high priest, Eli. Sadly, Eli was known for not restraining his own sons who were already astray at this time. Yet Hannah had prepared Samuel for his life in the temple and did not wait to start teaching him the Truth.

We can look at other young people in scripture whose parents must have dili-

gently taught them the words of the law when they sat in their houses, when they walked in the way, when they laid down and when they rose up. The captive little maid, who is not given a name, had faith to proclaim the man of God to Naaman. Daniel was taken away captive, probably as a teenager, and refused to eat the king's meat. Joseph knew well the commandments of the Lord and was not seduced by Potiphar's wife.

As children grow and expand their knowledge, it behooves us to increase our knowledge also. The questions will come faster and increase in difficulty. We must cultivate our own love for learning the scripture along with them. This will afford them the added benefit of seeing their parents reading and studying the Word. Young children are excellent imitators and will mirror to us all our best and worst characteristics and traits. With this in mind, we need to be always attentive to our words and behavior. We need to imitate our Lord Jesus and seek to develop the fruit of the Spirit in ourselves so our children will copy that.

Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him (Proverbs 22:15). Discipline is one of the most difficult parts of the child-rearing process. Many parents will disagree on the subject. Children are born with a sinful human nature and will test their boundaries over and over. They will not be perfect and will never cease to surprise and embarrass with their actions. However, consistent discipline, and as they get older, a clear explanation of God's requirements, will teach children self-discipline and respect for God's laws. They must understand that bad behavior is simply not acceptable. Proverbs 29:17 tells us, *Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.*

Children are quick to notice a flaw or hypocrisy, but teenagers are especially adept at it. Accordingly, we cannot over emphasize the power of example. We need to be ever aware of the model we project to our children. We must show them enthusiastic support for the ecclesia. They need to see us reading and praying and sharing the word with others. They need to see the Truth at work in our lives. We must be careful in our classes and discussions amongst brethren not to continuously dwell on controversial subjects lest our children think that is all there is to the Truth and become discouraged. The most effective teachers are those who show enthusiasm for the subject they teach. The same is true for parents teaching the Truth to their offspring.

The world around us is tightening its grip on our young people. They no longer need to leave the house to be enticed by its allure. The television and its adjuncts (especially the internet) have brought their particular enticements directly into our homes, by our invitation. In and of themselves they are harmless, until they are turned on. All the new technology can be used for great benefit, but great vigilance is needed to protect our very susceptible children and teen-

agers. Children can be induced, often with our tacit approval, to worship the gods of movies, music, sports, education, and ambition. How often do we come across a Sunday school student who can recite all the statistics of their favorite baseball player, but has difficulty reciting the books of the Bible? What “instant” message are we sending to our children when we skip the daily Bible readings to watch a movie or spend a whole evening shopping on-line? We must redouble our efforts to set the proper example and to monitor what our children are watching and doing with the technology they have.

As our teenagers begin to mature into adults, they enter a most difficult but exciting phase in their lives: the dating years. The sole purpose of dating should be to find a life mate. Hence, dating is not for young teenagers, but for those who are of marriageable age. Throughout the child’s life, the principle of “only in the Lord” should be emphasized. They hopefully will gravitate to those who are also spiritually minded in choosing their friends and then choosing their mate. This is the time when all our fears for our children are heightened. It feels like the test of how well we have taught them and carried out our plan. Suddenly, we see them as adults, separate from us, who need to make their own decisions and choices without our help. Will they behave properly with a person of the opposite sex? Can they see what the future will be like with this person? Questions arise that our own experience can answer but which they must answer for themselves. It is so hard to strike a balance between guidance and interference.

Recalling those memories of the new baby, is there any more joyful or gratifying an experience for a parent than witnessing the rebirth of that child in the waters of baptism? The years of praying and teaching and disciplining and praying again and again are rewarded in this one small act. Add to that the subsequent marriage in the Lord, the birth of grandchildren and then watching your son or daughter teach that new generation the law of the Lord. This is no small delight, for what greater joy could there ever be than one of our small gems being chosen when the Lord comes to make up his jewels?

Ralph and Nancy Diliberto, Burdett, NY

PARENTAL EXAMPLE

It should go without saying that if parents desire to have well behaved and well trained children, they must not be like petulant children themselves. If they desire a reasonable and consistent recognition of parental authority, they must be reasonable and consistent in framing their rules. If parents give way to temper and temperament, if rules depend on the mood of the moment so that a transgression may be a crime or a joke according to the condition of the parental liver, they cannot reasonably expect that the children will feel any genuine respect for them. – Islip Collyer, *Principles and Proverbs*, p. 161

Our Children At School

Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth.

Nearly 75% of all children raised in “Christian” homes who attend public schools will reject their “Christian” faith by the time they graduate from high school! Though this is a shocking and disconcerting statistic, it is not a surprise if one recognizes the influence of secular humanism being taught to the young and impressionable minds as early as pre-school. The social difficulties that face our malleable and easily influenced school-aged children, including the pervading influence of sexual promiscuity, drug use, rejection of authority figures and general immorality are well defined and generally understood by members within the Christadelphian household. For this reason, it is not the intention of this article to reiterate the existence of these issues, but rather to identify their source and uncover the social agenda that is at its root. The objective is to clearly identify the enemy, so that it can effectively be overcome. As believing parents, it is not sufficient to be as Lot, who *in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds* (2 Peter 2:8). Lot’s life is a tragic reminder that simply recognizing the issues but failing to act upon them is not enough. In following this course, Lot lost his family to the sinful influence of the world. Believing parents must avoid this catastrophe at all costs, taking all necessary actions to preserve Yahweh’s Heritage.

A Little History: Before Jean Jacques Rousseau (a liberal thinker who left his own five children on the doorsteps of an orphanage) invented the idea of K-12 state funded education in 1852, the *sole purpose* of education was to teach children to read the Bible, and as a result, public education in America remained thoroughly Christian. The books and lessons used, specifically The New England Primer and the McGuffey Reader, not only taught students educational lessons, but also provided them with a Christian foundation as students learned biblical principles that guided and shaped their characters. The result was an astounding 97% literacy rate, and most young Americans were proficient at reading, writing, and arithmetic. However, by the 1940’s, public school education began a steady deterioration that is today evidenced in the fact that, according to the New York State Education Department’s annual report, student illiteracy rates in most public schools range from 30%-70%. The beginning of this decline can be attributed to the misguided efforts of John Dewey, known as the “father of progressive education,” who at that time became influential in public education. A self-proclaimed atheist and admirer of Lenin, Stalin and Marxism, his agenda was to transform America into an atheistic and socialist society by redefining the purpose of public schools. As an example, Dewey wrote in *Teacher Magazine* in 1933, “*There is no God and there is no soul. Hence, there are no needs for the props of traditional religion. With dogma and creed*

excluded, the immutable truth is also dead and buried. There is no room for fixed, natural laws or moral absolutes.” After declaring the non-existence of God, Dewey endeavored to redirect the mission of the public school to reflect his anti-God and anti-moral beliefs, creating new textbooks and revising the old to reflect and promote this view. The existing public education in the U.S. is a result of his under-handed efforts.

Proverbs 1:7 states, *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.* Therefore it stands to reason that when the *fear of the Lord* is removed from the learning equation, *it is impossible to obtain knowledge!* The end-result of Dewey’s new curricula, that subtly introduced Secular Humanism and Moral Relativism into public education, is that the child is stripped of his belief in God’s Laws and becomes “*a law unto himself,*” believing that he is only accountable to himself and not to Deity. Though adults have the capacity to be spiritually mature enough to know these ideas are in direct contradiction to God’s laws and principles, a child becomes confused by the conflicting doctrines that he is exposed to. This is precisely the desired condition for those who seek to instill a different set of values. At their young age, our children are frequently unable to effectively recognize error and defend their faith against the steady assault on the biblical values taught at home, nor do they want to stand out in the environment where they spend most of their time, thereby succumbing to the powerful influence of peer pressure. Ultimately, the typical reaction is rebellion against the parent in order to choose their own values and rules. Here lies the beginning of many future problems with our children! The earlier a child becomes influenced by these worldly philosophies, the more likely they will become engrained permanently. After recognizing the presence of these social agendas, it should be no surprise that *full day preschool* is quickly becoming state funded, just like Kindergarten. With the addition of these before and after school programs, the school day can realistically last from 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.! Brethren, this is too much time for our children to be in the hands and under the influence of the world for it to be reversed in the few remaining hours of the day that we have with them!

Boys in School: There are many serious issues that apply exclusively to our boys, the pinnacle of which is the increased male violence in public schools. The well-publicized reports of distressed boys that “snap,” wreaking bloody havoc upon their classmates, is becoming more and more prevalent, so much so that public schools now have incorporated “terror drills” along side their tornado and fire drills! There are also increased cases of bullying, sexual harassment and experimentation with homosexuality than ever before. The pressing question is why? What is the source of this relatively new phenomenon? The answer is found in the fact that the Feminist Movement has infiltrated public education to such an extent that it is having an adverse affect upon our boys.

The self-proclaimed goal of this movement is “to rescue boys from the straight-jacket of masculinity” which in the feminist view has resulted in many of the afore-mentioned problems. In 1998, The Department of Education and Wellesley Women’s College joined forces to develop *The Women’s Educational Equity Act* (WEEA), which culminated in an anti-harassment and anti-violence teachers guide that became incorporated into the K-3 curriculum in many public schools. The program entitled “QUIT-IT!” includes many activities designed, in their view, to render little boys less volatile, less competitive, and less aggressive. However, the repression of normal “little boy” activity has in fact produced the *opposite* effect. “It is not that boys are bad,” says a spokesperson for the program, “but rather that we must all do a much better job of addressing **aggressive behavior** [actually normal boy behavior – authors] of young boys to counteract the prevailing messages they receive from the media and society in general.” Female children, including Kindergartners, learn to say “Quit-it! That’s sexual harassment, and sexual harassment is against the law.” The curriculum promises to develop male cooperative skills through “wonderful non-competitive activities.” According to the WEEA, “A child learns what it means to be a boy or girl between the ages of two and seven. The best prospects for influencing the child’s gender schema are in these early, malleable years: these years are the **opportunity zone**.” For example, during a teacher-training seminar entitled *Gender Equity for Girls and Boys: A Conference for K-12 Teachers and Administrators*, Dr. Nancy Marshall led a session entitled *Dolls, Gender and Make-Believe: Gender Equity in the Early Childhood Classroom*. During a slideshow presentation, she showed a slide of a preschool boy dressed up in high heels and a dress. “It’s perfectly natural for a little boy to try on a skirt, we know that biological, psychological, and intellectual differences between males and females are minimal during early childhood.”

In reality, this curriculum incorrectly conveys the message to girls that *all* boys inevitably become sexual harassers or violent aggressive men if they are not “rescued,” and that their voice is *always* heard as long as they are speaking out against boys and their “boy behavior.” This effectively indoctrinates girls into thinking that quiet, compliant, **feminized** boys should be the standard for men. Meanwhile, the boys feel either confused as to how they should behave, or become **defiant** because they are expected to act in a manner that is unnatural to them. The typical result is that boys either *become* violent or are *labeled* as such, being pressured by misguided administrators to medicate them with mind-numbing drugs, or they conform and become *feminized* (the beginning stage of homosexuality), which results in approval from their teacher and acceptance from their girl peers. What a choice! There is no doubt that our boys need to be properly civilized and correctly channeled, but this can only happen in a moral, structured and challenging environment, which includes *healthy competition*. Yahweh created the man to be a leader and the head of his household, and not

the submissive gender! Forcing him to become that which Yahweh did not intend will certainly result in confusion and disaster.

Girls in School: Boys are not the only ones who are feeling the incredibly adverse effects of an immoral and Godless society. Our girls are forced to grow up in a sexually charged culture in which they are encouraged to become prematurely adult and consumed by their appearance. The public school has become a haven for hyper-sexualized girls who dress and act like grown women. Society is seeking to reverse the God-given gender roles, which has resulted in not just the *feminizing* of boys, but also the *de-feminizing* of girls, promoting *crass* and *crude* behavior that is unacceptable to Yahweh. Girls are taught at a very early age to be a sex object and many have become walking advertisements for sex—not just in high schools, but as early as pre-school! Whether it’s the animated Bratz Dolls on their backpacks and lunch boxes showing bare midriffs, or their impossibly curvy Barbie doll wearing all sorts of inappropriate clothing, the message is overwhelming and difficult to combat. Whereas girls of earlier eras focused on improving their studies, becoming well-mannered and better help-meets to their future husbands, girls today *almost exclusively* focus their attention on changing their bodies and enhancing their physical appearance! According to a report in the American Psychological Association (APA), the sexualization of girls actually *diminishes* their cognitive ability, lowers their self-esteem, generates negative thinking, and causes depression and eating disorders. Add to this the public schools’ idea of “Sex-Education,” which in effect gives these girls’ *permission* and even *instruction* on how to be in charge of their own sexuality (free from the oppressive man), and the result is disastrous. They become “sexually liberated,” resulting in increased pregnancies and resulting abortions; increased STDs that result in increased psychological issues such as depression and self-loathing; and increased drug and alcohol abuse to help them cope with these issues, continuing the downward spiral. Lost in the equation is the fact that Yahweh looks on the heart, and not upon the appearance! Therefore, it is imperative that we teach our young girls to cultivate that “*hidden man of the heart*,” being the demonstration of the Christ-character in us, and show them the true value of becoming an honored *ornament* and *crown*, not only to their future brother/husband, but ultimately to Yahweh and Christ.

Marriage and the Family: A report from Dr. Paul Viz, a professor of psychology at New York University, provided stunning and disconcerting information regarding the way school textbooks have been rewritten in order to downplay the importance of marriage and the family. He systematically examined 90 widely used *elementary* social studies texts and *elementary* readers to see if they were biased or censored, and found that they were both biased *and* censored! His research revealed that children’s textbooks had *excluded* religion, traditional family values, as well as conservative political and economic posi-

tions. He said, *"In a general way, the family is often mentioned in the textbooks, but the idea that marriage is the origin and foundation of the family is never presented. The words marriage, wedding, husband and wife do not occur in these books. Nowhere is it suggested that being a mother or homemaker is a worthy and important role for a woman."* He went on to say, *"There is not one text reference to marriage as the foundation of the family. There is not one portrayal of a contemporary American family that clearly features traditional sex roles. Almost no story features marriage or motherhood as positive, nor does any story give any positive significance to babies. But there are many aggressively feminist stories that openly deride traditional manhood."* He concluded, *"The clear intention of textbooks is to change the definition of family."* With the recognition of such information, one should not be shocked that the younger generations view marriage and the traditional family with contempt and many modern-day women have lost their *natural affection* toward having and raising children. These young people are simply reflecting the indoctrination put forth in the school textbooks and as a result, have ceased to view marriage, the family, and human sexuality and gender in the biblical way.

Sex Education in School: One of the most disturbing revelations pertains to exactly who is really in charge of the Sex Education program in the schools. A woman who formerly worked for Planned Parenthood before becoming a "Christian" said, *"Planned Parenthood has become a forerunner in publishing Sex Ed books, pamphlets, and curriculum; it develops model Sex Ed programs for communities, schools, and affiliates; it creates pre-service, in-service, and enrichment programs for Sex Ed trainers; it provides a national resource clearinghouse as a conduit for the dissemination of Sex Ed information and materials; it distributes journals, magazines, and newsletters to Sex Ed professionals; it advocates unrestricted Sex Ed propagation - **Kindergarten through twelfth grade** - through political lobbying and the courts; and it sends an army of Sex Ed speakers into school, churches, and public forums every day - day in and day out."* She goes on to say, *"Girls do not automatically get pregnant when they are thirteen years old; it must be encouraged. We accomplished that objectivity by interesting the girls and boys in sexual activity through sex education, beginning in Kindergarten."* The fact is that Planned Parenthood-style education produces *more* sexual activity among kids, not less. When a child attends a Sex Ed class at school, the odds increase dramatically that he or she will have sex in the near future, as familiarity with it increases. In disturbing detail, this woman also explained that although she spoke to all levels, her favorite classes were **fifth and sixth graders**, stating, *"My classroom presentation boiled down to one point—you need to take birth control pills so that 'if' you want to 'explore' your emerging and natural sexual options, you can do so 'safely.' And if your mom won't provide the pills, you have someone you can come to. And by the next morning, my phone was ringing off the hook for birth control*

from kids that couldn't even drive."

Planned Parenthood uses a program that starts in Kindergarten, being derived from Dr. Alfred Kinsey's research, and is the basis for most of the Sex Ed taught in the public education system. Dr. Kinsey's two works, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (1948) and *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (1953), have shaped Western society's beliefs and understanding about human sexuality. What is not commonly known is that Dr. Kinsey fits the very definition of a sexual psychopath and deviant, being not only a pedophile, but also a bi-sexual and pornography addict! His means of gathering information was reported to be not only sadistic, but even more disturbing, involved children. To this day, Kinsey is called "*the father of sex science,*" and his main contribution has been establishing the importance of discussing homosexuality and Sex Ed in public schools! Most parents have very little understanding as to the degree in which the Kinsey philosophy of human sexuality controls the Sex Ed programs in the public schools. One school administrator said, "*Kinsey is the standard ideology of those in academia who educate the sex educators.*" Believing parents should therefore be strongly cautioned and adamantly opposed to allowing their Godly Seed to participate **in any** Sex Ed class in the public education system! Those who do should, at the very least, demand to see *all* the material being taught to your child, including the teachers handbooks, **and read it for yourself** so that you can effectively combat the influence of this most-disturbing agenda.

Homosexuality in School: Though the topic is an uncomfortable one, it is one that should be addressed, as it is increasingly prevalent in the schools. Using the AIDS epidemic as an excuse for infiltration, the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) has partnered with public schools to present their agenda in assemblies across the nation. These assemblies, created by gay activists, have America's school children as a captive audience, as these homosexual propagandists - *with the schools approval* - candidly describe portions of the gay lifestyle and promote homosexuality as a valid and desired lifestyle. Presentations like these are being conducted without parents' notification or permission, as demonstrated in the well-reported recent situation at Boulder High in Colorado in which it took a concerned student who taped part of such an assembly to make parents and the community aware of what was occurring. When confronted on the matter, school officials said "*We pride ourselves at promoting diversity.*" Again, this type of indoctrination begins in the elementary schools, as witnessed by a new video designed to instruct teachers on how to introduce the gay and lesbian lifestyle into their classes, titled, "*It's Elementary: Talking about Gay and Lesbian Issues in School.*" In it, teachers learn how to move the children along a predetermined track, arriving at a point where homosexuality is regarded as acceptable behavior, even though it challenges their

preexisting beliefs about what is normal. In fact, a comment in the video by one boy is particularly distressing. Expressing his new found insight he said, *“It’s kind of like, let’s say, there’s a new kind of vegetable or something, and if you’re not very open-minded, then you won’t try it ‘cuz you don’t like to try new things and stuff.”*

What Must Parents Do? In the book Public Education against America: the Hidden Agenda, author Marlin Maddoux says this: *“I believe that every Christian parent in America should get his or her children out of the public school system. I am not alone in this assessment. There is a growing consensus that concerned parents should remove their children from the public school system as quickly as possible!”* Another voice pleading with parents to count the cost of sending their children into government schools is Dr. James Dobson. In a *Focus on the Family* broadcast in March 2002, Dobson weighed in on the matter by saying, *“I’ve been very careful not to be negative to the public schools because there are many Christian teachers that are struggling mightily to do what’s right there, and I haven’t wanted to put pressure on them. But given the fact that, in every classroom across the nation, for 13 public school years, our kids are being taught homosexual propaganda and these other politically correct postmodern views, I think it’s time to get our kids out. This godless and immoral curriculum and influence in the public schools is gaining momentum across the nation in ways that **were unheard of just one year ago**. It’s as though the dam has now broken and activists representing various causes, including homosexuality, are rushing through the breach in ways that are shocking.”* The question is therefore, if mainstream “Christian” writers can be so bold as to make such declarations, why do we as *True Believers* find it difficult? This is a critical decision that cannot be taken lightly as the future of Yahweh’s Heritage depends on it! The believer must understand that times are different from when we attended school - *very different* - and that our young and impressionable children are the ones who will suffer from our inaction!

The heart of the issue is *not* about academics, but the *curriculum* and *indoctrination* that our children are receiving *in spite* of how nice their teacher is or how quaint their school is. But if you are in a position where you must leave your child in the public school system, it is imperative to be *fully* informed of these issues and be *very* involved in your child’s education and life! The advocates and promoters of these agendas rely on the uninvolved and uncaring general populace that is more interested in acquiring personal wealth and free time than they are in investing in their children’s moral and spiritual character. Brothers and Sisters, we must not allow ourselves to be so manipulated! We must become intricately involved in the lives of our children, the heritage of Yahweh, so that we can protect them from the egregious influences of the world that try to tear them away from serving God! As Jacob wrestled with the angel all

through the night in an effort to secure a blessing from him, we must also fight these most pervasive influences on behalf of our children, who are too young to do so themselves! The task is time consuming and difficult, but the reward is priceless, as we desire to witness our children walking in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. If we fail in this most important endeavor, deeming the battle too difficult to win or the war too hard to wage, then it will be our children who ultimately are the conquered, as the world will overcome them through her enticements. Ultimately we are responsible for *training up a child in the way he should go*, and are instructed in Titus 1:9 regarding the necessity of *holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort, and to confute the opposers*.

Arthur and Lizabeth Sankey, Morrison, CO

Our Children In The Ecclesia

Let no man despise thy youth; be thou an example of the believers.

When the apostle Paul developed the analogy, under the inspiration of God, of the ecclesia being like the different parts of the human body, he did not specifically reference how the range of ages in an ecclesia contributes to the body's wholeness and health. That extension of his reasoning, however, seems appropriate to make because all ages, from the very young to the very old, contribute to the richness and strength of a body of believers. *For the body is not one member, but many...If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him* (1 Corinthians 12:14,17-18). While children and young people, until the time of their baptism, are not part of the body, they can make an important contribution to the well-being of the ecclesia. Many times we have observed how a small child gladdens the hearts of the older members at the ecclesia. A child's innocence and eagerness to learn refreshes the ecclesia and reminds us of the apostle's words: *Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children...* (1 Corinthians 14:20).

Just as we desire that our homes provide a place of sanctuary and security for the little ones with whom we have been blessed by the Almighty – a place where both their temporal needs for food, clothing and shelter are sufficiently met and their emotional needs for love, affection and discipline are administered to – so we intend that our ecclesias, on a larger scale, can provide a place where the spiritual needs of our children can be nurtured. The role of *the ecclesia of the living God* was stated by the apostle to be *the pillar and ground of*

the truth and it was needful that young Timothy learn *how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God* (1 Timothy 3:15). Ecclesias serve as a place where the truth can be passed down from one generation to the next and where the coming generation can train in a supportive and loving environment.

The first and most obvious principle is that our children cannot benefit from the ecclesia, and the ecclesia from the children, unless they are present there. Thus, it is absolutely essential that the family priority be established right from the beginning of the marriage, even before the arrival of the first child, for husband and wife to be on hand at ecclesial services. Parents who are keen to have their children participate in sports would not expect them to ‘make the team’ if they were frequently absent from practice and considered by the coach to be ‘hit and miss’ in their attendance. Ought not the standard we practice for the ecclesia to be higher than that which a secular organization would require? Our children need to be at Sunday School consistently from week to week so that they get the benefit of lessons that are given sequentially for their learning. It is also important for parents to arrive at Sunday School on time and not to fall into the habit of being chronically late. The example of arriving habitually late is one that conveys to the children that the function is just not important enough to make the effort to be there on time. Being late distracts the attention of others and embarrasses the children by breaking into the opening exercises or their classes when they are already underway. Sporadic attendance also prevents the children from forming the same constancy of friendship with other children in the Sunday School.

We recently heard a man who had spent all his working life in senior levels of public school administration refer to students as “bodies in seats,” a kind of head-count measure of enrolment. Our interest at Sunday School is not in having a body to fill a seat but in having a mind intent on learning *the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ*. That is to say, while attendance at the ecclesia is necessary, just being there is not sufficient. The student’s mind needs to be prepared at home. If there is a verse assigned as homework memorization, the parents need to take an interest in the child’s mastery of the verse and help them with reciting and understanding it during the course of the week. This kind of parental engagement and encouragement does not end when a child reaches the age of seven or eight – it is even more necessary and important in the early teenage years. In Sunday School classes for older age groups, if there is homework assigned, the parents need to take an interest in the work and encourage the student to answer the questions. Care needs to be taken not to end up doing the assignment for the student but to be a guide so that the student gets the benefit from the learning and discovery. Then the parents need to ensure that the child has a schedule on Saturday evening that allows them to get to bed at a reasonable hour. A child that comes to class on

Sunday morning with only a few hours sleep is not geared to learn. Baby-sitting, other part-time jobs as well as social activities that involve late hours on Saturday night need to be approached with great caution, if not avoided altogether.

One of the more frequent complaints, when parents ask children in the early teenage years, “How was your Sunday School class today?” is hear to an answer something like, “Boring.” Such an answer by the child may be a way of testing the parents’ mettle to see if at least one parent will agree and take the child’s side. Agreeing with such an answer, as if to sanction the waning interest of the child, is a big mistake since boredom is, to a very large extent, an attitude. There are a number of ways by which a student who gives this answer can be challenged in a positive way. For example, the student can be asked to think of one question that would be relevant to ask the teacher at the next class. Questions have a way of engaging the class and raising the level of interest among all participants. *And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions* (Luke 2:46). This example of the Lord at age twelve is one that can be applied by our children. As parents, we cannot look upon Sunday School as the teacher’s job alone. It is a job in which we share responsibility with the teacher and must be informed about the class and engaged with our child-student. As parents, we need to speak with the teacher frequently, to enquire about the class, to learn about our own child’s progress and to offer support and encouragement to the teacher. Teachers may be reluctant to come forward and tell us if our child is being disruptive to the class (out of concern for sparing our feelings), but if we ask the teacher and give them the opportunity, they may be more inclined to share with us what they are experiencing with our child. Sunday School is a partnership between the ecclesia and the home.

One of the most important qualities for a child to learn in his or her relationship to the ecclesia is that of respect: *respect* for the meeting itself as a time and place for reverence and *respect* for the members of the ecclesia, as people to be loved, looked up to and cared for. Respect can be learned by observing parental examples. If children have heard their parents describe a certain brother’s talk on a previous occasion as “boring,” they are more likely to pick up on the parents’ own criticism and play it back to them. Thus, it is important that if parents have any negative observations to share about the ecclesia with one another, they do so in strict privacy and not in front of their children. A critical, negative attitude towards the ecclesia by the parents is almost certain to rub off on the children and therefore it is important that we, as parents, take a positive attitude toward our ecclesia. As our children grow older, they will come to understand that, owing to the imperfections of this flesh, ecclesias will not be perfect, but they must come to see the strength of God’s truth as greater than the weak-

nesses of those earthen vessels who profess it. They must come to see that their task, together with their parents, is to contribute to the spirituality of the ecclesia by their own examples and conduct. They should not be running the ecclesia down, but rather determining how they can contribute to building it up. It is also important that parents be united in their shared commitment to the ecclesia, as children are quick to discern and exploit differences between mother and father.

It is common during meeting for many parents to engage preschool children with toys and snacks to amuse them while they learn to be quiet. As the child reaches school-age, it might be books or electronic devices that are on ‘mute.’ At what age do children cease to be occupied with their own amusement and begin to follow the readings, sing the hymns, stand reverently and quietly during the prayers? Our answer would be, at the earliest age possible. It is heart-warming to watch little ones pick up a hymnbook, find the hymn number, even if unable to read the words, and try to sing along. Children want and need to emulate adults. They do not learn respect by ignoring the hymns and prayers and carrying on with their own alternative activities. If children have been taught the words and tunes of hymns in their home, their capacity to join in at the ecclesia at an early age will be that much more developed.

For many generations, the process of learning about divine things has followed an order in which the elders pass on their understanding of the Scriptures to the younger generation. In many orthodox Jewish yeshivas, this practice is still largely followed today even as it was in the time of the apostles. The younger generation would sit and learn at the feet of the older generation, much as Paul did under Gamaliel’s guidance (Acts 22:3). One of the challenges in our ecclesias is finding the right balance between the participation of the young and the leadership of elders. Young people have energy, idealism and a desire to do things. Stifling it will discourage them. Elders have wisdom and maturity that, when matched with the zeal of youth, can serve to channel it in ways by which the interests of the ecclesia, in giving glory to God, are best served. If a young person is given too much ecclesial responsibility too quickly, it may lower their respect for their elders, as they come to think of themselves more highly than they ought to think (Romans 12:3). There is no substitute for the maturity that comes with life’s experiences no matter how much understanding of the Scriptures a young mind may have gained. Therefore, it is important to teach our youth to defer to their elders, looking up to them as sources of wisdom about life and learning in the Word.

One of the most important things for children to learn, beginning at an early age, is the principle of service to Christ. Our children need to learn that when they do things for the brothers and sisters of the ecclesia, they do it unto Christ (Matthew 25:40). Children today are more self-centred than in previous generations, as much of their upbringing revolves around indulging their needs

and their pleasures. The ecclesia is an ideal place for our children to learn that our high calling involves service to others. Thus, the more this commitment to service can be inculcated at an early age, the better. Service may be small details, like holding a door open for an elderly member, gathering up hymnbooks after service or patiently waiting until the senior members of the ecclesia have gone through the food line. Another important form of service is teaching young children to know all the members of the ecclesia and to greet them by name each Sunday. Addressing a brother or sister as “Uncle” or “Aunt” is a habit that we believe ought to be encouraged, as it expresses endearment and emphasizes that we are an ecclesial family. Children are naturally shy and older members may appear gruff and stolid in a child’s eyes, but parents can help break through those perceptions and help the child and their elders become friends.

It is our view also that there needs to be gender distinctions made at an early age. Boys should learn that their service to Christ will involve different activities than that offered by girls. This is a distinction that is no longer made in the broader society – in fact, every effort is made to erase it – but there will be aspects of ecclesial and family life in which the male and the female roles are complementary but different. Taking a public speaking role in the ecclesia is not the pinnacle of our service in Christ. Girls do not need to feel that they are somehow less able to contribute to the ecclesia because they do not take this role. Overmuch weight should not be attached to boys publicly speaking, lest it eclipse other forms of service that need to be offered and which may be more suited to a young believer’s place in the ecclesia. Being encouraged to read from the Bible at home and at Sunday School – both in classroom settings and in front of the congregation, is very important to young students to increase their workmanship with its message.

Our Christadelphian ecclesias have many relationships among natural families. Although these connections are not emphasized in the pages of the New Testament, it was no different in the first century ecclesias, as we learn from the few hints that are offered (Example: Romans 16:7). The term *nepotism* refers to the advancement of family interests in a way that shows partiality. As it is often the case that we, as parents, will have our own natural children in our Sunday School or Bible School class at some point, we need to take care to treat all the students equitably and not show favouritism to our own flesh and blood. For example, it might be tempting for a parent-teacher to cast their own son or daughter in the lead role in the Sunday School play. Children that may have few natural family ties in an ecclesia are particularly disadvantaged if such a spirit of partiality becomes established. Some children, especially in their mid-teenage years, go through a stage where they are embarrassed to have one of their own parents as their instructor. As parents, we need to take that stage of adolescence in stride, as it will pass. According to the wisdom, *In the multitude*

of counsellors there is safety, our children benefit from having relationships with many members of the ecclesia and receiving instruction from a variety of teachers in the course of their development. There are times in a child's development when a bond may develop with an older member of the ecclesia who is neither a parent nor a close relative. That bond may be valuable in providing the child with a mentor to help in time of need.

In summary, the most important thing to remember is that the ecclesia's role in contributing to raising children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord is intended to supplement the parents' role but it can never replace it. While the ecclesia can be of great benefit to support and augment the parents' work in raising their children, an hour's instruction in Sunday School on a Sunday morning can never take the place of their constant daily interactions with their children. When the apostle Paul wrote to the ecclesia in Corinth, *Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men*, (2 Corinthians 3:2), he used an analogy that has an application to our role as parents in particular and the ecclesia in general. Just as our children have personal access to the word of God as they develop literacy in their early years, we – the parents and the ecclesia – are the epistle that they are first able to “read” and which they will study for example all their lives. May what they read there be that which contributes to their *call to glory and virtue* in Christ (2 Peter 1:3).

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Our Children In The Community

*Even a child is known by his doings,
whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.*

We are certainly fortunate to be blessed with so many children among us. The young children particularly need and expect their parents to provide shelter, food, clothing, protection, love and discipline. As our children grow and gain experience, they begin to assert independence, gradually relying less on their parents and ultimately becoming self-reliant. A small child is typically not very concerned about the world around him, but that will change. Whether for better or worse, changes occur through a variety of influences. It can be through parental and scriptural influence, or conversely, it can be through peers, teachers, coaches, school, television, magazines and other media. However, as parents we can exercise some control as to how alluring these worldly influences might be in the various stages in our children's development. We are fortunate to be aided in this task through scriptural examples that provide direction pertaining to our children in all aspects of life, including their exposure to the secular community.

Scripture offers us numerous examples of youth and how they are influenced; some good and some not good. When we think of the word “youth,” how do our minds translate it? The word “youth” has a sound to it that makes us feel good: youth is fresh, vigorous, active! There are levels of youth. During childhood, we think we will never grow up, while in the teen years we feel invincible. But where does youth end and maturity begin? Paul describes Timothy as a “youth.” Joseph is introduced to us at age 17. Samuel is described as “a boy.” David is *disdained by the Philistines for he was but a youth...* We know of Joash – king at 7; Manasseh – king at 12; and Josiah – king at 8. Daniel, at the age of the typical college sophomore, came before the king of Babylon. Later, after revealing both the king’s dream and its interpretation, he was made ruler over all the province of Babylon and chief over its wise men. We recall how he *purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself* with the king’s meat and wine, negotiating and trusting in God for release from the king’s requirement. What an example of spiritual maturity!

Are not our children asked to bow down (pledge allegiance) to a country that offers a different way of life than that to which Christ calls us? Our country allows for murder in the name of abortion. It has taken the name of God out of schools and asks its citizens to obey the dictates of the President and the Congress. At baptism we agree to conform to the commandments of our Lord, placing our citizenship in *heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour* (Philippians 3:20). It is this heavenly citizenship that we must keep uppermost in ours and our children’s minds and hearts. Our children must understand that an oath of allegiance to the flag and country is putting one’s faith in men rather than God. Do our children see us putting faith in the governments of this world? Do they see us, as their parents and examples, pledge our allegiance to this world not only with hand over heart, but with our votes, participation on juries or membership in secular organizations? Christ tells us in John 18:36, *My kingdom is not of this world*. Let us always show our Lord and our children that our intense desire is to please our Father rather than the world in which we presently live. We are to live in glorious anticipation of that future world order, which we pray will soon be established upon this earth.

Consider the impact of the parental example on children as reflected in the scriptural example of Paul and Timothy. Though Paul was not Timothy’s biological father, he treated Timothy as a son in the Truth, writing in 2 Timothy 1:2, *to Timothy, my dearly beloved son: grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord*. Timothy is described in Acts 16 as the son of a Jewish woman – a believer, and a Gentile father. Paul had considerable respect for both the mother and grandmother of Timothy (no further mention of his father is made). We can discern quite a bit about Timothy through the writings of both Paul and Luke. Luke states that Timothy was well spoken of by the

brethren in Lystra, and it is probably safe to say that while at Lystra, Paul became his mentor. In the book of Acts as well as in some of Paul's other letters, it is apparent that Timothy spent time with Paul during his travels, and later stayed with Paul while he was a prisoner in Rome. We can also surmise that like Paul, Timothy was at one point a prisoner himself, likely a result of his beliefs (Hebrews 13:23).

Interestingly, we have no record of any writings or even a quote attributed to Timothy. He never speaks, rather he is only spoken to. His "adoption" by Paul was evidently very meaningful to him. To Timothy, Paul offers considerable instruction and encouragement through the two letters that bear Timothy's name. Paul states to him that others should not look down on him because of his youth, and that he should show himself *an example* of those who believe through his "speech, conduct, love, faith and purity" (1 Timothy 4:12 NAS). Paul's letters are full of parental instruction, teaching Timothy specifically to *fight the good fight of faith*, and to *flee also youthful lusts: follow righteousness, faith, love, peace with them that call on the Lord* (1 Timothy 6:12; 2 Timothy 2:22). The parental bond, and the respect and influence it can have on youth, is referenced by Paul in his admonition to *continue in the things which thou hast learned and been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them* (2 Timothy 3:14). The power of parental example cannot be overemphasized, as also reflected in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. Paul had intense confidence in Timothy to send him there, and entreats the Corinthians, *Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me. For this cause have I sent unto you Timothy, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord* (4:16-17).

We are all experienced at suggesting how others should behave, but Paul sets a family oriented example for us regarding our parental responsibilities to our children. He consistently instructed by word and example to *take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine; continue in them* (1 Timothy 4:16). Paul explains, *I write so that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God* (1 Timothy 3:15 NAS), and he reminds Timothy not to rebuke an older man, but rather to appeal to him as a father. Similar teaching is found in Proverbs 4:1, *Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father and give attention that you may gain understanding;* and Proverbs 1:7, *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; but fools despise wisdom and instruction. My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the teaching of thy mother.* Learning subjection to parental authority as a child prepares us for righteousness as well as for parenthood, as Peter entreats us to *gird up the loins of your mind...and hope to the end for grace...as obedient children* (1 Peter 1:13-14).

Some do not conform to the example set, distracted and seduced by those things in their communities that draw them away. While Lot and Abram

traveled together in the same land among idol worshippers, Lot chose to move closer to that influence. What kind of person was Lot? When the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him that he should leave his kinsmen and travel to another land, Lot left with him. Lot was with his uncle as he built an altar to the Lord between Ai and Bethel and called upon His Name. Lot was there when Abram built an altar at Shechem, and he was there when Abram went to Egypt and when he returned. There is no question that he was aware of Yahweh considering the years of exposure to Abram's expressed faith and instruction. Perhaps like Paul and Timothy, Lot was as a son to Abram. Certainly Abram felt a responsibility toward his nephew. On the occasion of Lot's capture by raiders, Abram formed a troop and rescued him as well as the others taken captive with him. Several years later when the Lord appeared to Abraham indicating He would destroy Sodom as its sin was grievous, Abraham feared for his nephew who at that time *sat in the gate of Sodom*. Abraham pleaded with the Lord for Lot, the Lord agreeing to save the city should 10 righteous be found.

Genesis 13:7-16 says that when it came time for Abram and Lot to separate, Lot saw the Jordan Valley – how well it was watered, and he moved toward the cities of the valley and “pitched his tent toward Sodom.” Verse 13 reads, *the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly*. It is probable that for this reason Abram had avoided the cities of the Jordan. Abram and Lot had traveled together for a long time and must have talked about such things. As Lot moved closer to Sodom, the closer he came to its wickedness. When we read of Lot's capture, the record indicates that he was not just near the cities, but was living in Sodom (Genesis 14:11-12). Lot had a choice: he could become a part of Sodom and its activities or he could remain separate. We might speculate how he moved toward the city, gradually coming closer and ultimately lured into the city itself.

Might we and our children sometimes fall victim to Lot's dilemma? Lot saw the righteousness of Abraham and that of his house. Lot likely lived his life in a similar fashion while a member of that house. But Lot was beckoned by what appeared to be greener pastures. He wanted to get a better look at city life and must have liked some of what he saw. Lot raised children there. His wife was perhaps from among the families of Sodom. We likewise may find ourselves and our families becoming a part of *the cities of the plain* through work, school or play in our communities. Rather than attending Bible class, we might defer to other activities or feel we need to relax after the pressures of the day. Rather than establishing the importance of ecclesial life in our children's conscience, do we allow other activities such as recreation or sporting events to interfere? In either example, are we not sacrificing association with brethren for association with non-believers?

Consider how Abraham and his family lived their entire lives surrounded by

Canaanites. Yet Abraham described himself as a ‘sojourner and a stranger’ in that country. He spent time among the Egyptians. He knew them, probably developed commerce with them, yet he was never **of** them. From 2 Peter 2:6-7 we learn that Lot was “just” and the wickedness of the people in Sodom vexed his “righteous” spirit, but his sojourn there cost the life of his wife and much of his family. We must teach our children to think of themselves as living in Canaan – close to Sodom. We are among Sodom at work and at school but must maintain separateness, *come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you* (2 Corinthians 6:17). Does the language, behavior and the traditions of the people around us vex our spirit, and is that attitude conveyed to our children?

We live in a world not unlike that in which Abraham and Lot lived. As it was with the faithful of old, those we live among will be able to tell that we are separate by how we are living and teaching our children. Let our example and that of our children be according to the familiar Sunday School memory verse: *be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God* (Romans 12:2).

Ivan and Mary Ricks, Richmond, VA

A Tale of Two Babies

One of the surprising discoveries made by each successive generation is that children differ from the very cradle. We can remember many years ago two families beginning family life at about the same time. The advent of the first baby had very different effects in the two homes. One home remained placid and well ordered; the child was brought up according to the book of rules and apparently without protest. The parents went to meetings and carried on with all their former duties. The other home was so disorganized by the arrival of the firstborn that it might have been smitten by an earthquake. The parents never dared to take the baby to a meeting and were often not able to get there themselves. The happy and placid parents with the well-ordered child looked askance at this dislocated home. They were more censorious than sympathetic. If they pitied the unfortunate pair it is to be feared that the pity was more akin to pride than to love. “Those unfortunate people simply do not know how to bring up a child. Look at the way we do it.” Then nemesis visited the complacent pair in the form of another child, and they in turn made the discovery that babies differ. The second child knew nothing about the scientific book and did not want to know. He – or she – had come to make a stir in the world and apparently believed in the virtues of an early start. Thus unkind criticisms were appropriately rebuked and another of life’s lessons was painfully learned. Islip Collyer, *Principles and Proverbs*, Parents and Children, p. 158 (circa 1935)

Our Children In Our History

The following is taken from the June 1889 *Advocate* and presents questions for children “eight years of age and under” to answer. How would these topics and questions compare to a course of study for children of comparable age today?

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THE CHILDREN'S PRIZES

According to notice given in the November ADVOCATE, the papers of the children who have followed the outline of study for the year, will be received by either of the undersigned, no later than July 15, 1889... Those under eight need only answer the ten questions here given, which may or may not be in their own hand writing, providing the language is their own.

QUESTIONS FOR CHILDREN EIGHT YEARS OF AGE AND UNDER

1. -- Name the four Evangelists.
2. -- Mention one passage in the Old Testament quoted by Christ.
3. -- Which is the first and great commandment?
4. -- Why is man mortal?
5. -- How may he obtain immortality?
6. -- Why did Abraham leave his father's house and the gods of his people?
7. -- Where is Palestine?
8. -- Who were the Jews?
9. -- Who were the first three kings of the Jews?
10. -- Quote three passages that point to the restoration of the Jews.

Discerning Entertainment Choices

In these last days we are in a battle for the spiritual lives of our children. The world is throwing so-called entertainment at us from every direction. Modern technology makes it so easy for the entertainment to follow our children wherever they go via ipods, portable DVD players and computers in every room. We need to stand guard at the doors and windows of our homes. It is not Hollywood's job to raise our kids. God has given parents an awesome responsibility. Just as we train our children to eat healthy food and avoid too much sugar, we need to train their appetites to desire the things that are *true, noble, just, pure, lovely and of good report* (Philippians 4:8). So much precious time can be wasted on entertainment and it would be best to limit it as much as possible in order to *redeem the time for the day is at hand*. If we surround our children and fill our homes with praise and worship of our heavenly Father, if we spend time in prayer and time in the Word with them, and if our words and actions are consistent with Christ's teachings, they will develop an appetite for spiritual things. If they spend a lot of time soaking in worldly entertainment they will develop attitudes and beliefs that are worldly and appetites for more of the same. These ideas will subtly seep into their thinking and eventually threaten to take over their lives. *And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates* (Deuteronomy 6:6-9).

Let us make our home a place that honors God. Let us not sacrifice our children on the altar of worldly entertainment. Teach them discernment. There are websites available that I have found helpful to narrow the search for better choices in entertainment. The following are a few websites I have found helpful:

www.family.org – articles on parenting, relationships and marriage, life challenges and more. It has a section for teens and links to other helpful sites.

www.pluggedinonline.com – reviews on current movies, television, music, and video/DVD's from a Christian point of view.

www.whitsend.org – audio dramas that bring moral and Biblical principles to life. It is geared toward eight to twelve year olds but I know older children who still enjoy listening.

www.familytv.com – offers family movies for sale. Their stated purpose is strengthening traditional values through entertainment. Their movies come with questions to facilitate discussions on the values they teach.

www.dove.org – awards movies based on their Judeo/Christian values and family friendliness.

Beth Ferreira, Springfield, VT

CAUTION ADVISED WHEN USING THE INTERNET

Caution should be exercised in the use of any Internet resource. Parents who have had their senses exercised to discern between good and evil may, by sifting carefully, be able to find helpful tools that can be applied to their own parenting needs and styles. There are also software tools available to parents that block access to undesirable Websites – *Editor*

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Train up a Child... in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord

We will not hide them (the commandments of God) from their children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments (Psalm 78:4-9).

And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates (Deuteronomy 6:6-9).

Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it (Proverbs 22:6).