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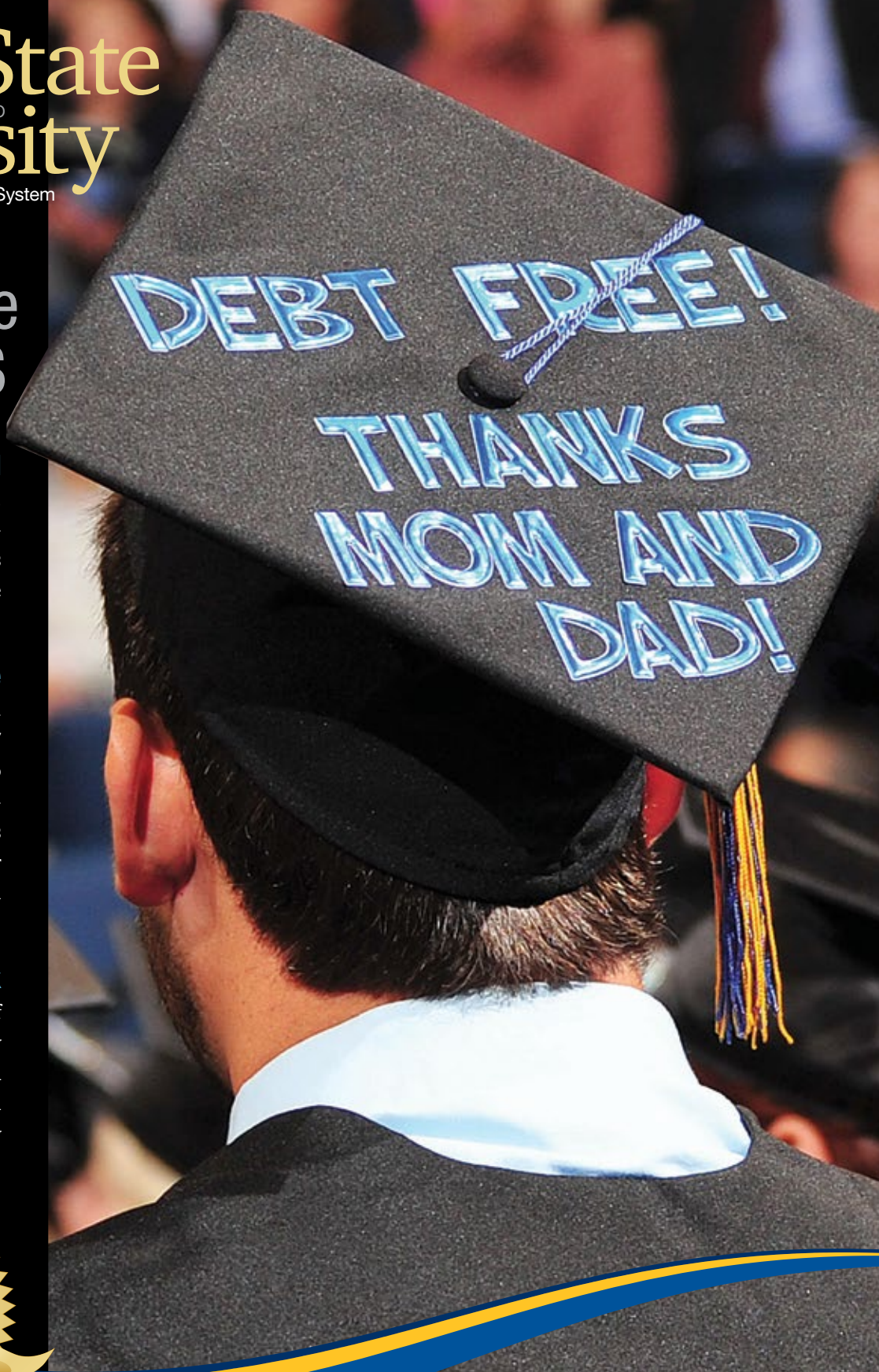
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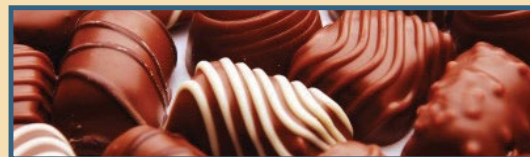
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FROM THE EDITOR

My Swan Song

This is my last magazine as editor of the *Texas Home School Coalition Review* after seventeen years, twenty-three working for THSC.

Tim and I started with THSC in 1990 as volunteers. We had one computer, one phone line, and an answering machine. I would sit down a couple of times a week to do a little data entry and return phone calls—collect.

Our children volunteered and learned much in the process. They went with us to book fairs and learned how to talk to people and how to work the THSC booth. However, I have long been grateful to the board member who encouraged us that we should think about getting staff—that our children were great, but one day they would grow up and have their own lives, and we would need other help. One of our children still works for THSC and does a great job organizing THSC events; the others volunteer some as they support their sister, but we found we did have to fill most of their positions with paid staff over the years. We started by hiring one part-time person to work half a day five days a week.

We then grew to having nine employees working out of our home. (THSC now has seventeen employees, most of whom work remotely and many of whom work part time. Only four people now work in the office.) We moved the office into our biggest bedroom, and it shared the space with my older son for a few years. THSC had about 200 square feet, with four to five desks on one side of the room, and Peter's bed and dresser on the other. It was not optimal, but I was still home schooling my children. I could get them started on schoolwork and then go upstairs and work a little for THSC, go down and check on the kids, then back up after school, etc.

Sometime during this period, Tim and I changed from being volunteers to paid staff. Finally, in the fall of 2000 we moved THSC into a real office with 1200 square feet of space. It was a monumental improvement! Of course, the staff did have to adjust to wearing shoes all the time and not taking naps under their desks! When our son married and left home, Tim and I moved ourselves into that large bedroom. Ah, space!



Lyndsay
Lambert

I have been honored to work with my husband through the years, and many blessings have come from my time with THSC. So why am I retiring? I am retiring (or more correctly, *refocusing*) to have more time to be a grandmother, to take care of my mother-in-law half time, and to be the “older woman.” Years ago, when my four children were small, I cried out to the Lord for an older woman; the older women I knew then were all busy. Because of this experience, I committed to the Lord that if I lived to be an older woman, I would fulfill the role mentioned in Titus 2:4–5 to “teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.” (NKJV)

During my time working for THSC, in many ways I was able to keep that promise, especially through writing for the magazine, speaking at conferences, and talking one-on-one with home schooling moms, but I have always felt that there was more to it. I worked for THSC first and foremost as a helpmeet to my husband and secondarily as an older woman. However, now that we have a great team, I feel free to change my direction and to begin fulfilling that promise in more of a fulltime capacity.

We now have five grandchildren, and I feel sure there are more to come. My retirement from THSC will allow me to spend more time with my grandchildren and to help their parents while they are all in what we used to call “survival mode,” when it is tough just to get the laundry and the dishes done.

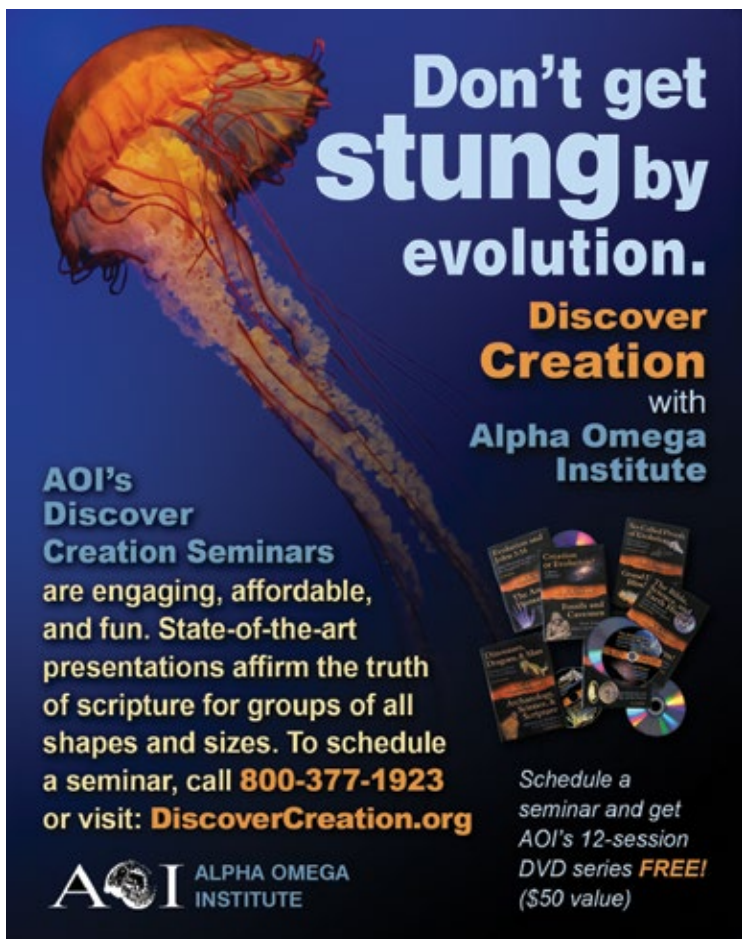
I also want to be more involved in the individual lives of the young women whom God brings my way. I intend to keep learning and growing, and I want to share the things that God has taught me over the years and what He is teaching me today.

One of the ways I plan to do that is by blogging. Not knowing my schedule or exactly what my time demands will be, I am only committing to writing once a week. I would like to invite you to join me. (Watch the THSC E-Newsletter for information on getting connected to my blog.) One of the greatest blessings of my time with THSC has been the great people whom I have gotten to know over the years. I am hoping that a blog will help me stay in touch with some of my favorite people: home school moms!

I will still be at many THSC events. Look for the grandmother pushing a stroller with a couple of little ones in tow. Please be sure to say hi!

Lyndsay Lambert, Editor Emeritus

Author's note: Lest this article brings up concerns about the future of THSC, let me explain that I am the only one retiring. In addition to a great staff and team, Tim is still going strong. He has no plans to retire, but he has begun to look for the right person to train as his replacement. We believe strongly in passing the baton; THSC will continue in the battle for home school and parental rights long after the Lamberts are gone.

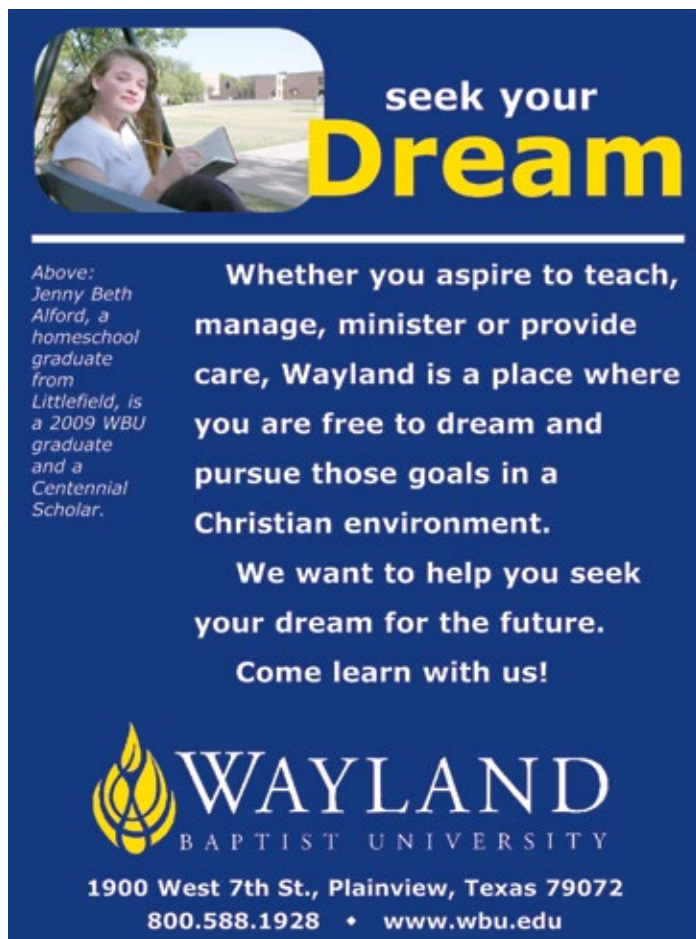
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REVIEW

FROM THE PRESIDENT



TIM LAMBERT

IN THE 1980s IN TEXAS the modern home school movement was in its infancy. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) had declared that home schools were not private schools and were, therefore, in violation of the compulsory attendance laws. The TEA encouraged school districts to prosecute home school families. More than 100 families in Texas were prosecuted simply for teaching their children at home.

When attorney Shelby Sharpe filed a class action lawsuit against the state of Texas to put an end to this legal harassment of home schooling families, it seemed like a reasonable approach—to most of us. However, many home schoolers fell prey to fear-mongering arguments that this suit against the state would in fact result in more regulation rather than less. One group even went so far as to oppose the suit in court.

I will never forget speaking to a friend who argued that *his* family had not had any problems so he did not see a need for this legal action—in spite of reports of the scores of other families across Texas who *had* been prosecuted by the state. There were vigorous debates and arguments across the state between those who saw this suit as an appropriate reaction in order to defend home schooling and those who saw it as simply an action that would draw the ire of the state and result in more state control.

From our perspective today, the *Leeper* decision (*Leeper vs. Arlington ISD*) was a huge victory that not only secured freedom for Texas home schoolers but also had an impact across the nation.

Today, a similar debate is raging in Texas over the legislation, known as the Tim Tebow bill (SB 929/HB 1374), to allow home school students to participate in University Interscholastic League (UIL) activities. Interestingly, we are hearing the same kinds of arguments against this effort that we heard twenty-five years ago against the *Leeper* lawsuit.

The major argument we hear from home schoolers against these current bills is that passing this legislation would ultimately result in the regulation of all home schoolers. This fear is based on the assumption that if we receive some service from the state, we will be regulated. The premise of this argument is that if we do not allow home schoolers to make this choice, our freedom will be secure henceforth and forever. That, of course, is a false premise.

One thing we can say from decades of experience is that some in Austin will always oppose the freedom Texas parents have to teach their children at home. In virtually every legislative session, we see bills filed attempting to erode or limit that freedom. That is why THSC exists and why we spend a great deal of time and money each session monitoring legislation and killing any attempt to limit the right of parents in Texas to home school—things we did in this year's session. In fact, you might want to view a short video called "Legacy of Freedom" on the THSC website that documents this decades-long battle for home school freedom that continues today. You can view it at www.THSC.org/Legacy.

The same arguments used today against our Tim Tebow Bill could have been made when we changed the law to force public schools to allow home school students to take the PSAT because in some areas that is the only place those tests are offered. In fact, we had to agree to add a defini-

tion of home schooling to the Texas Education Code in order to pass that legislation more than six years ago. Opponents of the Tebow Bill say we should not have done so. However, we have more freedom today since the passage of that law, not less.

Opponents could also have said the same thing when we changed the law to require public universities to recognize home school graduates as high school graduates and when federal law was amended to make home school graduates eligible for student loans or grants. When we passed laws to require community colleges to allow home school students to take dual credit classes the same as they allow public school students, to guarantee that home schoolers receive child support benefits or public assistance, or to allow military enlistment, etc., the same things could have been said—but they were not. I could go on, but my point is that all of these changes that were made to allow home school students to have equal access to the same benefits as public school students could have been opposed on the same basis as the arguments made today against the Tim Tebow Bill. Why is it that only on this issue the arguments are being raised? I believe it is out of fear.

Texas is one of the freest home school states in the nation because we have worked diligently to change laws to eliminate artificial barriers against home schooling and have worked even harder to oppose any attempt to take away our freedom. We did not get to this place by cowering in our homes and hoping the government would not take away our freedoms if we did nothing.

In 1913 UIL was established by the Texas legislature, and its first constitution made the league available for all students in Texas. Two years later that document was changed to allow only "white public school students" to participate. At that time—according to evidence presented in the *Leeper* case—as many as eighty percent of students in Texas were being home schooled. UIL was forced in the late 1960s to allow minority students into the league.

By the time you read this column, the Eighty-Third Texas Legislative Session will be over, and we may or may not have passed the Tim Tebow Bill and/or the Texas Parental Rights Restoration Act. Regardless of whether or not we were successful, there will be challenges to parental rights and home school freedom in the years to come, and the only way we will continue to enjoy that freedom is to be eternally vigilant and work hard to oppose every effort to limit that freedom.



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JIM DEMINT



GRACE EINKAUF

VISIONARY FOR A CONSERVATIVE OVERHAUL

JOHN RUSKIN ONCE WROTE, “The strength and power of a country depends absolutely on the quantity of good men and women in it.” In America today, as ever, we owe a great deal to the leaders who are willing to fight for causes more important than themselves. We stand together to honor and rally behind those who diligently support freedom rather than license.

Jim DeMint is just such a man. A passionate voice for conservatism, he recently resigned from the United States Senate to become president of The Heritage Foundation, an organization devoted to furthering conservative policies in our country. Heritage is a research and educational institution with a mission to promote freedom by marketing the results of careful policy research to members of the U.S. government, the media, and academic communities. As president, DeMint has said that one of his first goals for Heritage is to help the conservative movement understand how Americans from diverse walks of life perceive public policy issues—and to more effectively communicate conservative ideas and solutions. THSC was privileged to interview Mr. DeMint regarding his vision for America, which we report:

THSC: Tell us a little about your upbringing and the life lessons that had the most impact on you.

DeMint: I was raised with my two brothers and a sister by a single mother in Greenville, South Carolina, a small textile town. My mom was the toughest person I ever knew. If we were in trouble, she would protect us, but at home she was like a drill sergeant.

To support us financially, Mom started a ballroom dancing business in our home. We got up every morning at 6. She gave us a typed list of duties every day. I grew up with this idea that you worked all the time. We struggled, but I learned not only about just how hard life can be but also what a blessing work is.

You learn as you work that you can do more. You become more confident in yourself. You realize, “I think I can do anything that I want to do if I just work at it.”

That circumstance shaped me into what I am today. I went on to get my bachelor's degree in communications from the University of Tennessee and later my MBA from Clemson University.

Greenville was a good place to grow up. I went to school there and met and married my high school sweetheart there. Greenville was small enough that as I started my family and started my research and marketing business, I could make a difference.

THSC: *How has your faith impacted your politics?*

DeMint: As a Christian, I believe that God creates each human being as unique and of immeasurable worth. Though human beings are fallible and sinful, they have a great capacity for good when disciplined and restrained by religious and societal conventions.

The guiding text of the Judeo-Christian worldview, of course, is the Bible. That's where we got such precepts as the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." (Matthew 7:12) The Bible also is behind great American cultural expressions such as the "Declaration of Independence," Washington's "Farewell Address," Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address," and King's "Letter from a Birmingham Jail."

Our political system is distinctive because it is based on the belief that our rights come from God, not from government. So our rights cannot be taken away by government.

Traditionalists, and I am one, are committed to separation of church and state in the sense that the government should not promote the specific doctrine of any particular religious denomination or philosophy. We also do not agree that policies made to promote the common good should be eliminated from public debate simply because they are connected to traditional religious precepts.

Values that encourage abstinence until marriage, strong traditional marriages and families, respect for God and country, a strong work ethic and personal responsibility, integrity, and character are not merely religious tradition. They work for everyone and result in better citizens, a stronger economy, and a higher quality of life.

THSC: *What was your biggest challenge in the U.S. Senate?*

DeMint: There is a tremendous bias in Washington toward growing government by creating a new program to solve every problem. The trouble is, Washington does not do many things well, and that is why our founders defined a very limited role for the federal government and left the rest to the states, local governments, and civil society. When Washington tries to do too much, it erodes our freedoms and crowds out private citizens, who are often better equipped to solve problems through

charitable organizations and faith groups. It is our responsibility as citizens and people of faith to love our fellow man, feed the hungry, and help the downtrodden move ahead in life.

My biggest challenge in the Senate, though, turned into my biggest accomplishment: the people I helped elect. I think we changed the culture of the Senate. When I first got there in 2004, I was really frustrated with the “go-along, get-along” culture of many Republicans. It seemed that all we were doing was spending money and handing out earmarks, instead of fighting to save our country. When these new people came in—people like Marco Rubio, Rand Paul, Pat Toomey, Mike Lee, Ron Johnson—they helped us get rid of those parochial earmarks, which were a real distraction.

We have to focus on the national good and certainly the national budget. Ted Cruz—quite possibly my favorite Texan—is already helping Congress regain a proper focus.

THSC: *What is your vision for conservatism?*

DeMint: Becoming president of The Heritage Foundation is like coming home for me. Heritage policy research inspired my first run for office in 1998, and Heritage's conservative policy solutions guided my priorities in the House and the Senate. For forty years Heritage has believed that those values that made America great—honesty, industriousness, courage, determination—should inform our policies and our public institutions.

Heritage, which is the nation's most broadly supported public policy research institute, will continue to develop and promote policy solutions that advance free enterprise, limited government, individual freedom, traditional values, and a strong national defense.

America remains a conservative nation, but people crave leadership—champions who will stand up to the progressives, take on the liberal media, and push back against party leaders when they go wobbly.

Our sister organization, Heritage Action for America, is leading the effort to organize grassroots activists to educate, support, and pressure Congress on conservative policy solutions. As Ronald Reagan said, “If you can’t make them see the light, make them feel the heat.” That is what Heritage Action has been doing in holding members of Congress accountable for their voting records.

THSC: *What specific ideas are you focused on revamping?*

DeMint: At Heritage we intend to convince Americans that conservative ideas are the ideas that will make America better. Conservatives do not need new principles; our values have stood the test of time. It is important that we draw a distinction between timeless values and innovative policy ideas that we will need in the twenty-first century. Heritage's researchers and other experts are busy working out solutions to today's challenges.

We do not need bells and whistles, because conservative ideas work. They have been proved in states such as Tennessee, where the income tax was eliminated and the economy boomed. We have seen states such as North Dakota open their energy resources to development and create tens of thousands of good-paying jobs. We have seen states such as Texas pass tort reforms that encouraged medical doctors to move in, improving health care and lowering costs for everyone.

We also know that liberal policies fail. You do not have to look as far as Greece and Cyprus. Just look at California and Illinois. Look at Detroit. Controlled by liberals for more than fifty years, Detroit is bankrupt. Its population has shrunk by more than half. Only seven percent of eighth graders there read at grade level. Unemployment for Hispanics and blacks is near forty percent.

"The strength and power of a country depends absolutely on the quantity of good men and women in it."



Conservatives cannot rest until every American can reach the ladder of opportunity and climb as high as they can dream. We must connect with every neighborhood. We must make our ideas so winsome to the public that they become irresistible to politicians, no matter what their party.

That is why Heritage this year will begin anew to help the conservative movement understand how Americans from all walks of life perceive public policy issues—and how to communicate conservative ideas and solutions.

THSC: How does home education fit into these ideas?

DeMint: Here is how home education is part of this picture: Parents are their children's first educators, and public policies should respect this principle. Government policies should empower parents to choose the schooling options they decide are best for their children, whether it be public, private, charter, online, or home schooling—or a combination of these. At Heritage we are focused on rolling back federal involvement and restoring educational authority to states, to local communities, and, most importantly, to parents.

School choice is a key aspect of education reform. For the most part, parents know best what their children need. A growing number of parents, from across the political spectrum, choose to home school their children. They do so for a variety of reasons, including a desire to instill traditional values in their kids. This is the best option for many families, and policies should continue to allow them to make this choice.

I salute organizations such as the Texas Home School Coalition for encouraging understanding of, and excellence in, home education.



THSC is proud to support Jim DeMint in his fight for conservative policy. Freedom to live, work, and raise a family without the encroaching regulations of liberalism is the foundation of the American dream. We do not believe in freedom simply because we like it. We believe in freedom because it works.

THSC also thanks The Heritage Foundation for its support of home schooling in Texas by being the Lone Star Sponsor of the THSC Southwest Convention & Family Conference!

Grace Einkauf, a twenty-year-old home school graduate, is currently pursuing an education in liberal arts while living and working on her family's 100+ acre farm in Texas. She enjoys volunteering and singing in the community, coaching speech and debate, and writing at ScatteredGlimpses.wordpress.com.



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Consistency

Equals Family Security and Satisfaction

Holly Williams Urbach

ONE OF MY FAVORITE television shows is *Super-nanny* because it is such an object lesson of what can happen when there is no vision for raising a family. The families profiled on *Super-nanny* struggle to complete the most basic activities—from cooking and eating a meal to going on outings with their children. Nothing is done smoothly, and the parents are emotionally and physically exhausted by their struggles of trying to get through each day. Adding home schooling to such an atmosphere would be a recipe for disaster!

When I married in April 1985 and began having children, I knew I wanted something different than the way I was raised. Discipline varied according to my mother's mood each day, and rules were not clearly explained or enforced.

I tried one philosophy and then another with my first two children, but nothing had any staying power until I became a Christian in 1988. Finally I had guidance and inspiration in all areas of my life! I read my Bible consistently, in particular the book of Proverbs, and quickly began applying the wisdom I found there with my young family.

In 1993 we made the leap of faith to begin home schooling our growing brood of two daughters and two sons. I attended a one-day workshop Gregg Harris presented at a local church. His workshop was a breath of fresh air, chock-full of wisdom for training children, for home schooling with enjoyment, and for serving one another. I bought his book, *The 21 Rules of This House*, as soon as we were released from the workshop to peruse the shopping area.

At last I had a very concrete set of biblically based principles for the whole family to follow—especially Mom! I was enabled to be consistent in disciplining my children. The book was created to be copied so that children could color a page illustrating each rule as they were taught it. It also contained a laminated sheet listing each rule, which still has a spot on my refrigerator twenty years later. Gregg Harris no longer publishes this wonderful resource, but “The 21 Rules of This House” and accompanying instructions are listed at GreggHarrisBlog.Blogspot.com.

Once I implemented this child-training tool, our family life improved dramatically! I no longer wasted time trying to decide what to do regarding certain behaviors. In a short period of time we learned these new rules, pairing them with Bible verses, and we were off and running.

Not having to reinvent the wheel each time one of the children misbehaved made for days that ran more smoothly and efficiently. The children stopped pushing to see where the boundaries were once they realized that I was being consistent. Truly, when we correct our children we have rest.

Next I sought the Lord on another issue that needed the benefit of consistency. My children always clamored to have a turn to sit in the front seat of our van, to get the mail, to set the table and create a centerpiece for the dinner table, to help make dinner, and to have “special” time alone with Mom. I was feeling overwhelmed trying to remember who had done what and when. My children were frustrated and feeling

as though they had each been shortchanged when I allowed someone a privilege when it ought to have been a different child's turn. Parental inconsistency causes children insecurity.

One day, as I had a rare quiet moment when the children were playing outside together, it came to me to assign each child a day of the week. On “their” day they were the person who got all the privileges and responsibilities listed above. My oldest child was assigned Monday, the second child assigned Tuesday, and so on. When my niece visited us for two summers she was assigned Saturday as “her” day.

My children were happier as each of them had his or her turn to be the “special” person. That child beamed with happiness on his or her assigned day and planned all week for a unique centerpiece for our table and what we would do together for “special” time that evening. I was also happier because I no longer felt that I was doing a terrible job raising my children.

With just two plans in place, followed consistently, the whole tenor of our home changed. If we had not implemented biblically based rules and a daily plan for managing which child was allowed privileges and responsibilities, I do not think we would have continued home schooling after the first year. These two tools allowed us to truly enjoy our children and to have the peace and quiet we needed in order to seek the Lord for His plans for each of our five children. (We ended up with two daughters and three sons.)

My children are now all adults, ranging in age from 19 to 27. Each one of them has at one time or another thanked me and their dad for how they were raised. Each has pointed to a friend's family, in which the parents were inconsistent or disciplined emotionally, as examples of what he or she is glad did not occur in our family.

If you are struggling with your children, I urge you to seek the Lord for wisdom, to put in place some biblically based family rules (some others to evaluate: Doorposts at doorposts.com, Our 24 Family Ways by Sally and Clay Clarkson at wholeheart.org, and materials by authors Debi and Michael Pearl at nogreaterjoy.org), and to be consistent with whatever training tool you are led to use for your precious children. I wish you the rest, contentment, and satisfaction that I found with my children as I implemented the principles of consistency in my home so many years ago.

Holly Williams Urbach has home schooled her children since 1993. She has been married to her husband Joe since 1985 and is a mother of five and grandmother of two. Holly currently works as an on-site director for a home school academy and also in property management. In her spare time Holly enjoys writing, gardening, physical fitness activities, and interior decorating.



WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?



David Gibbs

HOME SCHOOL BLOGS and other news sources are issuing warnings to keep an eye on our freedom to home school. Some home school sources are quite concerned that under America's current leadership, home schooling as we know it could be in for a change. We hear declarations that America's children belong to the "community" and no longer only to their parents. We see a German home school family seeking political asylum threatened with being sent back to a nation that does not permit home schooling, because our current administration does not see that issue as a denial of freedom deserving political asylum in America.

Clearly, the fundamental right of parents to direct and control the upbringing of their children has been entrenched in America since the days of the Pilgrims and has been officially recognized in American constitutional law for more than 100 years. Today, however, instead of looking to themselves, to their families, or to their churches, Americans are increasingly turning to government to care for them, "cradle to grave." Many in the federal government act as if they alone—not families—know what is best for our children. If this trend continues in education, it could provide a significant challenge for home schooling families.

A well-worn political adage warns us always to "follow the money." Concern over massive government funding and control of public schools and the potential corresponding impact on home schoolers is not unfounded. It is another well-worn adage that "whatever the government pays for, it retains the right to control." If government continues to recognize that it is "under God," there is no problem. When government begins to function as a god unto itself, it is time to worry.

WHO SHOULD DECIDE?

Someone must decide what sort of education is best for individual children. The government could decide. It often seems that it would certainly like to decide. The children themselves could decide. Children are deciding far too much for themselves today, as our family structure crumbles. Or parents could decide. That is God's idea. However, American law is rapidly shifting away from parental authority to decide and is moving toward children having more power and input in their own education, with the federal government being the "Big Dog" in controlling all educational policy.

Rather than accepting the decisions of Mom and Dad, courts may well begin to say that a child of ten, eleven, or twelve has the legal right to choose for himself, even where his education is concerned. While that has not yet happened in America, clearly the law is trending in that direction as courts are allowing children at ever younger ages to make important decisions for themselves—including their involvement in sexual activity or in choosing a sexual preference. Is it not interesting that the government now wants children who are just beginning puberty to buy abortifacients freely at the drugstore but at the same time treats twenty-six-year-olds as children still able to remain on their parents' health insurance plan?

Parents are increasingly seen as impediments to their child's freedom, sexual or otherwise. The government is often far too eager to step in to "protect" children from their parents. Mandated, government-run public education is certainly one of the best ways to ensure that children will break free from the "outdated" religion, ethics, and morality of their parents and embrace the new values of a government that no longer sees itself as a Christian nation. Home schooling families, however, are still able to teach their children the real American history, ideals, and values of independence from a totalitarian government and a corresponding dependence on God. Future citizens may later thank you when these well-educated and morally upright adults are called upon to lead a nation that has otherwise lost its way.

WHAT ARE THE BASICS?

Political movements opposing potential challenges to home schooling may become more urgent in the near future, but for now parents need to focus on several basic issues. Home school families must make sure that home schooling itself will remain a strong movement that is difficult to stop. Follow these basic steps first:

- Know the law in your state.
- Follow the law.
- Do your work as home schoolers excellently.
- Keep good records.

These will be the keys to best protecting home schooling in the future, whatever the challenges. It is those parents who are doing an outstanding job and who are able to demonstrate that their children are being well educated who will best protect the continuing freedom for everyone to choose the best educational option for their child, including a home education.

Attorney David Gibbs III serves as the president and general counsel of the National Center for Life and Liberty, a ministry organization that defends life and liberty freedoms nationwide. Mr. Gibbs speaks regularly to audiences in churches and conferences while also litigating cases as a trial attorney. He hosts the weekly radio program Law Talk Live on the Moody Radio Network and has authored five books, including *Fighting for Dear Life* and *Understanding the Constitution*.

Working in partnership with THSC, the NCLL considers it a privilege to serve home schooling families across Texas. To learn more about the NCLL visit www.ncll.org. David will be a featured speaker at the THSC Southwest Convention & Family Conference in The Woodlands this August.



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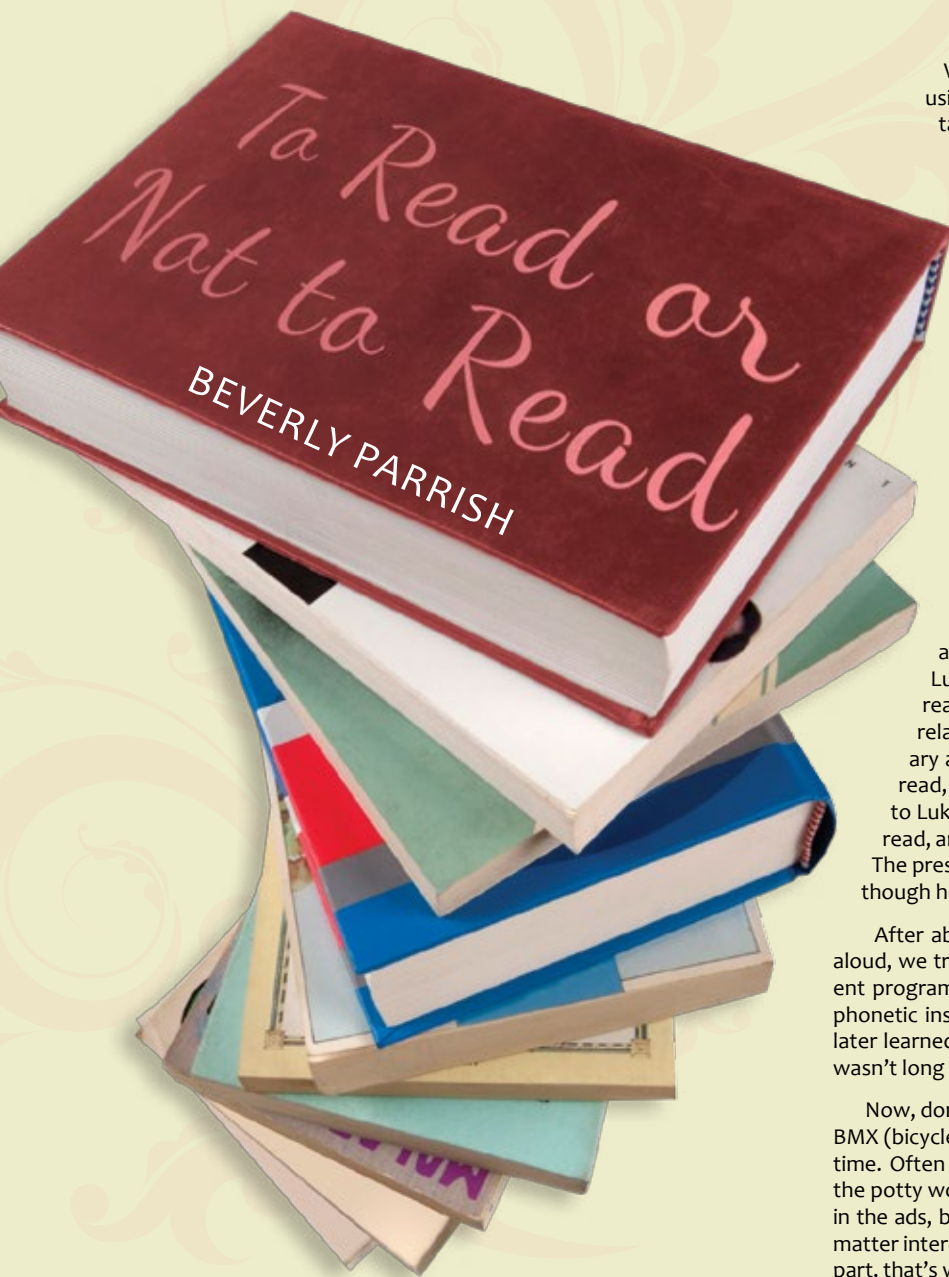
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ANYONE WHO KNOWS ME, or has ever set foot inside my home, knows that I love books. Perhaps it's the bookshelves lining the walls, the hallways, and the insides of the closets. Or maybe it's the books stacked on the toilet tank, on the floor, on the table, or on any other flat surface not otherwise occupied. At any rate, I love to read and want my kids to enjoy reading as much as I do.

What do you do when your children don't necessarily enjoy reading? What do you do when they struggle to learn to read—so much so that you wonder if they ever will? Well, take it from me, a mom who has been there and is still there in the trenches: There is hope!

I have six sons and one precious daughter (who has Down syndrome). My second son, Luke, struggled to learn to read. Way back when we first started home schooling, I didn't know much about learning styles, and I didn't know much about how young boys approach learning—being a girl and all. After twenty-eight years of parenting and twenty-two of home schooling, I know a little more now. Perhaps our experiences will help some of you.

We dutifully began trying to teach Luke to read at age six, using a sound, proven phonics approach. After all, we had taught his older brother to read at six using the same program. How hard could it be? Well, age six came and went without Luke learning to read. Ages seven and eight came and went, and at age nine we started to get worried. What we did not realize at the time was that we were missing (and therefore depriving Luke of) the greatest benefit of home schooling: the ability to change what we were doing to fit his needs. We were dangerously close to duplicating the one-size-fits-all method of traditional schools. We were continuing to do the same things we had been doing, with no results, foolishly expecting different outcomes.

Often my husband Chris would come home from work to find Luke crying, me crying, or both of us crying. It was not a pretty sight. So Chris asked me if there was anything about school that Luke liked.

"Well," I replied, "he likes it when I read aloud to him."

So Chris decided that we would shelve everything else and simply read aloud to Luke. Because my relationship with Luke had begun to suffer from the frustrations of learning to read, Chris recognized that the key issue was rebuilding the relationship between mom and son. Academics were secondary at this point. I read aloud to Luke. Whatever he wanted to read, I read. Wherever he wanted to read, we read. I read books to Luke that were way above what a young boy would be able to read, and he ate it up. The relationship between us began to mend. The pressure was off, and he could enjoy the fruit of reading—even though he was not the one doing the reading.

After about six months of this new school plan of simply reading aloud, we tried again with the phonics, only this time we used a different program—one that combined multi-sensory practice with explicit phonetic instruction. It clicked with him, and he learned to read. (We later learned he was slightly dyslexic and a very kinesthetic learner.) It wasn't long before he was up and running and reading on his own.

Now, don't spread this around, but we let him read magazines about BMX (bicycle motocross) racing because that was his hot button at the time. Often we had to pre-read the magazines and take a Sharpie to the potty words, and draw some extra clothing on some of the models in the ads, but he read the magazines from cover to cover. The subject matter interested him, so he was highly motivated to read. For the most part, that's why we read as adults—to find out about something that interests us. Today, at age twenty-five, Luke still reads! Goal accomplished!

To be reading by adulthood has always been our goal for our kids. Let me ask you this: When was the last time anyone asked you, as an adult, when you learned to read? No one cares when you started. They care if you currently read well enough to do your job properly, but beyond that, no one cares. The only people who care when a child learns to read are parents (whose kids are not reading when they think they should be), grandparents (whose grandchildren are not reading when they think they should be), and possibly a neighbor (who likes to compare the academic prowess of their children to everyone else's children). In the grand scheme of life, when we began reading is a non-issue. When we first began home schooling, a wise and more experienced couple gave us this bit of advice: "Check your parental pride at the door." This advice was invaluable to us, as it saved us from completely alienating our son by trying to force him to do something he was not yet ready or able to do (just because our pride smarted).

Our fourth son reached the "teaching reading" age, and we learned right away that he was severely dyslexic and also had an auditory processing disorder. We figured we would be okay, knowing from experience that

we could hold out confidently until he was nine, when, of course, like his older brother, it would all click in his head. However, when Seth reached twelve and then thirteen and still was not reading, we wondered when the “reading police” would come and haul us away. We pursued many different phonics curricula, tutoring, specialized therapy, brain training, nutritional issues, and anything else we thought might be a piece in the puzzle to unlock his ability to read. I think the key to finding the pieces to his puzzle was that we diligently, personally researched every option upon which we came. Each “expert” would assure us that his or her program was the only key to Seth’s success and that all the others were not worth considering. We refused to be loyal to any one program or idea; our only loyalty was to whatever it took to help Seth—and that worked.

Research has shown that what works for most kids (nothing can work for everyone) who have difficulty reading is an Orton-Gillingham-based phonetic approach. This approach includes phonetic instruction as well as instruction in recognition of high-use and phonetically irregular sight words. Not everything calling itself “phonics” meets those criteria. To simplify the process as you are researching phonics curricula for your family, look for certain buzzwords. “Orton-Gillingham-based” means a proven methodology of phonetic instruction that encompasses the following principles:

- Explicit or Direct Instruction (rules of how to sound out words are explicitly taught, not magically “discovered” on the part of the student by exposure or taught only by pattern)
- Intensive Instruction (lots of practice in the basic skills of sounding out; decoding)
- Systematic Instruction (step-by-step building of one rule upon another for decoding words, as opposed to teaching rules as they come up in whatever the student is reading)
- Multi-Sensory Instruction (engaging the student’s body through touching, repeating aloud, writing, manipulating three-dimensional letters, etc.)

The program should also exercise fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Simply sounding out words is not reading.

Realize that for some children, reading will come easily and they may practically teach themselves. However, knowing what I know now, my recommendation is to choose the most thorough program that meets the above criteria. Then simply move quickly through the areas in which your child is demonstrating mastery of the concept. It is not necessary to endlessly drill a concept your child already knows, nor should you skip things you assume your child knows. Present all the material, and when your child shows he has mastered it, move on. It may take two minutes, or it

may take two days. There is no need to purchase a program requiring extensive teacher training in order to teach it to your children. There are clearly laid out, thorough programs readily available that give the parent explicit directions with no need for specialized training.

Throughout this journey of finding success in reading, we were reminded that each of our kids is uniquely created by God for His specific purpose. We were reminded that it is God who finishes the work He begins in us, and that it is all done in His perfect timing. God used each of the avenues we pursued to add to Seth’s abilities, and they all came together—and are still coming together—in His timing, to help Seth become a proficient reader.

The point in not giving up, especially as it relates to our sons and their academic progress, is that the Enemy would like nothing more than to trap us into believing there is no hope. What better way to handicap a generation of young men and women than to limit them in their ability and desire to read—because ultimately, we read in order to learn what God speaks to us through His Word.

Beverly Parrish is a long-time home schooling mom with a bunch of great kids and a terrific husband. She loves to read and to help others overcome reading challenges. She is also a licensed Davis Dyslexia Correction facilitator. You can find her at LearnYourWay.biz. Beverly will be a featured speaker at the 2013 THSC Southwest Convention & Family Conference in The Woodlands this August.



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ASK GOD HOW TO BE CONSISTENT IN DISCIPLINING YOUR CHILDREN.

From the time our sons and daughters were very small, we've told them we expect them to obey the first time—every time—we ask them to do something. I realize this is an alien concept in the twenty-first century, but because the majority of our children were born in the twentieth century, we're getting away with it.

Our kids have known we expect them to obey “quickly, cheerfully, completely, and without complaining” because we repeated that phrase thousands of times during their childhoods. Just ask them today and watch them roll their eyes as they recite the mantra.

Now, please don't think the Harrell household was filled with quick, cheerful children, who completely batted a thousand in the obedience bracket. Oh, goodness no! Rather, our youngsters set their hearts on an objective to prove the theological concept that all humans are born in sin.

Consistency in discipline is a challenge for my wife Belinda and me. We get tired and frustrated having to repeat the same instructions, forgetting there is a spiritual battle raging within our children. See, the kids already know what they are supposed to do (study this, vacuum that, wash this, flush that). They just don't want to do what they know they are supposed to do, easily proving that theological concept of inborn sin and driving their parents to be consistently inconsistent.

Hey, I do it also. I'll hit my head on a problem and cry out to the Lord, “Oh Lord, whatever should I do?”

Predictably, God responds, “My son, you already know what to do.”



consistently
inconsistent
pat harrell

“Um, is that why I memorized all those verses, Father?” I sheepishly reply.

“Yes, My son, that was the point,” He concludes.

Being thirty years older than my children doesn't mean I'm thirty years smarter than my children.

Consistency in discipline is right for my kids. Consistency in discipline isn't easy with my kids. Actually, consistency in discipline wears me out with my kids. When my kids defy my instruction, sometimes I just want to ignore the infraction, hoping the behavior will magically go away. Sometimes I just want to go bury my face in a pillow and scream.

I get frustrated. I get frustrated when my sons know what they are supposed to do but don't do it. I get frustrated when they see their mother cleaning the kitchen, yet they stay seated at the table, reading about Legos. I get frustrated when my sons step over a stack of folded, clean clothes on their way both into and out of their bedroom.

My sons are part squirrel. Yes, this sounds weird, but it is true. I know they are part squirrel because of how they stuff their bedroom closet with odd items they find around the house, just like squirrels do. I'd holler at the boys to clean out their closet about every week, only to find it trashed again the following week. I didn't consistently check their closet each day, so they restocked it each day with socks, appliances, Legos, shoes, and toys.

Well, I got frustrated with being frustrated and finally agreed to ask the Lord what to do. He told me. Not in an audible voice, but in a revelation that reminded me why He is God and I'm not: “Remove the door,” He revealed.

“Do what?” I replied.

“Remove the door,” He repeated as He usually has to when imparting wisdom to this imperfect father.

With hammer and screwdriver, I removed the closet door from the hinges. The boys had shocked faces. By removing the door, I removed my sons' ability to hide their disobedience. Now each time I visit the boys' room, I instantly know the state of their squirreliness.

God has the best ideas for handling my sons, and I should ask for His wisdom more often since He has a Son too—though I haven't detected that God had this kind of trouble with His Son. But you do have to wonder if Joseph ever stepped on Jesus' Legos back home in Nazareth.

If you have a moment, please send an email to ImperfectFather@gmail.com. I'd love to read stories of how you creatively discipline your children.

Pat and Belinda Harrell have home schooled since 1995. They have five jolly children, and the loudest house on the block. Please send your thoughts on this article to Pat at ImperfectFather@gmail.com. He promises to write back. Read more about being an imperfect father at ImperfectFather.com.





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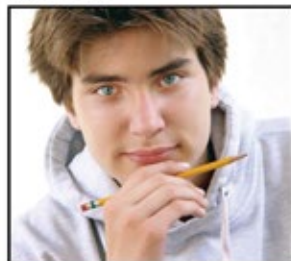
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When it comes to freedom, there are always battles. Some battles are fought in the trenches, at sea, or in foreign lands. Other battles are waged in courtrooms amid a sea of papers. They are fought on native soil at state capitals, and although the battle may not be bloody and the wounds may be invisible, they are battles nonetheless—battles for our freedom.

These are fights Texas Home School Coalition (THSC) is committed to winning. During each legislative session THSC works diligently to protect the freedom of parents to direct the care and education of their children. 🇺🇸

The THSC Watchmen

"I have set watchmen; all the day and all the night they shall never be silent." Isaiah 62:6

Aptly named for their cause, the THSC Watchmen worked diligently to represent home schoolers' concerns at the Texas Capitol during the 2013 legislative session. These home school graduates represented THSC as articulate, confident, well-informed, living and breathing examples of home schooling success. During their time of service, under the direction of THSC president Tim Lambert, the Watchmen labored to educate legislators regarding THSC's views on hundreds of bills, clarified questions regarding how the various bills might affect home schooling families, and persuaded them to see things from THSC's point of view. The Watchmen sifted through 9721 pieces of legislation, tracked more than 125 bills, and killed twelve different bills that would have harmed home schooling and/or parental rights on a wide variety of fronts. They were instrumental

in keeping the home school community aware of the dangers of SB 303, which would have given the final authority for doctors to make certain end-of-life decisions for sick children without informing the parents. Calls from the home school community flooded offices of representatives after the Watchmen sounded the alarm.

Another bill the THSC Watchmen brought to light would have allowed fourteen-year-olds to consent to their own immunizations. In the Texas House of Representatives, the Watchmen's work forced the author to dramatically limit the scope of the bill. In the Senate, the bill did not have enough time to gain traction and died in committee. The Watchmen also expressed their concerns related to House Bill 772, which would have recorded the immunization records of all Texas families unless the family opted out of the system, leaving those families vulnerable to accusations of child abuse for not immunizing their children. 🇺🇸

To Fight Another Day

THSC worked to create and lobbied hard for legislation that would have amended current law and allowed home schoolers to participate in University Interscholastic League (UIL) events with public school students. This would have given thousands of home schooling students access to public school activities and facilities that their parents help fund through property taxes. The bill, often called the *Tim Tebow Bill*, passed the senate by an overwhelming majority but died in committee when Chairman Jimmie Don Aycock of Killeen singlehandedly blocked the passage of the bill by preventing it from coming up for a vote under House rules. Although the bill did not pass this session, the *Tim Tebow Bill* made more progress this session than it ever has before and likely would have passed had there been a different chairman heading the Public Education Committee.

Another continuing battle is the one for the Texas Parental Rights Restoration Act. HB 2547 would have raised the standard of evidence from "preponderance" to "clear and convincing" when overruling the rights of fit parents. The bill died without debate or a vote in the Texas House. In the Senate Jurisprudence Committee, Chairman West blocked a vote on SB 1194 by Senator Campbell, which was the Senate version of the TPRRA. While it is disappointing that TPRRA did not pass, significant progress was made this session. In the previous session there was no corresponding Senate bill. This session, hearings on the TPRRA were held in both the House and Senate, and more witnesses testified than did two years ago. More and more legislators are becoming aware of the problem, and support for the THSC position is growing. Work on this issue will continue as bills are re-filed next session, and legislative candidates will be educated on the issue during the next campaign season. 🇺🇸

Victories

In regard to parental rights, THSC had a substantial impact through its work to defeat bills proposing to expand the number of families that could be sued under the Grandparent Access Statute. Sponsored by the Family Law Foundation (FLF), Senate Bill 1148 was effectively killed by overwhelming opposition from parents and families across Texas. The bill went too far in allowing non-parents to sue fit parents. It would have allowed a judge to overrule the constitutional right of fit parents on the basis of testimony from anyone, instead of an expert, regarding what would "significantly impair the physical health or emotional well-being of a child." The bill would have directly impacted low-income parents, who are less able to bear the financial burden of protecting their parental

rights. THSC contended that parental rights are for all parents, not just those who have the financial means to defend them. In an effort to save the bill, Senator West, who carried the bill, sought a compromise proposed by FLF. However, the compromise was rejected by THSC because it still expanded the number of families exposed to such lawsuits and removed the requirement for expert testimony. HB 391, the House version of the FLF's bill, died in the House Committee on Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence. Had THSC not been there to sound the alarm on these bills, they may well have passed, to the detriment of the fundamental, constitutional right of parents throughout Texas. 🇺🇸

A Strong Defense

In May THSC addressed concerns with the Bedford and Euless Police Departments following an incident when a THSC member's children were walking to their grandmother's home during Euless's daytime curfew hours. The children were stopped and questioned by police. Their father contacted THSC president Tim Lambert, who addressed the situation quickly with a letter to both police departments, detailing the

law concerning home schooling in Texas. He received a response from Chief Michael Brown of the Euless Police Department and replied with his concerns regarding additional actions made by Euless police officers, encouraging the department to make certain that officers have a clear understanding of the legal standing of home schooling in Texas and to review the department's policies and procedures accordingly. 🇺🇸

Putting a Face to Our Fight

In the Christian tradition of bearing one another's burdens, THSC reaches out to the home school community, informing them about their fellow home schoolers in need and providing meaningful ways in which they can help. To aid in this effort, THSC has released numerous short, informational videos.

The videos produced for THSC serve an important purpose for the home school community. In addition to offering resources for leaders and educational videos for home schoolers, THSC has also offered news-oriented segments that keep members informed about important cases in which THSC is involved and updates on successful cases from the past. The videos are available for viewing on demand, both at THSC.org and at YouTube.com/User/TexasHomeSchool, providing an efficient and effective means of informing both home schoolers and those interested in home schooling by offering a quick view into what is truly at stake when laws are misused to subvert parental authority. What is at stake?

EDUCATION: It is the education of students like Alex Brace, who is now a successful home school graduate, that is at stake. Alex was caught in the middle of a custody fight when her mother objected to her father home schooling her.

RELATIONSHIPS: Relationships between children and parents are at stake, as in the case of Heather Moody, who faced the uncertainty

of losing custody of her children to her ex-husband's parents when he was away.

FAMILY: Families like that of Chassidie Russell are at stake, whose daughter was taken from her and temporarily put in the custody of her ex-husband's parents even though they were neither the biological nor adoptive grandparents of the child.

FINANCES: The expenses of extended legal battles, even those that are unfounded, are at stake and can be devastating. After a judge issued a temporary order to remove Jim Loose's daughter from his home following her mother's death, a lengthy legal battle ensued with his late wife's parents for the custody of his daughter. Ultimately, Jim did regain custody; however, the cost was nearly crippling. The trial to return his daughter only took ten days, but the lengthy process the opposing counsel pursued exhausted the finances of this fit father. THSC stepped in, and justice prevailed; but not before the judge ruled that even though Jim won back custody of his daughter, he would have to cover \$150,000 of the grandparents' legal fees.

These stories are all different. They all have different stakes, but they all also have one thing in common: they are all cases in which the individual rights of parents and their basic freedoms were in grave danger. 🇺🇸

Circling the Wagons

THSC serves a critical need by protecting the parental rights of home schoolers in Texas. It represents home schooling, particularly in areas in which case law could be used to create a standard by which all Texas home schoolers could be affected. By providing a clear, compelling story in the most efficient format, THSC is able to bring these often complicated legal battles to the forefront and keep the home school community informed about the important issues facing Texas families.

As in all battles worth fighting, there are wins and losses. There were both this past legislative session. THSC will continue to fight and tirelessly serve the home school community of Texas. Join THSC in the struggle. Be part of the victory, because without the participation and support of home schoolers, these battles could not be waged. Your support of THSC's continuing efforts, along with your prayers and financial support, is essential and appreciated. 🇺🇸

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MEET TRINE AND JAMIE MIRANDA



JAMIE MIRANDA

WE BEGAN HOME SCHOOLING our eldest son Matthew and twins Mark and Mitchell in 1990. The boys had previously attended one year of public school, but because of their severe asthma, absences became an issue. My mother had read an article about a new organization called FEAST (Family Educators Alliance of South Texas), which seemed like an answer to our prayers. I visited with Ruth Perez, learned about legal issues concerning home schooling, chose a curriculum, and never looked back. The living room became our first classroom, and we embarked on what became a fifteen-year journey full of challenges and triumphs. The boys were often hospitalized, so I packed up the school books in a laundry basket and held school in their hospital rooms. They watched educational videos, played Hangman with spelling words on the small whiteboard, and attended daily field trips to the giant aquarium down the hall when walking was permitted by the medical staff. My husband Trine worked extra jobs on weekends to help make ends meet on one income while I educated the boys and supplemented our income by making cakes, selling scrapbooking supplies, and more.

As time passed we started a support group called Home and Values Educational Network, more commonly known as HAVEN Home Educators. We began with four families and now average sixty to seventy families each year, with a peak of 120 families prior to the economic downturn. The 2012–2013 school year marks HAVEN's seventeenth year of supporting San Antonio-area home schooling families by offering monthly meetings, field trips, holiday parties, science fairs, culture fairs, art and photography contests, talent shows, field days, social clubs for various age groups, and much more. In addition, Trine and I started a 4-H club and a Boy Scout troop, offering even more curricular and extracurricular enrichment for home schoolers. All three of our sons earned the rank of Eagle Scout and received the highest honor in 4-H, the Gold Star, in addition to being San Antonio Livestock Exposition and LULAC El Rey Feo scholarship recipients.

Matthew was HAVEN's first graduate in 2005 and was followed the next year by brothers Mark and Mitch, along with six other graduates. Matthew attended Texas A&M University where he earned a BS in agricultural communication and journalism and an MEd in agricultural education. He is currently employed as the 4-H agent for Texas AgriLife Extension in Guadalupe County and hopes to begin a PhD program in the fall.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: MATT, MITCH, MARK, FRAN, TRINE, AND JAMIE MIRANDA

Mark graduated from St. Philip's College with two associate's degrees, one in biology and one in pre-med. He currently attends Texas State University where he is a senior majoring in wildlife biology with Master Naturalist Certification. He and fellow home schooler, Francesca Lewis, his childhood sweetheart, were married in December of 2012 after a six-year engagement. Fran recently graduated from Texas State with a BA in fashion merchandising.

Mitch also graduated from St. Philip's with an associate's degree in liberal arts. He then attended Baylor University, earning a BA in studio art with a minor in Great Texts of the Western Tradition and a BS in cultural anthropology with an emphasis in world religions. Mitch currently attends the University College London (UCL) Institute of Archaeology, majoring in Middle Eastern and Eastern Mediterranean archaeology. He is the first home schooler ever to attend UCL.

Following our sons' graduations from high school, we continued to serve the home school community through HAVEN and also as volunteers for 4-H. The boys encouraged me to return to college, because I had always wanted to finish my college degree, so I began attending St. Philip's College too. I earned an associate of arts degree in English and then transferred to Our Lady of the Lake University, where I earned a BA in English, graduating magna cum laude, and an MA in English with a specialization in writing. I currently work full time as an instructional skills specialist and as an adjunct instructor teaching developmental English and labs at St. Philip's College. Trine has been my staunch supporter and rock over the course of our thirty-three-year marriage. He continues to work as a production supervisor at Watts Water Technology in San Antonio.

Throughout our tenure as the founders and leaders of HAVEN, we have counseled hundreds of home schoolers. One thing we stress to them is to create a love of learning by making learning fun. After home schooling for fifteen years, it occurred to us that we might actually have learned a thing or two not only about educating our sons but also about life. We have offered many the following advice.

We discovered that spreading a blanket under a tree on a beautiful fall day, counting migrating monarchs while rolling down a hill, and playing "Mother, May I?" with spelling words can count as a school day. Similarly, so can swimming a lap in a pool while reciting multiplication tables or discussing the nutrients in our lunch. Yes, the school day can consist

of sitting at a desk, doing page after page of worksheets, but it certainly does not have to be that way. After all, one of the most wonderful aspects about home schooling is having options—flexibility to offer new experiences.

As a new school year begins, remember that we not only want to teach our children the Three R's, we also want to instill in them a profound love of learning. We are talking about taking the time to create new opportunities and learning experiences to show our children all that God's world has to offer. In the grand scheme of things, does it really matter if we attend a field trip instead of finishing the last lesson in the chapter? Both are educational but in different ways. Our best advice to home schoolers, both established and new, is to allow children to enjoy their education and their lives. Do not get caught up in such a regimented rut that you fail to do anything fun! Our sons may not have finished every single lesson in every book, but they have learned something far more valuable: how to live.

We are truly honored to have been selected as THSC's support group leaders of the year, and we wish to thank God for allowing us to guide our sons, our families for supporting us every step of the way, our sons for becoming the fine young men they are today, and our friends at HAVEN for showing us their overwhelming love. Here's to a new year of love and laughter together!

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Book Reviews

Two Approaches to the Prodigal

A Growing Phenomenon Among Christian Home School Families

SUZANNE REID

ABULLET many of us are striving to dodge is the prodigal child. As we parents scan the landscape, we find it dismal, if not frightening! We see teens more familiar with STDs than ABCs. They connect with many friends on the computer via social media but are often lonely, feeling disconnected and often suicidal. They resort to cutting and other hurtful practices. Searching for a better life for our children, we often fall prey to the notion that we can protect them from this sorrow by finding that perfect parenting formula.

Sadly, statistics do not suggest that we are succeeding. Instead, a growing number of home schooled adults are leaving the church and pursuing their own agendas. This is a painful topic because it affects many of us and many of our friends at church. With the intention of providing some helpful resources, this article reviews two books with vastly different perspectives on the topic. As always, the reader must discern the truth for himself and decide the best parenting methods for his own family.

The two books are *Engaging Today's Prodigal* by Carol Barnier and *Jumping Ship* by Michael and Debi Pearl. Both books deal with the rising rate of children rejecting their parents and becoming apostates. Barnier calls this adult child a "prodigal," which leaves hope for the child's return. The Pearls use the word "divorce" to describe the damaged relationship, with its deep wounds and pain. Both books attempt to help the growing number of parents who are stunned to find themselves in this spot, searching for answers.

While both authors desire to bring clarity and healing to wounded families, they approach the prodigal from very different backgrounds. Having been a prodigal herself, Barnier draws from her own personal experiences to provide parents with tips for reaching the prodigal. Michael Pearl explains that he broaches this topic after receiving many painful letters and calls from home school families in crisis. Having raised his own five children and currently participating in the raising of his eighteen grandchildren, he shares parenting ideas from his life as a pastor and home school father.

ENGAGING TODAY'S PRODIGAL BY CAROL BARNIER

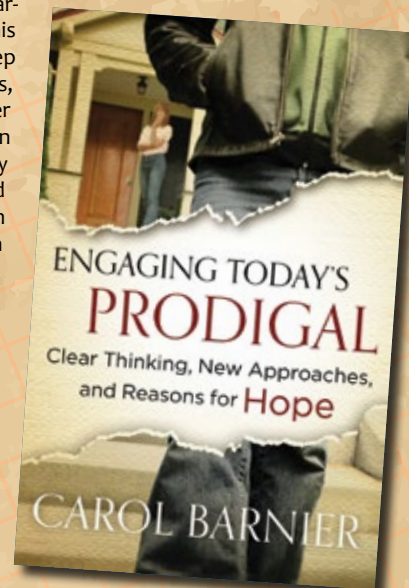
Barnier explains that her book "does not focus on the why" but rather on the "What do we do now?" Her goal is to help parents deal with a prodigal, now that they have one. This book provides neither insight into the mind of a prodigal nor the contributing factors that lead a child to abandon his parents' faith and worldview.

Dealing with the "What do we do now?" question, Barnier delivers her content in three sections. The first addresses seven myths that Barnier clarifies for the reader. In Part Two she expounds on the "Do's and Don'ts" of relating to prodigals. Part Three is titled "Holding Out Hope," in which Barnier shares her own prodigal experience.

A recurring message throughout this book is that children must be held responsible for their own decisions. Barnier reminds parents not to make their children their identities as they struggle through difficulties with a prodigal. She instructs parents to practice healthy boundaries, which will help children understand their growing responsibilities. She encourages parents to improve their relationships with their prodigals by instructing them to realize that they, as parents, are not responsible for their prodigal's behavior.

Other positive messages for parents and the church are found in this book. Barnier reminds parents to keep a vigil of prayer for their prodigals, to be active in the recovery of other prodigal children outside of their own families, to participate in recovery groups within their churches, and to begin sharing their process with others. She encourages the church to teach the Christian worldview to help children understand what they believe and why. She explains that if she had been better instructed in the Christian worldview, she may not have wandered into philosophy and atheism for the answers to her questions.

The book ends with some thoughts from other prodigals and a resource list, which is also available online at CarolBarnier.com.



JUMPING SHIP BY MICHAEL AND DEBI PEARL

"Just remembering we are humans—sons of Adam—ought to humble us."

In their book, *Jumping Ship*, authors and longtime home school speakers Michael and Debi Pearl present with humility solutions to parents struggling with one of the most sorrowful situations of our day: children "jumping ship" to join forces with the world and turn away from all that their Christian parents have sacrificed to instill in their hearts and minds.

The Pearls begin their discussion of the family with a metaphor, which they use throughout the book. They compare the family to a ship with a captain and crew. Their thesis is that "the ship must be going somewhere with a meaningful purpose, otherwise the crew would not tolerate the drudgery of their daily duties." Children must believe they are on the very ship that will best prepare them to be captains of their own ships, going in the direction they believe they must go, or, the Pearls say, they will "jump ship" for a better vessel.

On this family voyage, the Pearls suggest many important truths that must be present: The captain must be a man of integrity in order to garner his crew's respect. He must also be approachable and willing to work harder and serve more diligently than the rest of the family. The ship must sail with purpose. The Pearls suggest giving each child age-appropriate work, with rewards, challenges, and opportunities for failure and success. They encourage parents to give their children respect.

Taking the analogy farther, the Pearls say the captain must maintain morale among his crew. They say parents must begin with themselves because kids can see through hypocrisy: "Get real! Love God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength until the joy of the Lord fills your cup to overflowing. Fall back in love with your spouse . . . and enjoy each other in front of the kids!" The Pearls say the first fruit of revival in our relationships is to work on ourselves and to be the examples we want our children to be.

Jumping Ship is available at Amazon.com, among other places, or at the Pearls' website, NoGreaterJoy.org.



Suzanne and her husband Brian have completed fourteen years of home schooling and have graduated both of their children from home school. They serve in the home school movement as board members of Idaho Coalition of Home Educators. To contact Suzanne with any comments or resources you would like her to review, email her at SReid@iche-idaho.org.





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Training Is Not Just for Kids ✿

OFTEN GET ASKED the same question: “How do you get your children to mind you and do it so cheerfully?”

My reply is always the same: “Be consistent!” No matter what your discipline of choice, being consistent is the real key to success!

In order for our children to understand the boundaries, we create consequences. Consequences are what happen when a boundary is breached. They should happen exactly like you tell them they will—every time. It is the consequence that makes my children want to follow my instructions, and it is my consistency that makes them cheerful about it.

We all have different boundaries and guidelines for our families. Some moms make their children clear the table after dinner; others let the dishes sit around until late at night when everyone is asleep and then go in and clean. Neither way is wrong. We are each unique, and our family limits should be too. The question is, “Do you know what your boundaries are?”

If you tell your child to pick up his clothes, does he know you mean it? Or does he know that he really does not have to because you will tell him again in five minutes, then again with a firmer tone until you yell; then he has to do it? If that is your pattern, then that is the boundary you have set. You have consistently taught him that he gets three warnings and an angry parent before he has to pick up his clothes.

When I realized that was happening in our home, I also realized I could change the boundaries. If I had a line that the kids knew they could not cross—why could I not just move the line? I could just tell them once; then, if they didn’t obey, I would follow through immediately with consequences. *Say what? It can’t be that easy!* Oh, but it is.

Try this: The next time you tell your child to do something, follow the verbal instruction with a consequence. For instance, “Put your shoes on right now, or you will have to miss baseball practice.” (Think it through first. Be sure it’s a consequence which you are willing to follow through with. If you really cannot miss baseball practice, offer something different.) Then, if he doesn’t jump

to put his shoes on—even if he lingers for a few seconds in rebellion to your instruction—he misses practice. Bam. Done.

The sad truth is that if he does not put his shoes on, he doesn’t believe that you will do what you said. That, my friends, is the worst part of being inconsistent. If he does not believe you about the baseball practice, then what else does he not believe? Does he believe you when you tell him how smart he is? Does he believe you when you teach him that math is important? Does he believe you when you tell him Christ died for him?

Tell your child the truth. If you say, “You cannot have any candy at the store,” then mean it. Do not give in to whines and fits. Doing so not only leads to a miserable family life; it teaches your child that you cannot be trusted. I know it seems more complicated than that, but really it’s not. If your child’s cries of injustice have no effect on your decisions, then he will stop crying.

I have seen parents get quite angry and frustrated and blame their whiny, screaming children for the problems. I want to wrap my arms around them all and say, “If he is whining to get what he wants, then he knows it will work. You can gently teach him to stop doing that by telling him no and meaning it—every time.”

Stop the madness!

Being consistent is actually pretty easy. It’s really more about training yourself than training your kids. Instead of yelling from the other room for them to stop fighting, get up immediately and go deal with it. When he argues about not getting his way, be unaffected. Whines do not matter—truth matters. If you teach yourself to follow through with what you say—every time, immediately—your children will fall right in with you.

The best news is that in addition to having a more peaceful, pleasant home, you will build trust with your children. Once you have become consistent with your boundaries and truthful in your follow-through, your children will believe you when you tell them how much they are loved.

Lisa and her husband James live on a family farm outside a little Texas town with their nine kids and a whole herd of animals with which they have no idea what to do. It’s an adventure they never expected, filled with moments of greatness and moments of wondering why no one can remember to put their shoes away. In addition to home schooling and doing laundry, Lisa runs an Etsy shop with her daughters and blogs about it all at ThePenningtonPoint.com.



We all have different boundaries and guidelines for our families.



✿ Lisa Pennington



SHEILA CAMPBELL

WHEN I WAS A YOUNG GIRL growing up in the Texas Panhandle, I spent many late summer afternoons with my brothers, fishing and daydreaming on the banks of a small playa lake near our home. If the fish were not biting, my brothers would often skip rocks across the surface of the water. Each bounce of those stones would send dozens of tiny ripples rolling across that little lake. My rocks usually hit the water with a splash and sank quickly to the bottom, setting larger waves in motion.

As parents we sometimes feel like that stone that hits the surface and plummets quickly to the bottom, unable to skip along the top for even a moment like the others around us. We have all had those days that seem to unravel before they even begin. Sometimes it can feel as though our whole week—or even our whole year—has unraveled, and we wonder what we are even doing. Our children sin, we sin, circumstances beyond our control disrupt our lives, the bottom falls out of our perfect world, and everything seems to come apart at the seams. In desperation we fall to our knees, either mentally or literally, and we pray.

So often a desperate prayer seems to be a last resort as we plead for strength and mercy when all of life seems to be falling apart—but do we stay there on our knees when circumstances do not change and life continues to crumble? Do we stay there when things do change and the sun once more begins to shine? Is prayer still the first place we turn when the sun is shining, when there is money in the bank, and when our children are good and obedient?

When it comes to parenting, most parents quickly realize that the most difficult and the most important aspect of parenting—whether it involves schedules, chores, discipline, or any other aspect of parenting—is consistency. Schedules are easier to keep if they do not change, chores and even lessons are easier to learn if parents are consistent in the way they teach and review, and rules are more apt to be kept if the consequences for breaking them are always the same—every time.

Relationships also require consistency if they are to thrive and flourish, and this is true of our relationship with God. Are we really consistent when it comes to prayer? We may pray at every meal and with our children before they go to bed, but do we consistently pray—or habitually pray? Is there a difference? Of course, earnest, pleading prayer may rightly be the cry of our hearts when our worlds are crumbling, and when all is well we may still pray for our children every day as a matter of habit, but are these the steady prayers that build our relationship with God?

I recently listened to a sermon on prayer by Tim Keller in which he quoted Eugene Peterson's book on the Psalms, *Answering God*. Peterson said, "We have to realize what the Psalms are teaching us about prayer is

that all true prayer pursued far enough results in praise." *Prayer pursued far enough . . .* That phrase seemed to etch itself into my spirit, and I have thought long and hard about it. I wonder how often I truly pursue prayer into praise. My heart testifies to the truth that when we praise our heavy hearts are lightened, our anxieties exchanged for peace, our priorities redirected, and our hearts expanded to make room for joy, contentment, and tranquility. Praise deepens our relationships with God and with others. Praise promotes change regardless of our circumstances.

Paul reminds us in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 to "pray without ceasing." I think Steven Curtis Chapman best describes the continual pursuit of prayer in his song "Let Us Pray" as he sings, "Everywhere and every way, every moment of the day, it is the right time." I think "everywhere and every way" may be an accurate description of continual prayer. We need to—and should—pray those pleading cries for help when our world is broken. We need those repentant, tearful prayers for grace when we have stumbled; we need to speak those anxious prayers for direction when we are lost and uncertain; we need to spend time on our knees in intercessory prayer for our children, family, and friends—and the Lord is still honored when we remember Him before we eat and sleep.

As home school parents, we are the first and most influential examples our children have of a Christian walk, and although they may not often see us pray, our prayer lives flow out from our hearts in all directions like ripples on a pond. They are the waves that lengthen and broaden our lives when we are sinking, and they are the ripples that dance in all directions when we are skipping. So let us pray without ceasing, everywhere and every way; and in the midst of all these prayers, I hope we remember Peterson's words and pursue our prayers into praise. Praise promotes peace, and all of us, especially busy home school moms who continually juggle the difficulties and pleasures of educating their children, need that peace that passes all understanding. A heart that continually communes with God in prayer, pursuing it to praise, will be like those stones that skip joyfully across the top, seeming to defy the fact that they are merely rocks.

Sheila Campbell began home schooling in 1991 and continued home schooling as a single parent after the death of her husband in 2001. She was also the parent of a special needs child, whom she cared for at home until his death in 2004. Now that her children have all graduated, Sheila pursues her writing, after years of being a valued member of the THSC staff. She resides in Hale Center and invites you to visit her blog at PausingToPraise.com.



**Relationships also
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true of our relationship
with God.**



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October 18-20, 2013	Denton	State Leadership Conference	Texas Home School Coalition (THSC)	THSC.org/SLC



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