

## **The Universal Textbook -part 1**

*-by Jo-Ann Pienaar, (former Area 4 Representative)*

Why are we home schooling our children? Is it in order to provide a more excellent education? Is it to avail our families of a "Christian" start to the day? Although laudable, both of these reasons, as pointed out by Ken Ham, Executive Director of Answers in Genesis, are inadequate in fulfilling the mandate which God gave to parents in Deuteronomy 6:4-9. We are to instil in our children a Godly, Biblical world-view. Ken Ham calls it, "putting on Biblical glasses", through which we are to view all of life.

We know the Bible is the inspired Word of God. we teach its stories long before our children are able to read or respond to the message of salvation. As Christian we highly esteem each Word... or do we?

As educators, what we admire and adore is what our children will come to cherish. We read reams of material yearly; various novels and curricula are consumed in our quest to induce a life-long love of learning. But, in this process of teaching and learning, reading, writing, reasoning and thinking, let us not forget from whence our wisdom comes. Firstly, wisdom comes from fearing the Lord (Prov. 1:7). The Scriptures are His textbook for us. We need to use it in order to find the mind and attitude of Christ in all our learning. Let us not merely attach a few minutes of Bible story to the beginning of our school day, and expect it will constitute a Christian education.

The Bible, the Textbook for our lives, should be constantly referred to for confirmation of everything else we teach our children. It must be seen as the ultimate textbook, the highest and final word in all matters. Let us therefore ensure that by the time our children leave home, they will know this Book as a loving companion, indispensable to life after graduation. We need to have it read through, in its entirety, a few times with them, before they graduate. Revealing to them how God's wisdom is THE answer to the conflicts and questions of life.

Secondly, it is vital that we teach our children to defend their faith. They need to be able to give a reason for why they believe (2 Tim. 2:15). Possibly less than 6% of Canadians are born-again believers -the balance of the population need a ready answer. If we are asked about our faith, are we ready to answer - are our children? We should equip our children to answer effectively. This, in turn, will increase their faith at a time when they will be more vulnerable to questions themselves -those pre-adult years. They will need the answers as much for themselves as for others. We must anticipate the exploration of their coming independence and expect them to flex their mental muscles in probing all we have taught them. They will want to know that faith and hope rest with someone greater than Mom and Dad.

Let us not neglect the discipleship of our children. Read our God-given textbook -the Bible, while we are still able to influence them. Should our Bibles be taken from us, how much of it have we hidden in our hearts? Will we still be able to recite passages to ourselves and others? The world is increasingly more hostile towards Jesus and His followers. That means we all need a firmer conviction of our faith than what is afforded by simple outward conformity to "Christian norms".

In the appendix to his experiences at sea, a biography entitled, "Two Years Before the Mast", Richard Henry Dana Jr. says of the education of sailors, (and I here apply it to the education of our children), "... the cultivation of the intellect, and the spread of what is commonly called useful knowledge. while religious instruction is neglected, is little else than changing an ignorant sinner into an

intelligent and powerful one. That sailor upon whom, of all others, the preaching of the Cross is least likely to have effect, is the one whose understanding has been cultivated, while his heart has been left to its own devices. I fully believe that those efforts which have their end in the intellectual cultivation of the sailor; in giving him scientific knowledge; putting it in his power to read everything, without securing, first of all, a right heart which shall guide him in judgement, in giving him political information, and interesting him in newspapers; -an end in the furtherance of which he is exhibited at ladies' fairs and public meetings, and complimented for his gallantry and generosity, -are all doing a harm which the labors of many faithful men cannot undo."

Will we be guilty of cultivating our children's understanding whilst neglecting the training of their hearts? Study the Scriptures. Use the Bible as your textbook. Read it in its entirety, over time, asking the Lord to give us His wisdom and understanding in order that we may teach others.

Christian home schooling? Yes, we have a Textbook that is appropriate for all ages, all backgrounds, all families. God has given us the curriculum -let us not fail this test.

The Bible is the only book God wrote and commands us to study - let's teach our children to love it for life!

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