Bonded Together

#17

Bonded Together

"…that their hearts may be encouraged, knit together in love…" Colossians 2:2
Issue #17, February 2003

What Planet Is Your Treasure On?

"But it's a molded piece of plastic!" exclaims the frustrated mother after breaking up yet another near death squabble between two children over a toy. The perplexity of the matter is that there are hundreds of other molded pieces of plastic, or wood, or metal lying around to choose from. Why is this particular one so special that it's worth laming your sibling over. The truth of the matter is that it's not just plastic, is it? It's a symbol and it represents what is important to that child at that particular moment in time. Disney's current animated feature "Treasure Planet" does a good job of conveying that wealth is only a collection of pieces of "stuff", just "stuff". Your heart is where your treasure is. Is it in molded pieces of plastic? Be it that Big People toys are much larger and usually involve more chrome or more space to store. Is the pursuit of things getting in the way of doing what God has called you to do? Can you effectively minister with all that stuff? Can you be open to welcoming however many children God wants to bless you with or are you hooked on your "stuff" and the pursuit and management of more of it? It's saddening to hear Christians say they are limiting their family so they can more effectively "serve God" and then they spend the extra resources on "stuff". I have my own personal "stuff" problem that I'm trying to overcome. Lord willing, by the time I'm 60 I will have finished off all my ebay sales ☺. Why do we and our children place such a high value on things that don't matter eternally? We would do well to continually keep in mind Matthew 6:19-21 as we evaluate what stays and what goes and what comes into our house;

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Above Rubies Family Camp & Mother's Retreat August 22-24, 2003 in Pine Valley, California

Come join us this year as we enjoy the fellowship of other families and receive Biblical teaching and encouragement from Colin and Nancy Campbell. Space is limited so register today and take advantage of our flexible payment options to reserve your room. There is a good possibility that we will be offering a session with an Institute for Creation Research staff member for children and their parents to enjoy on Saturday afternoon. Contact us today for more information.

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On the Cover: Morgan Evans models "day wear" at the Northern California Above Rubies Family Camp in September 2002. Nights were in the 30's and it rained Saturday afternoon for an hour. The woods and camp were beautiful in spite of the cold weather.

Looking Back at 2002 and Ahead to the future

By Trish Evans

Southern California Family Camp

"…it was SO encouraging to get together with like minded people! It had been so long since we'd even been around anyone else with a baby..."

"…It has been agreed, between (two of the other moms attending) and myself that we were fertilized at the retreat with Spiritual Miracle Grow!! It seems to all of us that the retreat happened a long time ago with the amount of growth the Lord is encouraging. My attitude toward my calling as wife and mother is more clear and I am able to keep my spirit filled all day. The Lord has been so faithful…"

These quotes from moms after the Northern California retreat continues to drive our desire to forge forward with this endeavor. We have been awed at every retreat of just how well God carries the weekend and the 2002 retreats were no exception. Many families were blessed, encouraged and challenged. We look forward to being part of this again in 2003. We were pleased with the amount of families that came this year, but likewise challenged over the group dynamics.

At Pine Valley we experimented with a new game we'll call for the sake of argument, the children shuffle. This game involves trying to please everyone (first mistake right there) by offering child care to those that desired it, provided by a couple pre-teen and early teen girls in another room a reasonable walk from the main meeting room. The first challenge is to transfer all these small children across a parking lot in the dark without losing any of them.

If this is successfully managed, then you enter The Zone. This is the name of the actual atmosphere of the room with lots of small children without their parents & a few girls and one adult trying to entertain them and keep order. Right off the bat we had a vicious sibling squabble that left both parties in inconsolable tears. Meanwhile, a cute little toddler boy was greeting all the other toddlers by giving them a hug and a bite or a punch to go along with it. The team "in charge" had to decide who was going to help the siblings while "The Adult" dealt with the toddler.

Now how do you creatively and lovingly discipline someone else's child who you've never met before in a way that would be honoring to the parents unknown wishes of how to deal with such a problem? Yep, that's right, I didn't know the answer, either. I continued to flounder along trying to distract him, derail him when he approached another child and redirect him to a less dangerous activity in a room without toys (these were all in the main meeting room for the children who hadn't been removed from the assembly).

Usually Gary & I try to be in the sessions, or at least within earshot in as much as possible while taking care of our own children, so that we are available to the other families to field questions or concerns. This time, however, we were out of the meetings most of the time while we vainly attempted this childcare thing. In the end, it didn't seem that we met the needs of anyone fully by this arrangement. There was still noise in the meeting room. At both retreats it seemed that just as Colin or Nancy was getting to an important point in a message they were giving, the decibel level of the children would suddenly crank up. Coincidence?

We are prayerfully considering how God would have us handle this issue in the future. We have some ideas and hope that you will all lift us up as we strive to improve in this. We realize that some moms and families do not wish to come because they prefer to be in a quieter setting so they can hear the instruction. Likewise, we are committed to families coming to the retreats together and staying together as God has laid a conviction on our hearts to conduct assemblies with the entire family present and involved.

"Everything that we are going to receive and to learn about from Collin and Nancy is for the whole family. The Fathers get lots by watching the moms and the Moms get lots by observing their husbands seeking the Lord for the family. The children learn that their parents value them, God's word, and family as a whole. None of this can be harmful or bad for anyone. Yes, sometimes a little inconvenient and tiring but hey life is like this most of the time. You might as well learn to have a few coping skills while you're at this thing called family. Which, I might add, you learn at the retreat/camp as well…

"I have to say I agree with Trish and Gary. We want to unite the family not just pour into Mom and let Dad wing it. That is the problem with family already. Moms get a really great truth, and Dad doesn't catch it the same way. He thinks she is crazy, and then comes division. Over a truth even. I think that the vision is right on and the Lord is blessing it big time. Combining the two, Mothers/family is a great thing. It lets the mothers see and long for the connectedness (is that a word)? that family together really is. Thick -n- thin, working together no matter what is being received or given…" ***Karen Trejo***

"Rick and I look forward to the family retreats for just the reason you mentioned. My husband is able to learn from another man, not hear what happened from me. This is the proper order of things. Also, one of Rick's biggest reasons for going is that the children make friends from families of like mind. We have two older girls who will eventually need to be in the proper company to meet their future husbands, if God wills!

"The only complaint that I can think of at the moment has to do with the disturbances while people are up front. I have always had a strong sense of respect for other people speaking; "do unto others as you would have them do unto you". I believe even little ones can be taught to at least tone it down a few decibels when we are giving our attention up front-if not, out they go.

"Unfortunately, there are many adults who have not been raised this way and are not proper examples. I just think it is the utmost of disrespect to talk while someone else is talking and we make an effort to teach this to our children at the meal table and elsewhere. If the baby continues to sing, talk loudly or fuss after a warning when Daddy is talking, reading to us, etc. she goes to her bed. Don't get me wrong. We definitely believe in family worship and in the concepts you put forth for the family retreats, but for this to work it all must be done decently and in order, so to speak. Meaning children need to learn some self control and parents need to be diligent even if it means missing something. We certainly cannot expect complete silence from a such a crowd of parents and children, but I think if anyone's child makes more than a couple squawks that are obviously not going to be stopped, they should have the courtesy to remove the child until he/she gains control. So there's my beef.....!" ***Terri Harrison***

Northern California Family Camp

The Northern California retreat was not totally without some hitches that added to the excitement of the weekend. After having a smooth trip north to Pinecrest for our family, getting settled in and everything set up we were ready for the fun. The Campbell's flight was late and, knowing they'd miss dinner, the family bringing them from Sacramento (two hours away) stopped at a restaurant first. They ended up arriving at 9 that might. Gary stepped up to the plate and pinch hit for the evening message.

One mom's baby started, how does one politely say it, vomiting shortly after arrival. The camp directors graciously put her and her children in the upstairs of their house during the duration of their flu until it was safe for her to make an escape home. Unfortunately, though, she missed the whole retreat.

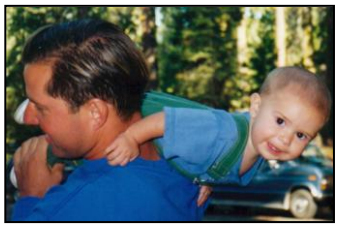
The Dixon family

Overall, though, it went great. While Gary and the boys were packing up, I was having an involved talk with another family about some serious stuff. But Gary pulled up with the boys and started honking because we needed to get to Sacramento to visit family so I had to cut the conversation short. I did not have peace about not finishing the conversation. As God would have it we ended up being at the Right place at the Right time the next day as we ran into this family in one of the hundreds of restaurants in Sacramento and we ended up talking another three hours! Coincidence? Hardly.

Turns out another two of the families that had been at the retreat ran into each other at a town later on the way home and they were able to encourage each other and discuss issues on their heart.

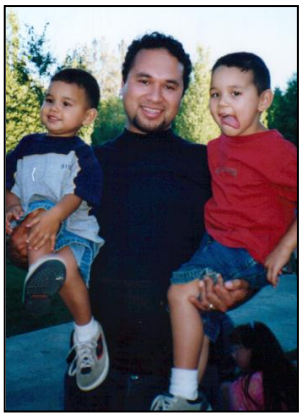
So, even though there are challenges, we know that God is able to direct us and help us all work together to continue to make these retreats a great place for families to come and be encouraged and uplifted. We hope to see you all there in August! *~Trish*

Guy Bauman instructing his children



Chris Brackett & son, Joshua

The Stein family worshipping



Michael Cortes with two of his sons

The Diary of a would-be retreat planner

By Robin LeClair

September 2001: I receive my first Above Rubies Magazine. A sweet woman whom I do not know had sent me several back issues. I drink in each one as if it was quenching a thirst long unfulfilled. God has touched my heart and life! I so desire to find a local woman's retreat, but there are none in my area. I start praying about helping someone put on a retreat. My husband Mike is supportive. Why am I thinking of this? I have never even been to an Above Rubies Retreat. Maybe I am crazy.

October 2001: My first phone call to Trish Evans -- what a blast! Her enthusiasm and encouragement for planning retreats is contagious and before I know it, I'm hooked.

I continue to seek the Lord for His direction and pray for His grace upon this endeavor.

November 2001: I sign a contract with Black Lake Bible Camp. Yippee! We are on our way. Nancy is scheduled to come and speak to us September 20-22, 2002.

"Oh Lord, bless and prosper the work of our hands. I ask you to send many woman who need to hear this message."

December 2001: A friend of a friend has offered to design the retreat brochures. Another lady has volunteered to print them in color for a very minimal cost. Wow, thank you Lord!

I make our camp reservations for 20 ladies, but am praying for many more than that.

January 2002: I am talking to Trish a lot and trying to get an idea of what I should be working on next.

Someone has told me to contact Sharon Hockenbury, a woman who has helped with a few retreats and will be a good resource. I'm praying, praying, praying!

The brochures still not done and I am feeling that much prayer is needed to bring this together – I am feeling the spiritual warfare.

February 2002: I meet Sharon for the first time on February 14th and love her immediately, maybe because it's Valentines Day (ha ha). She and a friend will lead worship for the retreat. Praise the Lord! She has also agreed to help me with the planning. My friends Sandy and Joyce have also decided to help. Thank you Lord for answered prayer.

March 2002: Praise God, the brochures are finished and they are beautiful! We print 350 of them and have additional brochures from the camp to fit inside. I am so excited to get them out because I have spoken with many ladies lately that are interested in coming. Oh Lord, I hear the hunger for the truth in their voices and I can relate. Fill us up Lord Jesus with more of you so that we can be life-givers to our families.

April 2002: Oh, I wish the retreat were a week away. I am so anxious for September to get here.

We are working on some gift ideas for the ladies. Sandy is going to make homemade goats milk soap. It is so kind of her and it will make a nice gift for the ladies.

Right now I am getting a lot of requests for 20-25 brochures at a time. Oh Lord, you are so good to me. I feel so weak and incapable, but you are mighty and in that I rest.

Trish sent me a retreat packet filled with several of Nancy's poems and uplifting writings. We will start putting them together soon. I will hold off printing until we have a good idea how many ladies are attending.

May 2002: Yippee! The first signup -- and she paid in full on the spot! It does my heart good to hold this first registration in my hand.☺

I'm praying for ladies out there whom I don't even know, but who God knows and will send.

I am enjoying getting to know a dear sister in Christ who wants to attend the retreat and also to help with collecting door prizes to give away at the retreat. She has such a heart for the Lord.

June 2002: We are getting more inquirers. Sharon and I hold a garage sale for two days to raise money for sponsorships. The hand of the Lord is upon us and we make $500 dollars and hand out many Above Rubies magazines.

I speak with Nancy this week and she asks me how many signups we have. I tell her nine so far and that I am hoping for around 30-40 ladies. Her response is, "Lets believe God for 80—100 ladies." I almost choke, and sort of giggle. "Oh, ok sure. I'll pass the word on." Oh Lord, help my unbelief. I need to trust you to bring them in.

July 2002: Lots of things are happening now. Sandy brings the gift soaps to me and they are perfect. She also offers to help finish all the printing for the handout packets. This is a big weight off my shoulders. We continue to send out brochures daily and I need to start making more copies from home.

My daughter and daughter-in-law will be coming with me. Oh, praise the Lord! I am so happy to be able to have them with me. Lisa my daughter-in-law will be teaching a scrap booking class during our Saturday break.

August 2002: We are receiving many requests for sponsorship. This has been so heavy on my heart from the beginning. Two families so far have sent funds to help a lady attend. What generosity!

Sandy and Sharon are taking over the phone calls for me since we are busy with out-of-town family for the next few weeks. I lay awake many nights praying, thinking and organizing for this big event. My cry to the Lord is continually, "bring them in, oh Lord."

September 2002: The days are filled to the brim with many tasks and much excitement. The phone rings continually and I really don't mind. My heart is so drawn to these ladies. I am calling Trish daily at this point. I thank the Lord for her support.

The number of registrants continues to rise and we are blessedly overflowing out of the campground and into several nearby hotels. We are busy gathering table clothes, decorations, door prizes and useful items for all the little ones.

Surprise, Colin is now coming with Nancy! I am overwhelmed with wonder. It has been on my heart to have Colin come since we are having approximately 12 husbands coming with their wives. I mention this to Trish and she says, "Go for it!" That is just what I need to hear.

Friday, September 20, 2002: The big day is here and I am in awe of all that GOD has done!!! We will have around 100 women, 15 men, 18 teen girls and close to 30 babies. That evening registration is complete chaos and keeps me running hither and thither.

I meet Nancy and Colin and their smiles and exuberance are energizing. People are everywhere and I wish I could be omnipresent. ☺

Saturday, September 21, 2002: The worship is heavenly and Nancy's messages are uplifting and challenging. I personally hear very little as I am so distracted by the care of my and others little ones. But I don't mind. I am here and the blessing of the Lord's presence is filling me up. I so enjoy looking across the sea of faces lit up with the wonder of God's truth, their hungry souls soaking up each morsel.

The evening prayer time is incredible and Nancy's love for all these women shine through. Many women are touched in a powerful way.

Sunday, September 22, 2002: This morning during the special music there is hardly a dry eye. You can just feel the presence of the Spirit moving on hearts. A dear friend signs (sign language) the song *I surrender all*. It is divinely inspired.

As the retreat comes to a close, the women can hardly tear apart from each other. We say many goodbyes and share many hugs.

As I pack the last items and prepare to leave, I looked around the empty room. These walls have held the prospects of many changes yet to come, heard our voices raised to the Lord, resounded with the truths Nancy shared from God's word and received many a tear fallen to the floor. I shut off the lights and as I turn to go I breathe, "Thank you Lord. Complete the work you have begun this weekend".

Author's note: I want to thank Gary and Trish for ALL the help, support and LONG conversations with me to make this happen. I believe with all my heart that the success of this retreat was mainly due to the ground breaking and foundation laying they did here two years ago by bringing the first Above Rubies Retreat to Washington. Their hearts desire is to bring this message to families throughout the West Coast.

Shuffling, Stumbling, Running and Walking in Obedience

By Karen Trejo

Hi guys and gals, Karen Trejo here with a message of hope…Hopefully ☺. I am a funny person to write this because I'm the one who always plans ahead and loves organization and order. The Lord is in the very long process of teaching me that His ways are not my ways and that His thoughts are not my thoughts. Thank you Lord for being so patient with me. If I was trying to teach me this concept I would have given up years ago and told everyone I knew that it was a lost cause. I'm thankful that Jesus sees me as a more than just cause and to keep fighting for me to get it.

Right after the 2001 retreat we came home to a year filled with; frustration, financial disaster, and family headache one after another. Our marriage was also not holding up in all the fall out so we were no help or support for each other. It was about 5 months until the next retreat, and Mark was already saying "we are not going! What do we think we are doing having all these children, and the house falling down and losing my job....."The list went on and on. The warfare was on for retreat 2002 and we were right in the middle of it, and didn't really know it. I could hear the Lord so faintly reminding me. "Be obedient Karen" Stay true to what you know, not what you feel." Okay Lord I would say, but what about.....? He is so kind and patient. He would just keep saying ."Keep getting up and be obedient." Well,.... The one thing I KNEW was that we both heard God say to go to the retreats and be apart of them, "lead my families in worship to the throne room so I can speak truth to them" God would say. So I had to stay focused on that even though my mind and heart were aching with despair over the "life stuff "that didn't seem to be working out.

In that year we had our washer and dryer go out. We were/are having foundation problems in our kitchen that is causing the floor to rot out and sag in front of our kitchen sink. Mark lost his favorite dog to what ever disease we don't know. Mark was laid off his job. Mark was in a serious car accident. Our two year old started having seizures that seemed to be manifesting out of no where. Mark's aunt got sick and died with in one month.(He was pretty close to her)Then our refrigerator decided to go out along with the hot water heater as well.(I'm sure I have left out something)

Mark sat down with me one night to tell me that the roof is caving in, in three places and that we just didn't have the money to go to California this year. We would have to spend the money on the roof to repair it or replace it.

I just sat there and cried. I was angry at God for putting me in a situation that was impossible. I was to be obedient and encourage my husband that we should go no matter what because that was what the Lord had told us to do. That it would be a witness somehow to the families that go and that our children would know their value even more as we trust God and be obedient. Yeah Right! He is really gonna fall for that one! Everything is saying we should not go and that if we were wise we would stay and fix our house and be safe. Someone told me a long time ago. God is wise and good, but not safe. That's because what we think is safe is sometimes disobedience to the Lord.

Well, we called Trish and Gary and they gave some encouraging words and lots of prayer over the months to come.(I'm sure they thought we were mental) (WE WERE!)

Somehow we just kept walking toward the date of the retreat with the knowing in us that we would go. No money, and with the car needing some tune up type things we plodded on.

God was good to keep us with visions and dreams of the families in worship at the retreat. We kept our eyes off our own situation by praying for others and for Collin-n- Nancy. I had tooth pain two days before leaving for California and it was so bad that I had to go in to the dentist. The day before we left I went in for a root canal complete with headache and being pregnant on top of it. I love being pregnant but that also means no pain meds or antibiotics during first trimester. We ended up doing herbal remedies and it was fine, but still a root canal 12 hours before departure? Jeeze what next?

We would intercede for Gary and Trish and before you knew it, it was time to leave for California. So with the bare min. for gas and food we left on our 14-hour trek to California. The enemy was not done sifting us though. Just as we were about 20 min. outside Flagstaff the battery light

was doing funny things. I told myself its nothing just a funny gage problem. Mark was concerned. and was silent for a while longer until the car started pulling and lurching every now and then. I thought OH NO! We have come this far and now this? A pretty new car, and these problems Lord? Oh God can you just give us a small break? "No not yet," came the answer. What?

Well, we rode into Flagstaff at a very slow pace and the car just quit right outside a Walmart parking lot.

Mark gets out and slams the door and yells at the top of his lungs ."I'm sure glad we agreed to be obedient to God .Lets have 10 more children and drive to Alaska!" Well, we both collected our cool and began to pray. Then we called Gary-n- Trish so that they could pray as well. Then we called Mark's dad and asked if he could float us the money until Friday (Mark's payday) so we could fix the car. We thought we would just have to figure out how to make the mortgage when we get home. "So much for obedience I thought." I just put my family into more debt and my husband into more distress."

We got the car to a place, with a lot of pushing, to fix it and we were finally on our way again.

We spent two stress filled days with Mark's parents and then it was retreat time. Mark had stored all the music for the retreat on disk so that when it was time to go he would just pop it in and make the copies. NOOOOOOO that would not happen. All the music was gone when Mark went to get it off disk. His dad had erased everything! AAAHHHHH!!!!!!!! Would this stuff never end! On top of it I had to rub it in by saying," You know this could have all been done at home and we would have it now and not have to worry! So then we were fighting. Great job Karen.

Well, needless to say we did get to the retreat. Late, but we got there.

The second day we were there, God did this huge thing. A couple came up to us and wanted to talk. The husband began by saying that the Lord was speaking to him about us..... He ended by saying that He had to out of obedience give us some money that God had told him to give. The Lord told him a thousand dollars. Then the Lord said "give them $100.00 per child on top of that. I just sat there so overwhelmed and blessed beyond what I could have imagined. My eyes began to fill with tears of gratitude and of thanksgiving. I was so humbled. I could have never expected such a gift to come our way. The Lord always goes above and beyond what we think a blessing would be.

Needless to say we could afford to pay the mortgage, and the car was fixed without debt. The children were able to have fun the rest of the trip by going to an amusement park, and we had enough to get home on too. God had paid for the whole trip, and the car too. How did this happen?

I began praying one night after we were home and my precious father reminded me that he was always with us and that the choice to obey made ALL the difference to him. He loves it when we trust him and obey him. His light shines brighter and the kingdom is advanced a little more when we obey. I said in my heart I didn't obey with a good attitude. He said back, now just think what might have been if you did? Obedience is a funny thing. It looks so stupid to those who do not know God's unfailing love. It looks so unwise to the people who plan and love order, and make organization their idol.

I know God doesn't tell us to do things outside his Word or things that are unwise or unreal to his Kingdom. That is why we need to be in good company. We need to be surrounded by people who know the Lord, people who know the Word, people who love us and are for us. Obedience is contagious too, If you live a little out, someone always ends up catching it.

I want to challenge each one of you families. Be obedient. know his truth and walk in his obedience and his blessings will come. Others will know him more by what you choose. Pick one family that doesn't know God's truth about letting him plan. Love them and invite them to the retreat for 2003. Pay for them even. It will bless you way more than you will ever know.

The financial blessing we received was an enormous gift and so huge that we were awe struck for a couple weeks after. But since then Mark and I have decided that we want to bless someone in the same way. So we have chosen a family to give to. We are so excited and having so much fun with it too. I know it will be the biggest blessing yet to our family.

Okay the ball is in your court. What will you do? Look at all the obstacles in your way? Or will you take the road less traveled? See Ya at the retreat and I hope to see lots of new families, too! Love ya'll, In His Service, Karen Trejo

Lambs Sent from on High

We are so blessed by God! Havilah Marie Lennick was born July 29th, 2002 at 4:15 pm at home. She is joyfully welcomed by her papa & mama (Brent & Jeaneen, *on right*) and sister Grace, 16 mos. She weighed 8 # 10 oz and was 18" long.

Isaac Joseph Weatherly was born to Mike and Brenda *(on left)* on Aug. 8, 2002., weighing 7 lbs. 13 oz. and is being doted on by siblings, Andy, Tiffany, and Kaylie

Taylyn Carylon Hockenbury was born August 19, 2002 at 10:06 PM and weighed 7 lbs 10 oz, 20 in long. Sharon and Doug and Toby, Tori, (Trey, with the cloud of witnesses) Tasby, Taryn, Tevis, Tenille, and Trajen .

We have been so blessed with the arrival of our son Jacob Eli Roberts. He was born September 2, 2002 (Labor Day!) at 1:40am. It was an arduous night for us all. Daniel and Victoria are beside themselves with the joy of another sibling. Jacob IS truly a gift to them. Now we are resting in the beauty of new life. Jacob weighs 7lbs is 21 inches long and is perfectly formed. Glory to God for bringing this child forth. Ed *(pictured at right)* and Adrienne

Robert Bruce McCall III was born on September 23rd at 11:06 a.m. at home. He weighed a comfortable nine pounds, seven ounces. He was born on the third day of the biblical feast of Sukkot (Tabernacles) and the first day of Autumn. Most importantly he was born at the exact moment ordained for him by God. He joins parents, Rob and Katie, and big sister, Christiana-2.

Jeremiah Joseph Crowley was born on October 18, 2002 at 10:38 am. He was 9 pounds 9 ounces and 21 1/4 inches. We are happy he is here and are excited to have another boy in our home to join Amanda-15, Corinne-14, Kevin-12, Ryan-10, Sean-8, Daniel-6, Abigail-4, Thomas-2. Side note, Jeremiah is our ninth child and weighed 9# 9 ounces...cool huh?) Kevin and Jennifer Crowley

Elisheva Faith Harrison entered the scene on November 20, 2002 at home with Daddy delivering her, and doing a great job mom adds. She was 8 lbs. 5 ounces and 19 inches long. She is welcomed by Rebecca-14, Miriam-12, David-10, Nathan-6, Abigail-4, Tikvah-2

Thomas Benjamin Hann was born Tuesday Nov.19th at 5:12 p.m. He weighed 7lb 14oz, 19 inches long. He joins happy parents, Ritchey and Keri and Ashley 16, David 13, Brandon 11, Johnathan 9, Katie 6, Sarah 4, Madison 3, Makayla 3, Rebecca 20 mos.

Ronald Lee "Trey" Koetsier III

was born on November 20, 2002 at 8:49 am, weighing 7 lbs. 14 oz. and was 19 ½" long. He joins big brother, Dylan-2, and parents, Ronald and Amber

Daniel Luke Yardley entered the

world on December 10, 2002 at 11:05 PM weighing in at 10 pounds even and 21.5" long. He was welcomed by parents, Rob and Linda, along with Sarah–19, Rachel–17, David-13, Hannah-10, Esther-6, Jonathan–4

Ethan McCloud Wolfgang Bowser was born at 5:09

AM on Wednesday November 27, 2002. He weighs 7.3 lbs and is 19.5 inches tall. Lance and Heather's other children are: Briar 10, Katie 8, Jacob 7, Molly 5, Emma 3 ¾, Nathan 22 mos.

The Bowser Family at the Northern California retreat

In the Center of God's Will

By Katie McCall

I went to bed early on the 22nd, right after dinner, almost as if I knew labor would begin that night. I awoke to contractions at 9:30 pm. I laid in bed, hoping they would not go away, as they had three times earlier that week. They continued, but were irregular and very light until nearly midnight. My husband, Rob, was up studying and I finally asked him to alert the entourage of women who had signed up to help usher in our newest blessing. My friend Cindy arrived first, followed by the three midwives, my mother and my friend Kim. Kim and Cindy also brought their toddlers, so our little condo was filled with expectant and prayerful hearts.

We had three midwives involved because each had a different role. Our primary midwife, Del, is a Christian lay midwife who I respect very much. She has ten children of her own and had a lot of wisdom for us. Our second midwife was a licensed midwife named Geeta, who is also and MD. She moved to this country from India, where she had been employed as an obstetrician. When she arrived in the US she decided to license herself only as a midwife, so she could attend some births while making the running of her crisis pregnancy center, Living Well Medical Clinic, her primary focus. We asked her to come so that we would have a good pair of "sewing hands" in case I tore again like I had with our first. The last midwife, Sue, was in training and came to help out. We had never met her before, but her gentle touch was truly a blessing.

The very idea of a homebirth was originally a bit unsettling to me. I was raised in a very medical family. My grandfather was a well-respected family physician and general surgeon. My grandmother was a pediatric nurse. Since my father died when I was young, my mother, sister and I spent several years living with my grandparents and several more in a house that was literally around the corner from them. We spent a lot of time with my grandparent's friends, also doctors, as well as lots of time in my grandpa's medical office and looking at medical books and magazines. My grandfather freely spoke of his surgeries at the dinner table which caused us to acquire strong stomachs. I grew up expecting medicine to be the solution to every bodily ailment.

When I had my first child, my husband and I went to Kaiser hospital to deliver her. There was never a doubt in my mind that a hospital is where babies are born. Albeit, we had taken Bradley Method childbirth classes and wanted to birth our baby as naturally as possible, my thinking was that this was just the safest "medical" thing to do. My family was all in an uproar over the fact that Kaiser used certified nurse midwives to deliver at normal labors instead of an obstetrician.

I narrowly escaped being induced and was able to have the natural, vaginal birth I wanted. However, I was saddened at all the unnecessary interventions that were used in a perfectly healthy, full-term labor. I was told to stay in bed (my blood pressure was *slightly* elevated), I was on an IV because I was told I could not keep water down (I threw up in late labor), I was told to push hard and long, even when I felt I didn't need to and tore severely. The midwife also pulled on the cord to deliver the placenta. I ended up being stitched up and had an allergic reaction to the stitches. In all it was eight weeks before I could sit straight or even begin to think of being intimate with my husband.

I was even more upset about the amount of prodding that was done to my very healthy, eight pound, eleven ounce baby girl. She was given eye drops, a vitamin K shot, taken from me nearly right after birth because she was "too cold." She passed a little meconium at birth and was subjected to numerous tubes down her throat and nose. She was left in a warmer for a long while even after we were taken to my recovery room. She was then bathed, much to her dismay, and returned to the warmer for a while. All this to welcome her to the outside world! She was a day old before she latched on to breastfeed.

In the recovery room every nurse made her opinions known. One nurse would take my baby's socks off and tell me they were cutting off the circulation to her feet. The nurse on the next shift would put them back on, telling me to keep her feet warm. As a new mother I was completely overwhelmed. Some told me to let her sleep with me while others told me that I needed to lay her in the bassinet or she would suffocate next to me.

After we brought our daughter home, my husband and I went through the process of becoming certified Bradley Method instructors. We were amazed by the information we learned and my husband resolved to never again allow a natural, normal, healthy labor be attended the way it was with our first. I was likewise resolved, but not quite so ready to see this ideal carried out. I knew it would mean delivering out of a hospital.

Fortunately, I was not given an option. My husband told me that as long as my next pregnancy was normal, we would have the baby at home. Once I became pregnant again, I went through the process of finding a midwife, thinking I would just use her for prenatal care since *surely* something would pop up during the pregnancy, requiring my baby to be delivered at the hospital. I was teaching homebirth students in my Bradley classes and telling people at the same time that we were going to "try" to give birth at home "as long as everything" was "normal." I'm so glad my students were not affected by my doubts.

> *Should all babies be born at home? Perhaps not. However, all babies should be born in the place designed and ordained for them. God has placed my husband over me as my head. Through submitting to him I was able to discover this place in the center of God's will.*

Basically, my thinking was, "maybe it's not God's will for me to plan a home birth."

One day, just about a month before I was due, it dawned on me. That old verse from Ephesians 5 echoed through my heart that wives are to submit to their husbands as unto the Lord. But in this? How could a man possibly know where the best place was to deliver a baby? I wrestled and yet the thought kept crossing my mind: could it be that God was taking the responsibility of my baby's birth off of my shoulders? Yes. God had called me to birth at home because my husband had called me to birth at home. This was such a relief. I was free to just focus on my labor and my husband was free to hear from God.

And here I was, six days "overdue," laboring in the most comfortable place imaginable, my own bedroom. My labor lasted for 11 hours (just two hours longer than with my daughter). The labor was unusual in that it never really followed any sort of pattern. The contractions slowed down if I walked and were harder and closer together when I would lie on my right side. At one point the contractions even stopped for about twenty

minutes, and didn't pick up any strength or regularity for an hour. Had I been at the hospital I would have surely been given Pitocin.

Finally, I began to feel that wonderful urge to push. Del suggested I go to the bathroom if I could, to empty my bladder before I pushed the baby out. I don't think I could have accomplished this in a hospital, where I felt sick and disabled. However, at home I found the energy to get up and walk to the bathroom, fully dilated. After all, this was a normal part of life, and I was at home and around the people I loved. By the glorious plan of God, my water broke on the toilet! No mess to clean up!

By the time I made it back to the bed I was totally bearing down. I pushed for twenty minutes. I pushed when I felt like it and I stopped when I felt too much burning. Del and Sue poured half a bottle of olive oil on my baby's head as it crowned and assisted the baby's head out gently. As the baby's head emerged, the midwives all moved out of the way for my husband to do the rest. Everyone was so peaceful and quiet. I was able to concentrate and actually feel the different parts of the baby's body as they passed out of my body. I was amazed how in touch with the baby I was able to feel in the silence. Rob was the only one who spoke as he lifted the baby to my arms, "It's a boy!"

Robert Bruce McCall III was born on September 23rd at 11:06 a.m. at home. He weighed a comfortable nine pounds, seven ounces. He was born on the third day of the Biblical feast of Sukkot (Tabernacles) and the first day of Autumn. Most importantly he was born at the exact moment ordained for him by God.

No one took newborn Robert away from me. He lay in my arms and latched on to breastfeed five minutes after birth. All the newborn procedures were done on my bed next to me. He received no eye drops, no shot, no heat lamp. My clean, newborn son was not bathed until his umbilical cord stump fell off over a week later. His hair was oily, but I took joy in the fact that my son had been "anointed" from birth. He was able to be greeted by his 19 month old sister who called him, "yucky, messy baby."

I did not tear. The difference in the recovery was so wonderful it felt purely miraculous! I was sitting upright the day of the birth on a hard chair. I walked to the library with my two children four days after the birth. I had no pain but the same types of aches I would have had if I had worked out at a gym.

Should all babies be born at home? Perhaps not. However, all babies should be born in the place designed and ordained for them. God has placed my husband over me as my head. Through submitting to him I was able to discover this place in the center of God's will. I am sure some babies should be born in a birthing center, some very ill babies should be born in hospitals and some very rushed little ones will be born in taxi cabs and at gas stations.

The Lord spoke to my heart a few days after Robert was born that the fact that he was born on the first day of Autumn was significant. He told me my son would be an instrument of change. Robert has already been the instrument to change the way I understand submission to my husband, birth itself, and God's role in the way our bodies function. I cannot wait to see what else God has in store! ***~Katie McCall***

A Testimony of Persevering Faith in Trusting God with Conception and Birth

By Sharon Hockenbury

There is a line from a famous movie, "Honest Miss Charlotte, I don't know nothing about birthing babies!!". As the little gal frantically blurts out this statement, there is a baby about to be born in the other room. This describes my experience when I first started having children, and I believe it is the case with most women in general.

My husband and I started out like the traditional Christian couple. We had some counseling and one of the sessions included how long we would wait to have children and what kind of birth control we would use. We just went with the flow and decided we would use the pill. My mother had some serious side effects from taking the pill when I was young so I definitely had negative "vibs", but the Doctor said the "mini pill" was different. I went on it before we were married to be ready for the honeymoon. I was so sick I went off of it and went to another form of "manual" birth control. The thought of having children actually scared me. Could I raise children in such a wicked world? Could I even mother children? Maybe I did not even want children!!

We were married and my tune quickly changed. There is something that happened in me and I soon had THE URGE to have a baby. I was almost 21 when we married and 19 months later I became a mother when our first child, a boy was born. Now this is where the ignorance of "birthing babies" came in. I knew NOTHING about nutrition, prenatal care, labor and all the other little things that come with having a baby, including nursing the little one. One thing I DID know. I loved Jesus and believed He would work all things out for the good in spite of me. . .not a statement of license, just a desperate pledge of trust in the Lord.

I was working a the church office as a secretary. Seems like a dichotomy now, but the fact remains. I was very ill. In-between typing assignments, I would be lying down or visiting the "great white throne." I packed on the weight, after all I was eating for two. My husband would make a run to Dairy Queen to satisfy my cravings. "Do you want a Peanut Buster Parfait or a Double Fudge Brownie delight?" "Yes, please!", I would reply and home he would come with both, one for me and one for the baby!! Our life style demanded that we eat out a lot. Church life seems to be that way when you are on staff. One time we went to a local restaurant and they had the BEST spare ribs. I ate and ate and ate. I did not even make it out the door before I profusely threw up all over the place! I was embarrassed, needless to say. Ironically the establishment was called, "The Chuck Wagon"!!

All this is to say, I did not have "healthy habits" and I paid the price in the form of Toxemia. I was put on bed rest and a drug to lower my blood pressure for 5 weeks and then hospitalized and put on IV's with Magnesium Sulfate. After about a week of that I was induced with Pitocin. I bet you do not have to guess what the out come was. After 12 hours of labor an emergency section was done because of "fetal distress". Our baby boy was born at 6#5oz., healthy. A miracle really for someone who knew "nothing about having babies." I had quite a time trying to nurse him also. I had inverted nipples and I just could not get him to latch on. Thank the Lord there was a woman who kept encouraging me not to give up. I would take a bottle nipple and put in over my nipple so he could latch on. It took time to get the milk flowing, sometimes the bottle nipple would fall off and spill all over me. For a first time mom this was not the best experience. But we persevered and after about seven weeks, he latched on himself and we continued until we conceived our next child at about 14 months.

Twenty two months after the birth of our son, our little girl was born. A repeat cesarean section, because that is just what you do. Hospital policy. We had moved to a different city by this time and I took a train down to where my doctor was for my check ups, because I could not change insurance midstream. During one of trips, three weeks before my due date, I went into labor. When I went into the hospital to prep for surgery, my water broke. The thought came to my mind, "Maybe I could just have this baby naturally", but I was told, "NO", and the surgery was done. Our little girl was a healthy 6#5oz. bundle and we were thankful considering, I didn't "know nothing about having babies." Nursing was easier this time and we continued for about 17 months.

You probably know how the scenario goes. We now had the all American family, a boy and a girl. What were we to do now? We haphazardly used a form of birth control and Natural Family planning. The only problem was, we were more natural than we planned!! Well, we soon conceived our third child. Now this was a challenge. By this time my husband had resigned as youth/young adult pastor and was only working part time jobs and we had no insurance. We were really crazy! In the eighties, having a third child with out the security of a job and insurance. The Lord is still our God, we only knew that we loved Him and that He would work everything out, in spite of us!! He certainly did. My husband got a job that included benefits, even with the pre-existing condition of pregnancy. Little did we know how valuable this would prove be.

Our third child, a precious big boy, at 9lbs. 7oz., was born by repeat section but he was not healthy. He checked out O.K. at birth but my heart told me there was something "not right," I kept trying to get a pediatrician to look at him. When he nursed, he seemed to labor so hard and have a difficult time breathing and nursing at the same time. He had a rare birth defect that required his transport to Children's hospital. This is a whole another story itself, but in summary, he was there for seven weeks, suffered a stroke and two surgeries. It was really a medical fiasco, but we finally had our precious little boy home at seven weeks of age. I had pumped during those seven weeks so I could maintain my milk supply, as I was not allowed to nurse him during his stay in the

hospital. This was not easy, as I was encouraged by the staff to just bottle feed him and I would not need to keep up the routine of pumping. As a more experienced mom by now, my heart told me otherwise and the Lord gave me the grace to continue pumping. My little one nursed like a trooper when he got home and continued for over 22 months!! I know that it was the Lord. We loved the Lord Jesus and He worked everything out in spite of us!!

Now came the dilemma. We had a boy, a girl, a boy that had a birth defect, shouldn't we stop now. . .My husband and I talked among ourselves. We were puzzled though. We had used birth control and still we conceived. Why did we even bother using it? This is when we decided to ask God about it. Novel thought!! I began a word search in the Bible. I looked up every reference I could find on womb, child, children, birth, etc. I came up with over 30 scriptures saying that God was the opener and closer of the womb and that children were a blessing. We loved God and wanted to walk in His was. This seemed like a drastic step to take, I mean actually let God plan our family. We knew no one else that did this. However, I was vaguely familiar with the idea because of my Catholic up bringing. We took the plunge into a birth control free relationship. Things got good!! A few months after this study, a friend gave me a copy of the book, "The Way Home". After reading it, I told my husband that we were not crazy after all, there were others that thought this way.

Our fourth child was born 3 years from the birth of our third. The longest span of time between children so far. The Lord does have a sense of humor. By this time I was beginning to know SOMETHING about having babies but still had a lot more to learn. After reading "The Way Home", I read Mary Pride's next book, "All The Way Home". She talked about homebirth and VBAC (vaginal birth after cesarean). This got my wheels churning. The Lord and I were talking. "Lord, if I am going to leave having children up to You, do you think we could talk about not having any more Cesareans? Would you direct my steps, if this is your will?" He heard my prayer, I mean He always does, but he led me to a Doctor that was willing to give me a "trial of labor". It had never been done in the hospital I would birth in, a VBAC after 3 sections, but he was willing, and I was thankful. I read every book I could get my hands on about VBAC, including Silent Knife, which would prove to give a vital connection in the future. But, more on that later. I went into this birth, excited and confident that we could have a naturally birth. After 17 hours of labor which included some drugs at the end, 3 hours of pushing and a painful episiotomy, we had our little boy, 7#4oz. I was elated and so thankful that the Lord blessed us in spite of us!! We nursed with some difficulty, as with previous babies, I got blood blisters and kicked holes in the floor when he latched on, but we continue to nurse for over 2 years.

"To be honest, I did have to deal with fear. I mean, what would happen next? I studied the word. I noted everything I could find about God's character and finally found peace in WHO HE IS and His love for me."

By this time, I was not quite an expert, but I was getting brave when it came to "having babies". When we conceived our next child, I began to research the possibility of a homebirth. It was partially inspired by the fact that my husband had launched into self employment and we had NO insurance. A homebirth with midwife would be something we could pay for. I found a licensed midwife who would do a VBAC at home. She felt like she had some leverage because she was involved in a national study on VBAC. This proved to be important, as the Doctor who delivered my third child in the hospital called my midwife and threatened to "turn her into the authorities" if she did my birth at home. Being involved in the study was our protection, so to speak. I know it was the Lord who is our buckler and our shield!! I continued to study about homebirth, reading books on this topic. Twenty seven months after the birth of our fourth child, our little girl was born at home with only five hours of labor. I tore a little and had do some herbs to stop postpartum bleeding, but this was a piece of cake compare to all the others!! My uterus did prolapsed. The midwife put it back in place and I did Kegels like crazy! My uterus was right were it was suppose to be by the time I conceived our next child. This little one nursed for over 2 years.
Our next little girl was born 2 1/2 years later by Emergency Cesarean. Oh, the long and winding road of birthing. I had planned on another homebirth, this time with 2 lay midwives. Again, insurance was an issue, but preference was a stronger motivating factor. The pregnancy went great and labor pursued at midnight with mild contractions. I woke at about 5 AM to go to the bathroom and was bleeding some. I called the midwife. They came. We consulted with a Naturopath and a seasoned midwife. We all felt I was safe as long as my bleeding stayed within certain guidelines, the babies heartbeat stayed strong an my blood pressure was stable. I continue to labor until about 2 o'clock in the afternoon. At this time I had dilated to a 6 or 7 but then stalled. I began to have a bulge to the side of my tummy. We thought it might be a distended bladder. We tried to empty with a cathedar to no avail. I was really praying. I had read a certain book about the "spiritual" aspect of childbirth. I really wanted to honor the Lord and trust Him totally with the birth of this baby. I think I was deceived to some degree, not wanting to transport to the hospital for lack of faith, so I hung on, pleading with the Lord to show me a sign as to what to do. The midwives were in the hall praying also. About that time, I heard an internal pop, hard to describe. I began to bleed profusely. I said, "lets go" and we hopped in the van, and headed to the hospital. When we got to the hospital the preparation began for an emergency section.

The Doctor on call was the Doctor who had called my midwife and threatened her. I refused to have him do the surgery. Some how, I sensed he would not be as compassionate with me. I did not want a hysterectomy nor to be chastised by him attempting another homebirth. The nurses then called for another Doctor. It was a female. She came in a said we were probably looking a rupture. She wanted me to sign for a hysterectomy. I refused, but she said it might be the only way that she could save my life. My husband demanded that I sign it, so I did, but I pleaded with the Doctor not to take my uterus.

I had read an article by Nancy Campbell, "Protect Your Womb". I knew how important it was to keep it, even if I could not have more children. I also knew that my mom had an hysterectomy at a young age and suffered for it. I was only 34. We rolled into surgery about 40 minutes later, I was put under general anesthesia, not knowing what my "fate" would be, nor that of my little one. At this point, I was in so much pain, that my pervading thought was RELIEF!! Here is the exact wording from the post-op report; "The rectus muscles were bluntly and sharply separated and the peritoneum was opened to an obvious hemoperitomeum and to an obvious uterine rupture. The amniotic sac was intact and was bulging into the abdominal incision at the time of entering the abdomen"
When I awoke, I did not see Jesus, so I knew I was alive and I immediately began to call for my husband and ask if my baby was O.K. I was informed that the baby was fine and a wept for joy. She was born with 8/9 apgar score. This was an absolute miracle as the statistics say that if a rupture happens and the baby is not out within minutes, they do not survive. I am so thankful that the Lord has a plan, that He works all things out for our good and His glory in spite of us!! We love Him because He first loved us and His hand of mercy is evident in all we do!! I was discharge from the hospital with strong words from the Doctor that I was not to have anymore children. She was unable to close all layers of my uterus and said that the womb would not with stand another pregnancy. I was risking my life and the life of the child if I were to have another baby. This was so emotional. After all we had trusted the Lord with the conception. What would this mean now?

The recovery went fine but I am speculating that as a result of the trauma of the birth, I had a difficult time with my let down reflex and nursing. The baby was considered "failure the thrive." We prayed and sought the Lord. I used a supplement nurser filled with goats milk and studied to find out why this was happening. I finally discovered that the Pituitary gland is affected with blood loss and trauma. I began herbs to support this gland and within a couple of weeks the baby was thriving and gaining weight as my milk was ample. I nursed her for over two years. I am so thankful that as I knew more about "birthing babies" and the Lord gave sufficient grace that I was able to persevere through this challenging scenario. My husband and I sought the Lord, cried, prayed and wondered what we should do now. Should we continue to trust the Lord with our family planning? We sought counsel.

One quiverfull minded pastor said there was grace for circumstances like this and that if we did something "permanent" it was O.K. We did not feel at peace about this. The thought that kept running through my mind was, "Now is when you decide if you have conviction or preference." If God truly led us through His Word and we and developed a conviction,

could it be changed due to unforeseen circumstances. ? After about six months, my husband and I came to a peace and continued to leave our family planning in the Lords hands. We had entered a season of abstinence up until this time.

I conceived our next child and I will have to admit, initially, I was overcome with fear. In fact, after the positive pregnancy test, I planned my funeral! I was fearful of going back to the same Doctor, as I knew I was going to face a lecture. But, I felt she knew my circumstances and would be the most confident to take my case. When I walked in for my first pre-natal visit, she was stunned, but supportive. She does not believe in abortion, that was in my favor. She said that a repeat section at least 10 days early was absolutely vital, that I must avoid labor at all cost. The pregnancy went fine and I had a real peace from the Lord during this time. I could have never foreseen what was to happen. I will never doubt again that the Lord's timing is perfect.

He loved me, has a plan for me and works everything out for our good and His glory

Our little girl was scheduled to be born on October 16, her due date being the 26th. On October 12, our 3rd child woke up a with severe headache, losing sight and bodily functions. I called 911. They came and his blood pressure was beyond measurement. This had to do with his original birth defect but was totally unexpected. He was diagnosed with stomach cancer in 1991. He had surgery to remove the tumor but there was no cure. We came home a used alternative medicine and He was doing really well. So, when this happened we were shocked. He was airlifted to Children's hospital and stabilized. He was talking to us and resting. Later, he was overmedicated and went into a coma. We had to make the decision to remove life support on October 14. We actually prayed that God would raise Him from the dead, but He was raised in glory. Our hearts were broken. We were now facing memorial service and a birth of a child in the same week. I did not think I could do it, so we postponed the cesarean section to October 21. We had the memorial service for our son on October 18. We celebrated his life and our life in Jesus. Oh, we were learning in greater measure the importance of Persevering faith!!

I awoke on October 21 at 4:00 AM in labor. I called the Doctor. The section was not scheduled until 12:00 noon, but since it was vital, as stated earlier that I not labor, I immediately went in and a section was performed by 7:30 AM. A healthy little girl was born. My uterus was in good shape, no sign of rupture whatsoever. Who could have imagined that one could even survive such dyer circumstance. But, this is what walking with Jesus is all about. He is with us, to uphold us with His righteous right hand. I do not know the ends and outs of all His workings. I do not even try any more. My only goal is to know Him more through everything we go through. To be honest, again, I had to deal with fear. I mean, what would happen next? I studied the Word. I noted everything I could find about God's character and finally found peace in WHO HE IS and His love for me. The birth of this little girl was a healing balm to our grieving hearts, souls and minds.

God opened the womb again and we gave birth to a healthy little boy 27 months later. We scheduled a repeat Cesarean Section ten days before the due date with the same Doctor. However, I did pursue the possibility of a VBAC but could not find a Doctor that would agree and definitely did not want to try a homebirth. When I walked in for my first visit with my previous Doctor, she was not as surprised but was definitely cautious. The section went fine and I went home the next day. Nursing went just fine and I finally learned the importance of pure Lanolin to heal blood blisters and make nursing less painful. I nursed this little one for over 3 years. This baby was born when I was forty.

By this time, I knew my chances of having more children was becoming less and less. I conceived and miscarried two babies. This was very emotional but I had to trust God and cling to what I knew to be true of Him. He loved me, has a plan for me and works everything out for our good and His glory, in spite of us!! I conceived in December of 2001 at the age of 42! I was thrilled. The circumstances in our life were very unsettled. My husbands home business took a BIG hit after 9-11, we were forced to move when I was about 10 weeks pregnant. I was tired and dealing with the normal pregnancy stuff, but again, God was in it and was faithful to give all we needed. I still can't believe what one can endure when God is with us. Since we moved to another town, I would be looking for another Doctor to have this baby. I did consider a homebirth and met with a midwife. My husband and I both prayed about it. My husband was not at peace with a homebirth, but would pray about it while I sought out options for this birth. I kept having the thought that I could have a VBAC. It just seemed the right way to go, instead of another major surgery. Six sections seemed like enough to me!! Through some referrals I found a Doctor about 1 1/2 hours away that would consider a VBAC if I scheduled a section and then when I went into labor, went to the hospital and refused the section. I knew this would not work, as I needed to walk into an environment where I knew I would have people on my team, wanting me to succeed.

Remember earlier I told you that I had read **Silent Knife** by Nancy Cohen. I found her website and contacted her via e-mail sharing my testimony and my desire to have a VBAC. She e-mailed me back and gave me her phone number to call her. I finally made contact with her and we talked. She gave me the name and number of another midwife that has done over 3000 births including a home VBAC birth after a rupture. She has flown around the US to help women with "difficult" cases. She read my testimony and said she would pray about doing my birth. She would fly in ten days before my due date, start labor and leave after the baby was born. We prayed and waited to hear from the midwife about her decision. Meanwhile, I had gone to a scrapbooking party and over heard a gal talking about her Doctor in the same town where I live. She said he was "naturally minded". This caught my attention. I asked her his name and called and made appointment with him. Before the appointment, the midwife e-mailed me and said she very seldom says no, but she just could not do my birth. She wished me the best and asked me to let her know when the baby was born.

My next step was to go to the Doctor in my hometown. I was so very nervous as he reviewed my records. After all, it doesn't look that great!! I have "white coat syndrome" anyway. He spent 3 hours with me. We talked about the politics of medicine and philosophy of birth. He was anti-abortion and proceeded to tell me he would support me in a "trial of labor". This was before I even asked!! The Lord was obviously opening the door for a vaginal birth. I e-mailed the midwife back to let her know what I had found and asked her to share her apprehension with me. She said she was excited for what I had found and that is exactly the situation she would like to have me birth in. In the hospital with the .peace and my husband felt really good about this decision. I continued on with my pre-natal visits.

My blood pressure was starting to climb, but did not get out of control. It did become a issue at the end, but not a major problem. I was exercising everyday and watching my diet. I was concerned about gaining too much weight this time, as I started out over-weight. I did the glucose tolerance and it came back high. One of the concessions I had to make going to a medical doctor. The doctor gave me the option of doing the extended test or just doing the "diet". I did the "Zone" and my blood sugars were perfect. As result I only gained 19 pounds. This was an answer to prayer. I read about 30 books, including several Christian books, during the second half of my pregnancy to prepare my heart and mind for the VBAC and to fight the fear that enemy of our souls wants to defeat us with.

The Doctor's plan was to break my water 10 days before my due date. He felt that by breaking my water there would be less pressure on my previously ruptured uterus and scar. He also felt better about having more control of the birthing process. At this point, I trusted him and knew I would have to make some concessions in order to have a vaginal birth. My final appointment before the scheduled induction my blood pressure was up and I was instructed to go home and stay down. The doctor would schedule my induction the next night instead of waiting two days. The hospital refused to take me at first, at all, because of my history. They changed their minds, as the head nurse said they could not legally refuse me a trial of labor. However, they would not take me on the weekend due to inadequate staffing. By this point, my blood pressure was stable, but my pulse was very fast, I think it was just the stress. We went in to do a stress test and the baby was fine. We went home with instructions to call the hospital on Monday morning at about 4:00 AM to go in about 5:00 AM. Once again, I could not go in as there was not room for me. The hospital said they would call me when they had an opening. The hospital called at 9:00 AM wanting me there about 9:30 AM. We got there about 10:00 AM and began with the routine preparation of a hospital birth.

I had a birth plan and the Doctor had agreed that I could have a heplock with no running IV and liquids a desired. However, the anesthesiologist came in. She sat down and looked me in the eye. She

proceeded to tell me that there was a probability that my baby and I could die, but they had to honor my request for a trial of labor. She then ordered double IV's, one in each arm, no liquids. She also ordered that I be crossed typed for 4 different types of blood because I have a rare blood type and ordered 4 pints of my blood type that was to be in the hospital before the induction was done. I had blood drawn, which was lost in transit and then a redraw had to done!! Finally, the blood arrived and we could proceed. I was hooked up to the monitor, my blood pressure was O.K., but my heart rate was really fast. Sometimes they did not know if was me or the baby. The baby's was faster than normal also, obviously responding to my adrenaline. The doctor came in optimistic as he held a copy of the latest OB/GYN journal in hand. The feature article was on safety of VBAC, even VBAC after rupture. The Lord had even given the Doctor peace, even though he is not a professing believer.

So, here we are. My husband, my dear friend to act as a doula, my 11 year old daughter, a young supportive nurse, her assistant and the Doctor. The process would begin. The doctor broke my water about noon. Labor clicked in about 1:30 P.M., mild and starting to be steady. By 3:00 PM it was intensifying and I was at about a 3cm. and 50 percent effaced. By 6:00 PM the contractions were about every minute and I was at 6 cm and 70 percent effaced. However, the baby was presenting forehead first and bent off to the side. The body was almost transverse, so she was not descending like she should. The doctor was concerned about the hard labor now and the pressure on the uterus without progress. He worked the cervix to promote dilation, causing some bleeding which he was concerned about. The nurse assured him that it was probably a result of the manipulation he had done. They watched the bleeding and it did not increase, so we relaxed. The Doctor also tried to get her head to come down in proper position using his fingers as forceps. By this time labor was very intense and the manipulations were not working. The doctor suggested an epidural so he could get up inside and really maneuver the baby manually. He did not want me to keep laboring with this intensity without progress due to the previous rupture. He said they would change my position, wait 20 minutes and then we would have to talk about an epidural and possible repeat section. He left the room and my husband did too. My husband was just walking the floors of the hospital and praying. The Doctor came back, checked the baby's position, no change. He called for the anesthesiologist. It was a different one than when I had originally came in, thank the Lord. He was considered one of the best. He did the epidural. By the time I laid down I was dilated to 9 cm and about 90 percent effaced with an lip around the cervix that would not go away.

This is when I am thankful for my doctors patience and desire to help me have a VBAC. He reached up and held back the cervix while I pushed. He was able to get the cervix up over the babies a head enough to be able to manipulated her position. He was finally able to get her head down and turned, again, using his fingers as forceps. She had scratches and then scabs all over her head from this procedure. The Doctor felt this was safer than forceps. After her head finally stayed in position he found that her shoulder was hung up on my pelvis or hip bone. He ended up having to twist her 180 degrees and then a 360 degrees to unstick her. At this point, she slid down into the birth canal. I realized at this point that my husband was still out praying. I had my daughter go get him. When he came in I was pushing!! He was so surprised and thankful to the Lord for hearing his cry for a safe delivery. I began to push, I ended up with an episiotomy so she would be born quicker, again to alieve additional pressure on the scar. As it was I pushed 14 contractions, 3 times each contraction. Without the episiotomy, it would have been twice as much. My Doctor also said he was an "technician" not an artist, thus he could repair a cut much better than a tear. I agreed to the cut. The baby came almost right away. A healthy 7#10oz. baby girl at 10:06 PM We were all elated. It was not the natural birth I had hoped for but it was so much better than a section and recovery so much quicker. I have no pain, anywhere. I was able to go home the next day!!

I am so blessed with this precious little girl. Nursing has taken a extra effort, as my milk supply is low. I think I felt so good that I did too much too fast. I am focusing now on this little on and nurturing her to help her thrive. The rest of the family is so happy with our new blessing. She is definitely being smothered with loves!!

I would like to add a few things here. First of all, I had a transverse (across) incision for all my sections. After the rupture, I did herbs and oils to help heal. If you are interested in what I did you can contact me. (See the information at the end of this article.

Second, I am not trying to convince anyone to have a VBAC. I am only encouraging all believers to seek the Lord regarding birthing, children, birth control and trust the Lord to orchestrate your steps for your good and His glory. It is not my intent to "judge" some one who chooses to have repeat sections. It was just a desire of my heart to have another vaginal birth. Being almost 43, thinking this might be my last, I wanted that experience. As I have said, I believe the Lord uses everything for His purposes. If my experience encourages even one person to seek the Lord for their circumstances then I praise God.

Finally, persevere in the faith. Do not let fear be the light unto your feet, but allow the one you put your faith in - Jesus himself, the one who is faithful, direct your steps. Do not be too quick to act on impulse, but always take the time to seek God first. . Most of us "know nothing about having babies", when we start out. But when we KNOW the Savior and persevere even in difficult circumstances, I believe He is faithful and He will make our paths straight. Love Him, seek to know Him more and all these "things" will be added unto you!!

Sharon Hockenbury is the wife of Doug for 22 years and the mother of; Toby 201/2, Tori, 18 1/2, Treyton (4-11-86 to 10-14-96), Tasby 13 1/2, Taryn, 11, Tevis 8 1/2, Tenille almost 6, Trajen 3 1/2, Taylyn 3 weeks.
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Just A Little While...

By Laura Hipps

November 17, 2001 About 5 weeks ago, I found out that I was expecting again. I was very excited and thankful as I had been praying along these lines. Yet things seemed weird because I was not sick really and hardly tired which are the 2 telltale signs of pregnancy for me. Well, a week ago, I started spotting and since I did not miscarry after 4 days of that we went and had a sonogram to see just what in the world was going on. There was our little, precious baby, easily visible on the screen but no heart beat. I think devastated is too small of a word. Even though I had my suspicions, it was terrible to learn the truth. My next fear was that our doctor was going to do a D & C, which to me is the same procedure as an abortion.

Dale took issue with that when I said it to him. Anyway, thankfully, our very kind hearted doctor said we will just wait a few weeks and let my body do what God made it to do. I was SO relieved. Now it has been almost a week since the sonogram and I still have not passed the baby. I am not physically uncomfortable but emotionally, I am a wreck. One day I am so depressed that I barely can function. The next day I am fine, then another black day... My poor family. We told our children after we came home from the sonogram all that had happened. They did not know before that point that I was pregnant. So they were hit with it all at once. I think they are doing okay now. It was very hard for the older kids at first. Anyway, I am still waiting for God and my body to take care of the situation. The sonogram tech was also very kind and compassionate and she asked if we wanted a picture of the baby. I said yes and I am so glad I did. My heart is broken but I know that God is in control and he has our best in mind.

November 30, 2001 ...I miscarried my baby this morning. God was so gracious to me through out the whole ordeal. I praise Him! I had bleeding for 3 weeks, which had wound down to almost nothing the last few days. I thought that perhaps my body had just absorbed everything and I would get off with out going through the labor like my midwife told me to expect. When this all started, I was concerned about a few events that I had ahead of me, folks coming for supper, a birthday, Thanksgiving and then Michael's orthodontist appointment in Fremont. Well, Michael's appointment was yesterday afternoon

and I miscarried this morning around 7:30. God's perfect timing.

Another prayer answered was in the midst of all my pain of contractions. I was whimpering in my bed after basically having stout labor pains for a few hours and I just begged the Lord to let it stop, to let it be over with. Right in the midst of the next hard contraction...it quit! Just like that! I was afraid to move! I finally got up to the bathroom and when I sat down, I passed the placenta and some clots. My pain was finished. Isn't He so Kind!

I had woken up about 2 am and my womb hurt. I had this sharp pain that would not go away. I lay awake with that for about a half-hour and then dozed off to a dream about my baby, the first I've had. In my dream, I held a clear bubble in my hand and my teeny baby was inside the bubble. I could see that it was a boy. As I held the bubble, it stretched and flattened out some and then burst in my hand. The baby vanished. Then I woke up. So...I am taking that as Jesus letting me know that my child was a boy. I know that he is with Him. God has been so kind and gentle with me through this all.

Just like a caring shepherd with a hurting little lamb. I named my son Nicholas Dale and he is still a part of our family today. My three-year-old, Timothy, talks about him the most. If he sees a picture in a book of a child angel, he will often comment, "Oh look Mom, that looks just like Nicholas." Or, "Mom, can Nicholas see me riding my bike?" It warms my heart to hear him speak of his brother this way. It makes heaven that much sweeter knowing that our son is waiting for us there. While it is painful to bear the loss of a child, it is so reassuring to know that I didn't just "lose my baby". He is safe in the arms of Jesus, the exact place I want all of my children to end up!

FOR NICHOLAS
11-31-01
Oh my precious Nicholas
My early leaving boy
I know you're safe in heaven now.
God's filled you with His joy.
You'll never skin your little knee
Or have a bad night's dream.
Our Jesus will walk with you
Down Heaven's streets that gleam.
And though your Mama cries now
Not to hold you near her heart,
The day will come, my precious son,
When we'll never be apart.
It will seem long to me
Yet to you, just but a day.
While here on earth I toil,
There in Paradise you'll play.
My arms are empty now
But the day will come, I know,
You won't return to me
But to you, my child, I'll go.
I love you Nicholas!!

After my first miscarriage, when I conceived again, I was elated. Surely this baby would be the one to "give back what the locusts had eaten". We were so excited and got out all the fetal development books to show the kids. "Here is what our baby looks like now," was a common phrase in our house as we looked on the Internet and in the books we have for those wonderful photos. We were all so excited. My husband even started suggesting names! Unheard of at this stage in a pregnancy for us.

At 10 weeks, I started spotting again and on the advice of my midwife, I went on complete bed rest. For two weeks I lay down on the hide-a-bed in the living room. When my son had his 4th birthday, I took pictures of him and his cake from my bed. When my favorite uncle came to visit from California, I chatted with him from my bed. Life went on and I stayed in bed. Bed rest is actually quite enjoyable...for about the first two hours.

And still I was bleeding. After two weeks of this, we decided to get a sonogram to find out what was going on. Again...no heartbeat. I was stunned. Twice in a row? What is wrong with me. It took my body 8 weeks to give up the baby and placenta. But God was again so gracious. I had no pain at all. I was just dreading going through that labor again. I was thankful.

We named our baby Sarah Joy and I wrote a poem for her as well.

For Sarah Joy Hipps
9-13-02
What is it like there where you live?
Are you filled with the joy only Jesus can give?
Do you dance and play in that beautiful land
Holding your big brother Nicholas' hand?
Do you sit at the feet of our Savior there?
Does Grandma Adele stroke your beautiful hair?
Does the angel choir thrill your heart
When the harps and voices, their praises start?
Are the city streets really gleaming gold,
And the walls all jewels as we've been told?
Can you see my sorrow at losing you?
Do you miss your mama's love so true?
Do you see my empty arms, my tears
My heart that weeps because you're not here?
Do you patiently wait for your mama who
Will someday be called to come join you?
Does Jesus kiss you for me each day?
Does He tell you I wanted you so to stay?
My precious daughter, my babe, my own
Into Jesus' arms so early flown.
I longingly wait for the glorious day
When I'll look in your eyes and then I'll say,
"I LOVE YOU SARAH JOY!"

Two months went by and lo and behold, I was late again on my cycle. I was scared to hope. I was afraid to dream. We didn't tell anyone but my closest girlfriends and that only so they could pray. I didn't know what God had in store for me and was afraid to find out. Yet at 8 weeks, I started spotting again. Another sonogram disclosed what we already knew in our hearts. No heart beat. Now this, our third angel in heaven. I was devastated. I was practically catatonic for a day or so, unable to function so great was my grief. Thank the Lord for my children who ran the home during that time.

About then, a friend of mine loaned me a book, "A Mom Just Like You" by Vicki and Jayme Farris. Vicki Farris is the wife of well-known HSLDA founder Michael Farris. She is a godly woman, quietly homeschooling her 10 children. I was particularly drawn to the chapter where she shares about their struggles to allow God to plan their family. I have had this struggle. Probably you have, too. We all think to ourselves when we are in our 20's,"Well, I could have 10 kids or something!!! Yikes!" And we take our fertility into our own hands. Some of us, like Vicki and me also, haltingly give it up to the Lord and hope for the best. Then the babies come. Seems like they come fast and furiously. I had 3 girls all 19 months apart. Talk about boom, boom, boom!

Well, after Vicki had baby #9, she had 4 miscarriages in a row... It was a difficult time for her as you can imagine. Then came another type of surrender. Giving up to the Lord the dream of ever having another baby. The Bible tells us that God opens and closes the womb. When I was younger, I was afraid that God would continually open my womb. Now I wonder if He will ever open it long enough for me to bear another baby. It is as difficult for me to give up my intense desire for another child as it was to give up my need to control when and how many babies we would have.

While Vicki Farris was blessed with a healthy baby after her fourth miscarriage, I am still waiting. The doctors say my eggs are "stale" because of my age. I am 37. I don't buy that. We have not given up. I want to try again. When I was spotting, I could really empathize with Jesus when He prayed in the garden, *"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me;...yet not my will but yours be done". (Luke 22:42)* And as Job told his wife when they lost everything, even their 10 children, *"Shall we accept good from God and not trouble?" (Job 2:10)*

I know that my three babes are in heaven with the Lord and I take great comfort in that. Isn't that ultimately where we want all of our children to be?

Mothers, I ask you, in Jesus name, please don't take your fertility for granted. Don't despise the gifts that God wants to give you. The day may come when He says,"No more." What a sad day that may be.

And to those of you grieving over a babe gone too soon, I pray that my little poems will be a comfort to you. Our little ones sit at the feet of Jesus and he kisses them good night for us. May God comfort you. Please feel free to contact me if you want to.

In Jesus love, Laura Hipps
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Little Baby yet un-named,
Seems you left before you came.
In the twinkling of an eye
No hello, just sad good bye.
Though you're hidden from us, we know
Now you bask in Heaven's glow.
I trust the Savior to hold you tight
And hug and kiss you now good-night.
With Nicholas and Sarah stay;
We'll come to join you there some day.
I know you're safely home today
And yet my heart hurts anyway.
I dreamed of holding you close to me,
But, my love, 'twas not to be
I'll have to wait until the day
When Jesus calls me home to stay.
Then you'll take me by the hand
And show to me sweet Heaven's land
And all you'll ever know or see
Is Heaven's joy for Eternity.
12-31-02

Should We Limit Children Because of Medical Situations?

The following is a series of questions and answers from parents across the country. To participate in a forum such as this see **http://www.quiverfull.com**

***Kate writes**: "We agree that God's best is found in allowing the womb to be open to His planting, and not ours, and we base this on the many passages in the Bible that speak so. However we also agree that there are times when God's wisdom may indicate the use of birth control, most particularly when the life of the mother is at stake."*

First, I would like to point out that I am nowhere near trying to argue with this godly woman who happens to be facing a very difficult time of her life, and therefore a very difficult decision (to allow God to open/shut her womb or to use NFP at this time). However, I was wondering if there were any other viewpoints on this issue. My husband and I are very borderline quiverfull (and I've really appreciated those of you who have admitted how many years it took for you to become fully convicted!).

This has been a "sticky point" for us. If there is a "time and place" for not allowing God to control it, then doesn't that open the door for a lot of interpretation as to when that time and place is? If God is not in control in such times as the life of the mother being at stake, then is He really in control at other times? Sometimes I've looked at pregnancy almost being an "illness" during those times when the life of the mother is at stake and therefore is rightly avoided just as any other illness. But I shudder to put the label of "illness" on pregnancy. I was almost convinced that if you truly believed that God always knew best, then this would apply to the "life of mother at stake" condition as well. However, on Family Life Today when they had their series on family planning, one of the doctors on the show pointed out an anecdote of two mothers with similar heart conditions that were told not to get pregnant. One of them was convinced that God knew best in this situation, she ended up becoming pregnant, and died. This wrenched at my heart and as much as I try to pass this off as a "peripheral" issue, it plagues my thinking. I also realize that we are all accountable to God as individuals, and I don't necessarily need an answer to what should be done in this situation if I never end up facing it...I just need to do what God calls me to do now.

*That being said, I still would like some other words of wisdom on this, if any are brave enough to offer! (And I know that Rick and Jan Hess have a chapter on this, and the story of the mom with a hole in her lung, etc....which is a wonderful story, but I don't think it answers as much as I would like it to...**and I definitely agree that too many doctors tell mothers that being pregnant would endanger their health, even when it is not necessarily true, but I'm still hung up on the times where it clearly looks like it would endanger the mothers health).***

Thank you in advance, and for being patient with a "doubting Thomas"! Kate

Vyckie Answers: Dear Kate,

I noticed your post on the QuiverFull Digest recently asking about whether it's acceptable to use birth control in a situation where the mother's life is in danger. I did not want to respond to the Digest - but, for what it's worth - here's my take on that situation:

First of all, it's great to know that you are thinking about this issue in depth - convictions that are lightly adopted are easily abandoned when they become inconvenient. I had a couple of different thoughts concerning your question - and I hope it does not frustrate you too much that I don't have any hard and fast answers!

One thing to consider carefully is our motives in dealing with the exceptional cases. Whenever Warren or I establish a new rule at our house there are typically two responses from the children - I'll use a hypothetical case as an example: If I were to say, "No running in the house - period!" - I can imagine Angel, who has always been fairly compliant asking the question, "Is it okay for Lydia to run?" I would easily recognize this - not as a challenge to my authority - but just the opposite - Angel would want to be sure that my new rule was fully complied with, so she would want to know if I expected the older children to start training the youngest not to run in the house.

On the other hand, I can imagine Berea asking me, "What if the house is on fire, then can we run?" Then, the next time I caught her running in the house she would defend her action by claiming, "but it was an emergency - I have to tell you something really important!" Berea tends to look for the exceptions in order to justify breaking the rule.

If I understand correctly, your concern is that if we can make a case for practicing birth control when the life of the mother is at risk, then where *do* we draw the line and on what basis?

I know you are well aware that often when a doctor tells a woman that future pregnancies might jeopardize her life - it is simply not true. It is rare that pregnancy is actually life threatening to the mother. In many cases, when a woman's health is severely compromised, infertility goes along with the health condition (i.e. amenorrhea due to extreme weight loss or gain, etc.) - this most likely is God's way of protecting the woman from the risks of pregnancy during that time. But what about the cases when the woman's reproductive system continues to function normally in spite of her other health conditions, or in the (very rare) case of a woman

whose health is otherwise fine - it is only pregnancy which puts her at risk?

Many would argue that in those cases, a couple ought to trust God to supernaturally close the woman's womb. After all, she cannot get pregnant outside of the will of God - and He knows whether a pregnancy will endanger her life, so He can be trusted to do what is best for the woman in her situation. Abstaining during the woman's fertile period would be a lack of faith and therefore, the couple should not expect to receive God's protection for the woman's health.

But then, we learn of situations (like the example you gave in your post) where a couple did trust God, conceived, and as a result of the pregnancy, the woman died. What happened? Was it God's will for her to die? I don't know. I do know that God generally works within the natural biological processes that He established in His creation. He designed the woman's reproductive system - and generally it works as intended. Is He able to overrule those natural processes and prevent a woman from conceiving? Certainly. There have been very rare instances when He has supernaturally intervened - in the case of Abraham and Sarah, also Zechariah and Elizabeth, and of course, the Virgin Birth, God miraculously caused conception to occur when biologically it would have been impossible. I don't know of any recorded examples of God supernaturally preventing conception. ***(See editors note at end of story)***

I'm sure you remember the breastfeeding problem I had with Andrew which forced me to stop nursing him at only 10 months. Andrew had not yet begun eating solids and was nursing frequently throughout the day and at night - my cycles had not returned as a result. When I started getting sores when he nursed, I called Anne and talked to her several times for quite a long time, trying to figure out what the problem was. Anne looked through all the printed material she had and even called someone higher up in LLL - but we could not figure it out. Judy came to the house and watched me breastfeed - she thought maybe Andrew wasn't latching on correctly. I talked to a lactation consultant, several nursing mothers, a dr. - even had the elders from our church pray for me - Warren & I prayed - no answers. We could not figure out why I was getting sores, and finally because it was so painful I quit nursing.

Whether a couple has a dozen children or only one - it is important to welcome them in the same spirit in which we would receive the Lord Jesus Himself.

Right away, my cycles returned and I got pregnant with Lydia. When the same problem happened with Lydia, one phone call to Anne and about 5 minutes or less of consultation and we figured out the obvious - thrush. It was apparent that the Lord did not answer my prayers with Andrew because it was His timing for me to get pregnant with Lydia. He could easily have caused me to conceive while nursing - most women have their cycles return while nursing and usually before 10 months postpartum. But not me - I have never ovulated while nursing (well I finally did with Lydia after transferring her to her sister's room at night when she was 23 months old). This whole experience confirmed for me that the Lord works within His created order - He still was in control and His will was accomplished. I thought it was pretty miraculous, but it was not "supernaturally miraculous" like what happened to the virgin Mary.

So in a situation where the woman continues to be fertile even though pregnancy could be life-threatening it is likely that if she does not abstain during her fertile times she may very well become pregnant. I believe it is highly unlikely that the Lord will supernaturally prevent her from conceiving - if He intended to prevent her from conceiving He would have done so through natural, biological means. Which brings us back to where we started - should the couple abstain?

As I thought about this question, a different situation came to mind which I believe is similar in that the difficulty of the situation really tested a person's faith. I read a lot of biographies of Christian saints whose faith is an inspiration. Richard Wurmbrandt, who wrote "Tortured for Christ" and founded Voice of the Martyrs ministry, told of several instances in which he was tortured and asked to reveal the identity of fellow believers. He admits that he often lied to his torturers in order to spare his brothers from imprisonment. Rahab is a Biblical example of someone who lied in order to protect herself and the Israelite spies - this seems like a lack of faith to me, yet Rahab is listed among the faithful in Hebrews 11. On the other hand, Corrie Ten Boom said that she could not bring herself to tell a lie. On one occasion, when soldiers demanded to know where the Jews were hidden, she blurted out, "They're under the table." This was true - there was a hidden panel in the floor where the Jews were hidden - it was covered by a rug and a table was placed on top. When the soldiers looked at the table they could plainly see that no one was hiding under there so they wrote her off as a crazy lady and began searching the rest of the house. God protected them all. I often wonder what I would do in a similar situation. Of course, we don't really know until it happens, but I think I would lie.

I hope this comparison makes sense to you. People tend to respond in different ways - I would be hesitant to say that the couple who abstained lacked faith while the couple who did not, and the wife became pregnant and died, had great faith. I just pray that I'm never in the situation to have to make that choice.

In some ways the "life of the mother" question reminds me of the way many Jews in Jesus' day dealt with the Law - in trying to figure out how much they could get away with (what distance is lawful for a man to walk away from his house on the Sabbath?) they were keeping the letter of the Law while completely missing the spirit of the Law. I am not saying this because I think it applies to you - I don't. But while we're on the subject - this is something that I think is important to consider. The "spirit" of being QuiverFull is simply to view children as God views them - they're a blessing, plain and simple. Whether a couple has a dozen children or only one - it is important to welcome them in the same spirit in which we would receive the Lord Jesus Himself.

God does not send children as a punishment - He sends them, in part, because He knows that we need them to keep us from our own sinful tendencies of selfishness and self-gratification. In the same manner, I tell my children that even if I could afford a maid, a cook, and a gardener, I would still make sure they had plenty of chores to do. Not because I want my house to be spotless and my yard to be immaculate - but because I see what happens when they have too much time on their hands - they become discontented, bored, lazy, picking on each other, etc. When they have plenty of work to do, the selfish tendencies all but disappear - they are pleasant and co-operative. I don't make them work day and night, of course - and the Lord does provide much that is enjoyable and rewarding in our work as parents. So, I try to keep a healthy perspective to my QuiverFull beliefs - it's not just "we do not use birth control" - we need to see God as a loving, caring Father Who wants to give us good gifts.

I love to share my own experience and offer whatever resources I have - and I know that my strong convictions are obvious - but I do hope you know that I am not trying to "convince" you. Only the Holy Spirit can do that - and I've learned that He works in His own time and His own way and He always deals with us as individuals. **I am fully convinced to trust Him with our "family planning" and welcome however many children He desires to give us - but it was a long journey for us to go from permanent sterilization (vasectomy) to no birth control at all - and it took several years for us to get to that point.**

I was recently reading Dr. Sears' book on Attachment Parenting - he stated that from the "outside" AP can seem overwhelming and like it would drive a mother to exhaustion - no bottles, no pacifiers, co-sleeping, baby wearing, responding immediately to baby's cries, etc. Anyone who first hears of this style of parenting might think - I would be frazzled - I'd never get any sleep, I'd go nuts jumping at every little cry, the baby would be spoiled, etc. But the mothers who actually do it find that they are more relaxed, get more sleep, enjoy their children more, etc. As I was reading that I thought the same goes for the "quiverfull" lifestyle - from the outside it looks exhausting - but those couples I know who are doing it actually have very peaceful, relaxed homes. They enjoy their children and actually have less of a workload than most of the couples who limit their family size. I guess it's kind of a paradox - like taking the "narrow road" which seems restrictive and hard - but in fact is free and peaceful - a "light burden" and "rest" as Jesus promised. On the other hand, the broad road seems easy and carefree, but leads to heartache and trouble. Those who seek to shirk responsibility actually end up more weighed down and miserable than those who embrace their duties. I hope this doesn't sound preachy - it probably does!

If, before Warren had the vasectomy reversal someone had told us that I'd spend the next 7 years either pregnant or nursing (all but about 8 months - and not consecutively) - I'd have seriously had second thoughts. I would have said, "That would kill me." But, in reality it has not been burdensome to me. Attitude helps a lot and what helps my attitude is knowing definitely that God has called me to this lifestyle. Any mom

who does not have that sure conviction from God - I would not recommend adopting this sort of lifestyle - because it would be too difficult. On the other hand, If I knew for sure that God gave me this conviction, but I rejected it and went my own way, I know that I and my family would suffer the consequences. We see families all around us who are only half committed to serving the Lord - and it is so apparent in the struggles they encounter - marriage breakups, wayward and rebellious children, financial difficulties, spiritual dryness, etc.

I urge you to be in prayer (as I know you already are) and take the time and effort required to know the will of God for your individual family. Let the couples whose health problem requires a life or death decision in regard to family planning seek the Lord for direction in their own circumstance. Such is not the case with you. I am confident that the Lord will guide and direct your husband and you in the choices that He desires for your family as you seek His best for your lives.
~Vyckie Bennett

(Ed Note: see Gen Ch 20 vs 17, Gen Ch 29 vs 31 through Ch30 vs23 for examples of God withholding conception.)

Birth Control--A Sin or Not?--(The Thought's of a "Not!" Person)...

Birth Control?

"However, I am studying and researching and praying about whether it is a SIN to be on birth control, or whether God might not ever TELL us to be on it, to bring about His will that we not have any more children. OR, is it truly something that God lets us decide on our own? Or is it something that He wants to have absolute control of - always? I'm unsure at this point, and seeking knowledge. "

My husband and I do not use birth control. We also do not plan on using any birth control in the future. That being said, however, we do not believe the use of birth control (in a general sense) is sinful (assuming it is a non-abortive method). This stance is taken because the Scripture does not declare family planning to be a sin--and we refuse to call "sin" what God chose to leave unmentioned.

We agree that God's best is found in allowing the womb to be open to His planting, and not ours, and we base this on the many passages in the Bible that speak so. However we also agree that there are times when God's wisdom may indicate the use of birth control, most particularly when the life of the mother is at stake.

In fact, at this moment I am awaiting surgery for some birth injuries that occurred earlier...and so we are avoiding pregnancy (by recognizing when I am fertile and such). This is done SO THAT my body will be better able to bear the next baby (and the next, and the next!) and so that our harvest will be more fruitful.

In other words, we are presently avoiding pregnancy, so that we might be able to have more babies than we would have otherwise. Another word for it is called, "being a good steward." Just as a farmer carefully tills and cultivates his field in order to reap a large harvest, so must the couple carefully tend to the wife's "field," ensuring it's ability to yield much fruit.

We recognize that God's Word clearly defines children as blessings, whereas our society does not. Hmmmm? What should we choose as our governing rule: the Scriptures or the Culture? (Not a hard question to answer). We choose God's Word--and while it is not always the "easy" path (especially with three youngsters, age three and under!), it is certainly a JOYFILLED one!

We can't imagine life without the three little blessings God has granted us, and we can hardly wait to get this stinkin' surgery over with so Baby #4 can join us (should God so will, of course)...and Baby #5...and Baby #6...and so on...
Blessings in Him, Molly Aley
Elaine Answers:

Trust God

With all due respect to the thought Molly has put into her decisions, and trying not to stand in judgement of a couple's decision, I have to disagree with or question a couple of points. At first, it seemed to make sense...to my human mind. But it weighed on my mind until I knew why and had to respond. Molly mentions that she and her husband are avoiding pregnancy so that her body will be healthier for later pregnancies. To me, this sounds like she is saying that they are protecting themselves from God creating a miracle of life at a time that she and her husband think is too soon.

Cannot God be trusted to make the decision that is best for them, and best for His overall plan? He is as capable of NOT giving a baby, as He is of giving one. Also, God allows many things/trials that we wouldn't decide to experience, that show themselves to be great blessings. Is it OK to refuse a baby that may be created now, supposedly in order to take control over protecting later ones? He is the One who is in charge of the creation and the protection, now and later. I need to point out, too, that it's not safe to assume there will be later ones. That may not be God's plan for you. We don't know when our womb will be closed, as many of us can attest to.

Also, the Bible says that the only time a husband and wife should deny each other physical intimacy is during a consensual time of fasting and prayer. Fearing/preventing pregnancy for whatever reason does not qualify. (I have known couples who stretch this guideline and say that the middle of the wife's month is their fasting and prayer time, but I don't believe this to be in the spirit of the Scriptures.) I know that if there was a likely, major medical risk, it would be tough to have the faith to follow through completely. I'm not sure I could. I do know that God knows of our humanness, and cares about our concerns and will forgive us. That doesn't mean it's OK to go ahead and trust in our own wisdom over faith in His.

In the case of trusting God with the blessing of babies, 'stewardship' and 'common sense' are often thrown out as defense for human control of the womb. He calls us to faith, not to 'lean on our own understanding.'

The creation of a life and the generations of life that follow are not something I am qualified to refuse, prevent, or avoid.

There was a time I had just experienced my first of two miscarriages, AND was facing my 2nd test in a month for breast cancer. I wondered for a moment if maybe we should 'be careful' about getting pregnant. Thankfully, His voice spoke right away in my heart, and asked, "Don't you still trust Me?" It was powerful and wonderful, and I knew how to proceed from there. With Him and in faith, in His victory over fear. Love to all, especially those struggling with this conviction,
~Elaine Shaffer

"we refuse to call "sin" what God chose to leave unmentioned."

You mean things I guess like abortion or maybe arson? Just because something is not specifically mentioned with a "thou shalt not" does not mean it is ok to do it!

The "being a good steward" argument gives all sorts of reasons to not have children at all.. . .it would make more sense to wait till we have more money; or till we have a more stable housing situation; or till I am older; or maybe I am too old now, and we should not have any more. . . or anything.

Bottom line for me on birth control is - who is wiser and better able to plan my family? Dh and I, or GOD? No contest.
~Henrietta, mom to ten in England

Shannon writes: "*Wes and I are new to the whole idea of letting God be in complete control in this area of our lives and we are learning much. We were both raised by loving Christian families, but both practiced birth control. It's very confusing to*

be raised this way and encouraged to let God be in control in every area of your life accept this one area. We both never questioned it, as many others don't, because this is how we were raised and how everyone at the churches we attended believed was right. My husband and I have always loved children and have felt funny when asked if we would have anymore kids because it didn't feel natural to answer that ourselves or to be in control of that answer.

When I found out about the retreat I really wanted to go to learn more and felt God prodding me. Boy was I right! My husband and I have talked and prayed non-stop since returning, but are still not committed to what God has planned for us. We are working through your book "God's Vision For Families" and I see my husband taking a "headship" role more than ever for the first time. He told me tonight that he wants to start reading from the Word at dinner and that he would like me to cook more meals ☺.

I am also reading "Me, Obey Him" with other ladies at a homeschool mom's group I host on Monday nights. Cynthia and Annalisa both come and we are supporting and praying for one another. I just feel God all around me more than ever before and I soooo want to do His will. I am soooo grateful Wes and I are working through this together!!

Also, Chris (from South Lake Tahoe) asked me at the retreat how we ended up there. So, it got me thinking about it. About 2 years ago my mom mentioned a book by Teri and Steve Maxwell - Manager's of Their Homes. I found the titus2.com website and then found all these references to Above Rubies. I checked it out and felt my heart being touched by the stories. I of course ordered the magazine and loved it. Then I met Annalisa and found Cynthia knew about you guys too. I ordered your three books and the Grace at my Place tapes and was further touched. God was working on me.

Then I remembered about a dream my mom shared with me when I was 18. She had been praying that God would reveal to her His plans for her children and their spiritual gifts. She told me He revealed to her that I would be a nurturer of lots of children! At the time when I was 18, I brushed it off. I was headed for college and didn't think twice about it. My relationship with Jesus wasn't much. I met Wes in college and received my teaching degree. After graduating, my mom again mentioned the dream/vision and felt it was confirmed in me becoming a teacher. But, when I remembered this at the retreat and the fact that my mom also had a hand in me finding Above Rubies, I began to think that maybe this is another direction from the Lord about having more children - and He used my mom of all people!!!

This morning I was meditating on all of this and God gave me a verse! Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight! I couldn't believe it! This is what it's all about! I had been telling everyone that I believe in my heart that this is right, but my head is having a hard time believing it and letting go of the fear! I finally understand and relate to what this verse is saying! I shared it with Wes and he understood too! God is good!

Now for questions: These are a few that came up. I hope you can help answer them for me? I also understand that many of these questions are ones that can only be answered by God, but I thought perhaps you could give me possible answers/insights or scripture references for answers?

1. I completely agree children are blessings from God and he wants them to be raised in healthy families with a married mother and father, so why would God then choose to bless a 14-year-old teenage girl with a child?

2. Why would He bless two gay or lesbian people with a child?

3. Wes and I have been so fortunate with every pregnancy and birth. I have had easy ones with all three and we have conceived easily with each. But what about mothers with medical problems? I have a friend who had 2 children and would love more, but has been told by her doctor that she will probably die if she has another child because of complications she had with both pregnancies and births. Should she ignore the doctor and trust God or trust the doctor who God may be using to help her and use a BC method to not have anymore children?

4. Should a couple who is having trouble conceiving see a fertility doctor for help (like in vitro) because God may use him/her to help or should they do nothing and continue to trust God to possibly "bless" them?

5. Do you believe God wants every Christian couple to be QF or completely surrender to him in this area and let Him decide how many, if any, children they will have?
Trusting in Him, Shannon

***Trish Answers**:* I think God can use that baby He gives to the "14 yr. old" to bring change and accountability in her life or that of the father's or immediate family as well as He can save and use that child anytime down the road for great things.

If she chooses to abort, He can still use that child to affect her life and ultimately bring her to Him. We only see the parade as it passes by, remember, not the whole picture from beginning to end.

Again, in the instance of gay couples or any other non-believers, we don't know how God will use that child for His ultimate glory. It could be for salvation for any of the involved parties or merely because society needs people born in order to function properly. How many times have you been blessed by someone who wasn't a Christian? I've had lots of blessings come my way through goods & services provided by non-believers that I'm glad were born so that my needs could be met through these unique creations of God using their gifts and talents for mine and yours benefit, whether they acknowledge their creator or not. Will that help with Question 1-2?

For number 3, I know of others personally who've gone on to have more after the doctors told them no way, Jose. As far as whether your friend should trust God on this or not, all I can say is that is between her and her husband and God and none of us can really tell them what to do since we don't have to walk in their shoes. We can give them info and then they have to decide.

#4-I believe that a couple should explore radical nutritional changes first because our bodies have gotten so screwed up with the SAD (Standard American Diet) and all the chemicals we put in each day. Someone should detoxify and take mega doses of B vitamins *(see Marilyn Shannon's Fertility, Cycles & Nutrition from couple to couple league, http://www.ccli.org or http://www.abe.com a used book site).*

Many women's bodies need regulating and can be "fixed" this way. There are also herbs such as Don Quai which help correct female problems and there are herbs for the guys as well. This is not going against trusting God since we are attempting to work with Him to make our bodies good gardens for the children He would bless us with by using things He created. I'm not totally against in vitro....yet...since I believe God has created every single life then He also created the ones that man manipulated through test tubes. I have not gotten a clear yes or no personally in this area yet I know many QFers have strong opinions on this issue.

#5-Yes, I believe Christians should be totally open to God for the number and spacing of children, but I don't believe it is a salvation issue, just one of those things that we will see burn away when we meet Him face to face.

How many chocolate bars have I consumed that I knew He didn't want me to because they were bad for my body and my nurslings?

Likewise, what areas have others or I wrestled with. Everyone has something. **We are saved by grace, not works, not the number of little fish we can put on the back of the Suburban.** There's probably lots of little areas that God wants to shine His light on and we need to give up and give over. I've probably wasted so much money at Wal-Mart buying useless junk that I could have fed a small country. Pick your sin.

BUT, don't ask about the pygmies in Africa, you know what God wants of you and you cannot NOT do it because so and so at the church down the street isn't trusting God and is a pastor. God has shined His light on this area in your heart, not his right now (that we know of). We are all on a walk and God will finish the good work He began in all of us and we are not responsible for anyone else, just for what God has asked of us. In CS Lewis' The Horse & His Boy, Aslan tells the boy (Cor) that *"I tell no one anyone's story but his own."* Jesus answered Peter when he was asking about "that disciple" what if he should stay alive until I come

again? What business is that of yours?. Don't worry about what veryone else is doing, you and Wes seek God and do what God has asked of you.

Shannon replies: *We spent time in prayer and seeking His direction and now know that we are on the right path. Our greatest desire is to follow Him and His will for our lives. We realized in order to this fully we had to stop believing in the myth that birth control is okay. It is so easy in our culture to ignore the Biblical truths about children being blessings from God and get caught up with the "rat race". Christian and non-Christian families alike end up controlling our blessings to 1.8 children and not allowing God the opportunity to bless us further. We realize it is a difficult road to be on in our culture (especially California), but we are on it (with lots of support). We are no longer ignoring God's truths.*

In fact, we are soooo pleased to announce that God has blessed us again! We are expecting our fourth child this July! We actually conceived only two weeks after the Above Rubies conference - God had a plan!!! He prepared our hearts and minds for what was to come and we thank you so much for being a part of that. We are welcoming this baby with so much joy and happiness. God is so good.

A Final Thought

"…A number of months ago I "accidentally" stumbled upon an online article on the potentially abortifient effects of birth control pills. This was news I had never heard before and it really rocked my boat. I had been using birth control pills for years without a second thought. As I read the article I felt convicted by the Holy Spirit. I threw away the remaining pills immediately. This in turn led to several weeks of mental turmoil. My youngest is sixteen months old and nursing- I certainly had no plans of conceiving again anytime soon, if ever! The vast majority of online information I could find on the subject was from Catholic resources (almost exclusively) and I was truly in a state of distress over it. Then I met you. At the ICAP curriculum sale, you gave me copies of Above Rubies and Bonded Together.

This was the first time I had read anything like it and I knew our introduction was no accident- which I believe I mentioned to you that day. As I had been prayer about all the challenging and stretching of my mind and heart that God was doing, I wondered why I hadn't heard this info before... why an educated, well-read person would not have ever come across it until now. A friend of mine had apparently been praying for years that I would discover this info, and her take on it was God's timing is perfect. He presented the info when He knew I had been sufficiently prepared to receive and accept it. At another time I think I would have rejected it and found some very impressive argument to justify a different position. So, I received my first subscription issue of Bonded Together in yesterday's mail, and all the previous stuff I had seen on God controlling family size came together in that newsletter. I got it: children are a blessing and a large family can be an indication of God's favor- precisely what we are praying for. If my Father- whom I trust- wants that for us, then I am truly a favored daughter.

After an edifying conversation with my husband I went to bed with a new perspective, and the very next morning (that would be today) had a positive pregnancy test result!!!! I had only a half suspicion and was so surprised. I understand now why God allowed this information to come to me in the gentle way that it did and in His perfect timing. He had to first prepare my heart to submit to His will so that I could be part of His plans for this little one. Amazing how gentle the Shepherd is with His sheep, how patient and tolerant. I had to thank you for the way you allowed God to use you in preparing me for His work. I am a bit scared, but I know your ministry will encourage me in the upcoming months. I look forward to the new things He will teach me through you. More soon.…

~Connie Tiscareno

To School or Not to School

I grab my lunch and say goodbye ... with no doubt or question why
I'm sent to school to learn from those without the truth to which we hold
Amid the math and writing skills ... between the lines they try to kill ...
belief in God and all His rules
you've taught me well ... the Scriptures tell ... of how they are considered fools
I know you want what's best for me, so I won't even question
decisions of you sending me, to a place that wants for me
to learn of great humanity ... conforming to society ... without a Christianity
You say to me the goal in life's to love the Lord with all our might
to run the race and win the prize, but they will teach me otherwise
So here I go, the salt and light, to do for you the best I can
Please pray that I am not deceived and trade my faith in God for man.
- the Harpazo Network

"And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea." Mark 9:42

The following are excerpts from an article "To School or Not to School". The full article is at: http://www.harpazo.net/Homeschooling/

"Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward." *Psalm 127:3*

As Christian parents it is a given that we love our children ... correct? We look out for them and understand it is our responsibility to care for them in accordance with God's Word. We do it without question of course, because we are good parents and that's our job.

Our children are a gift from God. We love them, we cherish them, we nurture and protect them. We acknowledge our responsibility and exercise freely our parental rights by setting common sense boundaries over them. We take care of them ... choose what they eat ... when they go to bed ... what they wear ... what they watch on tv, etc.
So how is it that while practicing all of these and more ... that we find it acceptable that we give up all parental authority and common sense in an area so important as their **ed·u·ca·tion**?!? What would compel us to relinquish all our rights and responsibilities and put them in the hands of strangers?

Why is it a given that when a child turns 5 we put them on a bus and let them go off to be taught by others who do not know or love them. Why when we learn that so much of what is taught is **completely contrary** to what we are commanded to teach our children, do we take a passive attitude as if there is nothing that can be done. We sit back and say, 'what a shame that they are being taught this or that' ... *as we allow it to continue!*

This does not need to be. And we would like to suggest that it is inconsistent with what we are to do as Christian parents. Yet an overwhelming majority do.

Another option exists ... A good one ... HOME SCHOOLING. And many believe whole-heartedly that it is the *Biblically Correct* approach to **raising and discipling** Christian children.

The purpose of this page is neither to accuse nor judge those who have placed their children in public schools. Rather to provoke us as Christian parents to examine the decisions we make - as with everything - through the lens of God's Word!…
Evolution, The Big Bang Theory, Sex Ed, Homosexuality, Ritalin Abuse, Witchcraft ... This list could go on & on, we have only touched on a few of the more obvious issues.

Isn't it sending mixed messages to your children ... to teach them one thing at home and send them to school to be taught something completely contrary? **It offers a lot of undue confusion!** Can you confidently send this little boy or girl out the door in the morning and say *"Listen to your teacher"? (This is not to say that there are not some wonderful people out there - with good intentions - who happen to be teachers ... but we realize that even a Christian Teacher in a Public School would still be expected to cover the required curriculum.)*
**** IMAGINE THIS:** Your child comes home one day and tells you they just learned that **2+2=10**... what would you do?

Would you be very bothered that they aren't learning their Math correctly? And how about when they tell you their teacher told them this WAS indeed correct ... and all the other students believe it is correct.

Wouldn't you grow even more disturbed? WHY? ... Because it *isn't* correct! It is a lie. And your child is *supposed to be there* to **get an education!** How about when your child takes that Math Test and puts down the correct answer **(2+2=4)** yet has it marked wrong. Would you put up with it? Doubtful.

Would you explain to little Johnny that *"Their teacher is not teaching them Math correctly, but they will just have to answer the questions according to what the teacher tells them anyway"*? Your child may think - and they'd be right - "Then why are you sending me there to learn Math?"

How about Language? If they came home telling you that they learned how 'words are made with numbers rather than letters.' What would you do?

Yet we look away when they **degrade our God** in front of your child and tell them they evolved by random chance and natural selection. That they came from a monkey. Where is the line to be drawn? Science, History, Math, Language Arts? *(Personally, we find '2+2=10' MUCH LESS OFFENSIVE than to say "there is no Creator")*

"The thoughts of the righteous are right: but the counsels of the wicked are deceit." *Proverbs 12:5*

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish." *Psalm 1:1-6*

"Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge." *Proverbs 19:27*

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction" *Proverbs 1:7*

If the FEAR OF THE LORD is indeed the BEGINNING of KNOWLEDGE ... How much KNOWLEDGE can be known - or taught - in a place that neither acknowledges nor teaches even the most basic principals of their very Creator?

"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men." *Matthew 5:13*

'Aren't we suppose to send our children to the Public School to be Salt & Light???

NO! Your children are supposed to be at school **receiving an education** ... not to be missionaries. They are supposed to be there TO LEARN. So just what are they learning ... and is it in line with the Biblical principals we are COMMANDED to teach them?

> **LEARN:** To gain knowledge, comprehension, or mastery of through experience or study. To fix in the mind or memory; memorize (source: dictionary.com)

It is counterproductive to send our children out of the home each day to learn what we consider to be incorrect ... to learn things that are not only "unbiblical" but ANTI-BIBLICAL! This puts us in the defensive position of sorts, as we try to defend the Christian/Biblical World View against all the "scientific evidence" they will be presented with at school. And is this being good stewards of our time OR seriously wasting it with a lot of backpedaling?

Another undeniable issue concerning sending our children out to be Salt & Light in Public Schools is that sadly, the numbers state that more often than not, our children are being influenced by the world rather than winning their unsaved classmates and teachers to Christ!

There are plenty of opportunities given to us daily - as Christians - to be the Salt & Light in this world. Adults in the workplace ... Families in their neighborhoods ... Churches in their communities and so on. It can and should be done without subjecting our children to a ungodly education.

"Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals." *1 Corinthians 15:33*

"The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour: but the way of the wicked seduceth them." *Proverbs 12:26*

"He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." *Proverbs 13:20*

"Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?" *Luke 6:40 and Matthew 15:14*

What about the dreaded "D" word...**DOUBT**.

What if while receiving their education from a Public School you find that your children begin to doubt YOU rather than their textbooks? What if the overwhelming & outnumbering influence of the teachers/peers all accepting one view on one side ... vs. Ma & Pa on the other makes them doubt YOU!

This also places your child into an awkward position; whose telling the truth and who is telling lies? *'Do I trust my Mom & Dad OR do I trust my Teacher? They cannot both be right.'* And on so many of the issues being addressed here we see that the views are world's apart. Wouldn't this cause a conflict?

The Bible says: **"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other..."** (Matthew 6:24 and Luke 16:13)

"A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher." *(Luke 6:40)* The student who admires his teacher doesn't just acquire the same knowledge, Jesus was saying. The two will eventually think alike; they will talk alike, even live alike. Our teacher should be the Lord Jesus Himself, and we, in turn, should teach our children. We should be able to say to them, as Paul said to the Corinthians, ***"Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ"*** *(1Corinthians 11:1)* (Gregg Harris, The Christian Home School, pg 75)

Many seem to think their children are incapable of being deceived and led astray! We have addressed the issue on other pages in this website about how even Christian ADULTS often fall prey to deception in one area or another and how it takes diligent, constant study of the Scriptures to arm oneself against these things .... *Yet your 9-year-old, cannot falter?* .....

If children being the Salt & Light is the main objective ... it should be equally acceptable to drop them off with a Cult ... and trust that they will win over the Cult members to Jesus Christ ... right? *Of course not!!!* Our children should not be sitting under nor receiving an education from a Cult ... no more than they should be taught the false Religion of Secular Humanism. Both are contrary to the Word of God.

In keeping with this same topic ... if your child is already so equipped and immovable in his faith as to go into the world for the majority of his time and be completely unaffected (what so many Christian adults have yet to accomplish) ... We are curious. When are they doing all this learning as to fully equip them for this task?

What is the average day of a child who attends a Public School like? How is their time spent? They wake up at about 6:30/7:00 am - get ready - and are off to school by about 8:00 am. (give or take a little) They are then in school till about 3:00 p.m. ... correct? Add even more time if they are involved in after school activities ... They come home, eat dinner ... How long do they spend on Homework? ... How much time are you left with before their bedtime? ... And in this time, are you spending major quality time with them pumping them full of God's truths **to counteract** all the negative teaching they've heard on some of the above listed topics at school that day? Are you having family devotions? And what about other family time ... play time? Is there any? How much time do they get to spend with their brothers and sisters? Do they have anytime left to spend with Christian friends?

NOW add the amount of time they spend weekly in Church, Youth Group, Wednesday Night services etc. When you add it all together and compare it ... you may find the majority of your children's best waking hours are spent in the Public School surrounded mainly by unbelievers.

**** IMAGINE THIS:** What would you do if your child were to come up to you today and ask you if they could start having only *Twinkies* for breakfast, lunch and dinner each day - would you let them? Of course not! Why? Because it is not in their best interest of course.

I don't think you would reason this scenario out in your mind and say *'it will be okay if they have Twinkies for all their meals each day because they have a piece of Broccoli each evening and a salad on Sunday mornings which will neutralize all the bad effects that the Twinkies would produce as the majority of their diet.'* A regular diet of *Twinkies* would not be healthy for them and you as a good parent know this. They would not be getting enough of the nourishment they need to grow. This may eventually have adverse effects on their health and so on ...

And so it is when a child from a Christian home spends the majority of their time with unbelievers ... being taught so much Anti-Biblical stuff. Do you think this will be balanced by a couple hours of church activities per week? They need more than this. Much more!

The Bible says*:* ***"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."*** *Deuteronomy 6:6,7 (See also; Deuteronomy 11:18-21)*

Here is a crazy thought
Maybe you could teach your own children
as you sit in your house ...
and when you walk by the way ...
and when you lie down ...
and when you rise up ...
Sounds like a full time arrangement doesn't it?
"My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck." *Proverbs 1:8-10*
"My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee. For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life." *Proverbs 6:20-23*
"And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children." *Isaiah 54:13*
"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." *III John 1:4*
"Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding. For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law. For I was my father's son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother. He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live. Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth." *Proverbs 4:1-5*
"And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." *Ephesians 6:4*

…As we stated above it is not our intention to judge those Christians who send their children to Public Schools. We realize - statistically speaking - it may be a great portion of our readers. However we do hope we have provoked you to give this subject some serious thought. We know you love your children and want what's best for them. God knew in advance that this would be the case. So He gave us - in His Word - all the answers we would need to this - and every - question.

In addition to the Biblical reasons that we believe Home Education is God's best for Christian families ... a case could also be made on the failure of Public Education in general. For thousands of years - until the mid 1800's - families successfully taught their own children without the help of the government and it's compulsory schooling. Frankly, It isn't working! The facts speak for themselves. This type of schooling also takes your children away from their home & family for the majority of their days from the time they are just barely older than toddler age till almost adulthood. These years are VERY CRUCIAL in raising and discipling your children.

It seems much like a game of Russian Roulette ... to HOPE they will be able to handle the Public Schools ... to HOPE they will weed out all the misinformation, propaganda and lies ... to HOPE they will not succumb to peer pressure ... to HOPE that they will keep themselves from compromise! ... To sit back and say *"I am not worried it is in God's Hands"* is irresponsible. Fathers, would you take this approach with employment? *(i.e; "I don't feel like working, so I'll just trust God to provide food, money and clothing for my family")* We hope not ... because the Bible clearly says: ***"But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."*** *(1 Timothy 5:8).*

Likewise, God has given us thorough counsel on the raising of our children. We are responsible to do as He asks. Our children belong to Him and He has put them in our care for a time. Let us not become so involved *'building our ministries'* that we overlook such an important ministry right under our own roof!

We do have a choice. Let's make the best one - Too much is riding on it!

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

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About the Medical Information in this Newsletter

The medical information in this newsletter can be viewed as being very negative towards the established medical system in this country and even "alarmist" in nature. That's not because I'm a hyper-paranoid quasi cultist thinking that everyone is "out to get me" (even if they really are ☺). The stories we choose to put in are to reflect a trend in our culture towards accepting whatever a conventional medical belief is about anything healthcare related as being the "gospel truth" on that issue.

We hope to counter that with alternative information and stimulate and challenge our readers to dig deeper and to research all options. We are not out to abolish the entire medical profession. Crisis medicine has saved many lives and if I'm ever in a major auto wreck with blood coming out of my body everywhere I would rather be taken to a hospital than a chiropractor. A skilled technician is always appreciated.

But when it comes to the internal workings of the wonderful body that God has created and designed to work despite the effects of Sin in our world, there are just too many things that the medical institution and pharmaceutical conglomerates have pushed on an ignorant and uninformed public that run counter to working with the body for health and healing.

We do not claim to know all the facts. Only God does. Not the doctors or homeopaths or anyone else living here on Earth. We are all "only human" and the best we can do is prayerfully ask God for wisdom in each particular instance and find out as much as we can as we try to make the best informed decision as possible. So please don't believe or disbelieve everything you read in these pages, but diligently check it all out and even then, hold on to it lightly in case knew research/info comes out later that says otherwise.

To Peek or Not to Peek

Ultrasound. It is very common now and someone who chooses not to have one is looked at as quite odd. But is it totally safe and as harmless as everyone has been led to believe? Here are some links and quotes from them that say otherwise. Is it "natural" to send sound waves into our body and bounce them off our babies? Certainly not. Is it prudent? Sometimes. It has been used to detect things that can be dealt with before birth and is credited for saving the lives of mothers and babies. It is it overused? Definitely. Each pregnancy is different and, just like cesarean sections, there are times when ultrasound is a great technology to have available for our judicious use. But let's keep it at that: use it judiciously and not to check out every baby in every pregnancy. Prayerfully consider it and seek God's wisdom before running in for a sonogram.

The Dangers of Prenatal Ultrasound
http://www.unhinderedliving.com/pultra.html

"To give you some means of comparison, I offer this analogy. Have you seen a woman with an extremely high voice break a glass by singing an extremely high pitched note? That is an example of what just ONE relatively slow sound wave can do. Ultrasound technology is based upon ultra high-frequency sound waves, which bombard the child in the womb at an extremely high rate of speed. If one slow sound wave from a woman's voice can break a glass, what can super high frequency sound waves do to your child? Ultrasound waves in laboratory experiments have been known to damage chromosomes, produce internal cellular heat which damages cells, retard the normal development of cells, and many other phenomenon."

Ultrasound Scans Linked to Brain Damage in Babies (*this link brings up the home page, then type in this title into their search engine)* **http://educate-yourself.org/cn/2001/ultrasoundandbraindamage19dec01.shtml**

"More subtle, but potentially more dangerous, is the routine application of ultrasound in normal pregnancies. Although most medical practitioners assure us that ultrasound presents no dangers, this procedure, which is used to study the body's internal organs with non-ionizing waves, has been the subject of research indicating some considerable risks. Although supposedly said to work with sound waves, they are not in the audible range, so their high frequency is not natural to the body. Dr. Mendelsohn wrote, "Ultrasound produces at least two biological effects--heat and a process called 'cavitation' in which bubbles are created that expand and contract in response to sound waves. The first time I saw this cavitation process in action, a chiropractor turned on the therapeutic ultrasound machine in his office and placed a few drops of water on the part of the machine that was applied to the patient. I wish every reader...could have been with me to watch that water suddenly boil and bubble" (The People's Doctor, Vol.7, No. 11, p. 3).

"After ferreting out the truth about ultrasound over the years, Dr. Mendelsohn received copies of documents researching the procedure, which anyone may receive by writing WHO Publications Center, 49 Sheridan Ave.,
Albany, NY 12210, asking for "Environmental Health Criteria 22: Ultrasound." Experiments cited in these documents indicated reduced fetal weight and reduced fetal organ weight in animals who received ultrasound. Researchers are noticing a small but definite reduction in newborn birth rate among human infants exposed to ultrasound. The immune systems of laboratory animals exposed to the procedure are said to be affected. It also affects the blood platelets which allow the blood to clot. This could lead to problems with circulation because of traveling blood clots. Changes in the structure and composition of cells, including genetic material, has been suspected. In experiments with animals, these changes have resulted in defective embryos with a variety of problems. Researchers postulate that problems incurred by ultrasound could take as long as 20 years to surface, including the possibility of cancer and, most commonly suspected, leukemia. The mother might also experience congenital malformations."

Weighing the Risks: What You Should Know about Ultrasound
http://www.mothering.com/11-0-0/html/11-2-0/ultrasound-risk.shtml

"In westernized healthcare systems, ultrasound, which may be offered to a pregnant woman either to investigate a possible problem at any stage of pregnancy or as a routine scan at around 18 weeks, has become almost universal in pregnancy. In Australia, where I live, 99 percent of pregnant women have at least one scan, paid for in part by our federal government, through Medicare. In fact, from 1997 to 1998 Medicare paid out AU$39 million for obstetric scans, compared to AU$54 million for all other obstetric Medicare costs. In the US, the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ACOG) estimates that 60 to 70 percent of pregnant women are scanned, ***despite an official statement from ACOG that recommends against routine ultrasound.***[2] *At a cost of roughly $300 per procedure, this represents a cost of approximately $70 to $80 million each year in the US."*

Ultrasound: Weighing the Propaganda Against the Facts
http://www.findadoulatoday.com/articles/ultrasound.asp?q=ultrasound

"Obstetricians in Michigan (Lorenz et al., 1990) studied fifty-seven women who were at risk of giving birth prematurely. Half were given a weekly ultrasound examination; the rest had pelvic examinations. Preterm labour was more than doubled in the ultrasound group–52 percent–compared with 25 percent in the controls. Although the numbers were small the difference was unlikely to have emerged by chance.
"A large randomised controlled trial from Helsinki (Saari-Kemppainen et al., 1990) randomly divided over 9,000 women into a group who were scanned at sixteen to twenty weeks compared with those who were not. It revealed twenty miscarriages after sixteen to twenty weeks in the screened group and none in the controls."

Risks of Ultrasound Scanning
http://www.fraternet.org/naissance//docs/ultrasound1.htm

"A study by Jahn revealed that out of 2,378 pregnancies, only 58 of 183 growth retarded babies were diagnosed before birth, and 45 fetuses were wrongly diagnosed as being growth retarded when they were not. Only 28 of the 72 severely growth-retarded babies were detected before birth. Furthermore, the diagnosed babies were more likely to be delivered by caesarean section (44.4%) compared with 17.4% for the babies who were not small for dates. If a baby actually had IUGR the section rate varied hugely according to whether it was diagnosed before birth (73.1% sectioned) or not (30.4%). Preterm delivery was 5 times more frequent in those whose IUGR was diagnosed before birth than those who were not.
"The average diagnosed pregnancy was 2.3 weeks shorter than the undiagnosed one. The admission rate to intensive care was 3 times higher for the diagnosed babies. This important study provides further evidence that scans are not benefiting babies or those mothers who were subjected to caesarean sections."

Ultrasound - More powerful, more dangerous, more unethical
http://www.aims.org.uk/ultra2.htm

"However, recently he and Dr Platt his co-editor of a specialist journal on ultrasound were faced with a dilemma. [1] Two studies were submitted on early human embryos, and the most powerful forms of ultrasound - pulsed and colour Doppler - had been used. [2,3] These create intensities many times higher than normal scans. And, as we already know, when the probe is inserted into the vagina, as in this case, the ultrasound does not have to go through the wall of abdomen, which absorbs some of the energy. The journal had previously published studies where pulsed Doppler was used at 11-14 weeks gestation, but when it came down to 10 weeks it seems the editors became concerned.
"It is significant that one of the studies was done on women who had had fertility treatment. It is on this group that transvaginal probes and ultrasonic study of embryos began - these women were only too willing to agree to investigations they thought might help and give them early indication of pregnancy. Is it coincidence that outcome of such pregnancies - the most closely monitored of all - is so poor, with a high rate of both abnormalities and deaths?"

In the News

Motherhood makes women smarter, study suggests

By Maggie Fox

WASHINGTON, Nov 7 (Reuters) - Motherhood may make women smarter and may help prevent dementia in old age by bathing the brain in protective hormones, U.S. researchers reported on Thursday.

Tests on rats show that those who raise two or more litters of pups do significantly better in tests of memory and skills than rats who have no babies, and their brains show changes that suggest they may be protected against diseases such as Alzheimer's.

University of Richmond psychology professor Craig Kinsley believes his findings will translate into humans.

"Our research shows that the hormones of pregnancy are protecting the brain, including estrogen, which we know has many neuroprotective effects," Kinsley said.

"It's rat data but humans are mammals just like these animals are mammals," he added in a telephone interview. "They go through pregnancy and hormonal changes."

Kinsley said he hoped public health officials and researchers will look to see if having had children protects a woman from Alzheimer's and other forms of age-related brain decline.

"When people think about pregnancy, they think about what happens to infants and the mother from the neck down," said Kinsley, who presented his findings to the annual meeting of the Society of Neuroscience in Orlando, Florida.

HORMONES WASHING THE BRAIN

"They do not realize that hormones are washing on the brain. If you look at female animals who have never gone through pregnancy, they act differently towards young. But if she goes through pregnancy, she will sacrifice her life for her infant -- that is a tremendous change in her

behavior that manifested in genetic alterations to the brain."

Kinsley's team tested rats that had never had a litter of pups, had raised one litter, or had raised two or more litters. The rats ranged in age up to two years -- the equivalent of 70 to 80 years in a human, Kinsley said.

The rats were given two tests involving finding food inside and outside a maze. They were retested several times over two years.

"Females who had two reproductive experiences were able to learn and remember the maze better than females with one or zero," Kinsley said. "Females with zero were not able to do the maze as well as females with one (pregnancy)."

The team later killed the rats and looked at their brains -- specifically at the hippocampus, the region of the brain associated with learning and memory. The rats that had several pregnancies had lower levels of a protein called amyloid precursor protein -- which, in humans, is associated with the development of Alzheimer's.

He needs to do more tests but believes the effect may be even stronger in human females, who invest much more time and effort in raising offspring. Humans also have the "grandmother effect" -- older women in most societies play a role in raising their grandchildren and thus the children benefit from having grandmothers who engage their faculties.

Kinsley said he became interested in his research after his wife had a baby during an especially stressful year when he started a new job and the family moved to a new house.

"Watching her and how her behavior became more efficient during this time got me thinking about the links between maternal behavior and maternal efficiency," he said. "Nature seems to provide the mother with a boost to enable her to care, long term, for the most important and costly genetic and metabolic investment she will ever make -- her offspring."

Do Vaccines Cause Immunity?

(From Tory)
Dear Friends:

I have a sister who took her child's titers instead of vaccinating on the American schedule at age 5. She did this because the first cousin is autistic and she is concerned that vaccines are the "trigger" for
autism, particularly in light of the Mind Institute results from CA. last week.

Her child was fully vaccinated up until the booster requirements at age 5. However, this is what her tests indicated, and now she is looking for additional information to support her to not immunize. She was shocked to find her child was not immune after so many shots and was hoping that this would be a way she could feel comfortable about not vaccinating.

Can anyone help direct her to appropriate info. so she can make an informed choice? My personal feelings (HUGE anxieties...) on vaccines are not enough
.. With thanks for any help to sway an average stay-at-home mom.

This boy is 5. He had the full American dose schedule, and 1/2 of them failed according to his titers which indicated the following: Lab: American Medical laboratories
Not immune to Hepb <less than 10 mill.>
Immune to Rubella at 104, greater than 15 is shown immune
Mumps - tests show .76, less than .9 is a negative, therefore he is not
immune
Pertussis - not immune, less than 5
IgG immune at 40, tests show child's level is 5
IgA immune at 10, tests show child's level is at 1
IgM immune at 5, show at 2, DPT, not immune
Tetanus – immune, Varicella - not immune

Tory Mead, Portland, OR

Tory,

I trust that others more experienced will answer this question, but will throw a few ideas at you for assisting in understanding the problem and hopefully communicating to your sister.

You might print out the wonderful ***"DISPELLING VACCINATION MYTHS"*** widely available, one source is: http://www.unc.edu/~aphillip/www/vaccine/dvm1.htm

Also direct her to: ***"WHY VACCINES DON'T WORK"***, found at:
http://www.vaccinationdebate.com/web4.html

Neil Z. Millers book, ***"ARE VACCINES REALLY SAFE AND EFFECTIVE?"*** is a great gift.

In the meantime, think about the following:

1. THE CHILD IS TODAY IMMUNE TO ALL THE DISEASES ON YOUR LIST.

Evidence: the child does not have the clinical signs of any of the diseases. Antibodies are NOT the key to immunity. Even mainstream immune system theory recognizes that antibodies are a very small part of
a large and complex 'total body health'. Only the 'sales force' sticks with antibody theory and measurements for selling vaccines. Forget antibody measurements. (Vaccines do not succeed because the body makes 'antibodies', vaccines do not fail because the body 'cleans out' the
contamination (antigens) which is the vaccine ingredients. Vaccines FAIL because immunity has little or nothing to do with antibodies, and because immunity comes only from total body health not some extremely small part of the body.

2. THE CHILD IS EXPOSED EVERY DAY TO MANY 'GERMS OF DISEASE', NOT NECESSARILY TO ANY 'DISEASE CAUSING GERMS'.

Micro-organisms are not the cause of infectious diseases, at least not a primary cause, but rather the chemistry of the body must be unbalanced or polluted for 'unfriendly' virus to have an environment where they can grow. Keep the chemistry of the body in balance and internally clean (detoxified) and the body will not need to conduct an 'acute, beneficial healing episode' commonly known as disease symptoms. If the body does need to detoxify, this will be beneficial and safe if the child has adequate internal nutritional support.

3. HEALTHY CHILDREN DO NOT NEED ANYTHING BEYOND WHAT THEY ALREADY HAVE. UNHEALTHY CHILDREN NEED SOMETHING TO BRING THE BODY INTO BALANCE OR ELIMINATE AN EXCESS.

That 'something needed' is frequently vitamin A or C, may be love or rest or recreation, may be challenge or acceptance, may be patience or courage, but no one
has ever successfully proven that any child has ever benefited from an injection of rotting matter combined with nerve and brain destroying poisons, the actual ingredients of vaccines.

Hopefully, your sister will see that choosing not to vaccinate is the best approach. Remind her that vaccination is an 'elective procedure' and she would be wise to thoroughly study the subject before submitting
to what is a superstition that lacks scientific proof. Ask her to get information from those who have studied both sides, taken time to digest the information, and who are free of any Money, Power, or Prestige motives in a conflict of interest regarding the answer.

In friendship, Dewey Duffel
*Links to any of the above, including the book, may be found at: http://www.vaclib.org/indexdoc.htm

Vaccination Liberation - Idaho Chapter, P.O. Box 1444 Coeur d'Alene, ID 83816 (208)255-2307/ 765-8421
vaclib@coldreams.com

Can Ritalin Kill a child?

By Samuel Blumenfeld
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On March 21, 2000, 14-year-old Matthew Smith dropped dead of a heart attack while skateboarding. The ninth-grader had been on Ritalin since the first grade. Lawrence Smith, father of the youngster, has testified that he and his wife were forced by Michigan Social Services to put their child on Ritalin or else be charged for neglecting their son's educational and emotional needs.

"His last report card was his best," says Lawrence Smith. "But it wasn't worth it for us. Putting him on Ritalin was the worst decision I've ever made." And that's because no long-range study had been made of the effects of Ritalin on children who take it over a number of years.

It has also been known since 1986 that methylphenidate, the generic term for Ritalin, causes shrinkage of the brain. A study that appeared in Psychiatry Research (Vol. 17, 1986) states: "The data in this study are suggestive of mild cerebral atrophy in young male adults who had a diagnosis of HK/MBD during childhood and had received stimulant drug treatment for a period of time."

Another study published in Archives of General Psychiatry (July 1996) found that "Subjects with ADHD had a 4.7 percent smaller total cerebral volume." Fifty-three of the 57 subjects with ADHD had been previously treated with psycho-stimulants. Apparently, these drugs constrict the flow of blood.

Despite these alarming findings, nearly 6 million children take Ritalin or one of a number of other stimulants in order to attend school. According to the Boston Globe (May 14, 2002): "New Englanders buy more of the stimulant Ritalin and its generic equivalents per capita than residents of any other part of the country." Believe it or not, New Hampshire is the nation's leading consumer of methylphenidate, the generic name for Ritalin. Next in consumption is Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Maine.

Why such high consumption in New England? The region has more doctors per capita, and therefore more children are likely to be prescribed medication for so-called attention disorders. Also, New England has a high concentration of liberals who love the public schools and are more inclined to be cooperative when educators recommend drugging their children. In addition, more and more adults are taking Ritalin and its competitor, Adderall.

Parents Magazine and Good Housekeeping of September 2002 had two-page ads for Adderall XR, suggesting that life for a child could be so much better if he were on the drug. The ad reads:

Finding the right medication may help you see a big difference in how your child feels about himself or herself and what he or she is able to accomplish all day, every day! Ask your doctor if a change to patient-friendly Adderall XR could be right for your child.

In other words, "Parents, please switch from Ritalin to Adderall." The ad then has these cautionary words about side effects:

Adderall XR is for patients with a confirmed diagnosis of Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). The most common side effects are decreased appetite, loss of sleep (insomnia), abdominal pain, and emotional lability [instability]. Amphetamines have a high potential for abuse. Caution is advised in patients with a history of high blood pressure or mental illness. There is a potential for worsening of motor and phonic tics and Tourette's syndrome.

When parents are advised to put their child on Ritalin, no examination is made to see if that child might be allergic to its side effects. Of course, some children seem to benefit from the drug. Otherwise, there wouldn't be 6 million children on it and other similar drugs. But the power of methylphenadate is closer to cocaine than aspirin.

Recently, I received a call from a father being pressured by a school to put his son on Ritalin. What did I think of the idea, he asked. I told him of the sudden death of some children, the violent and murderous behavior of others, and the fact that Ritalin shrinks the brain. He wanted me to tell all of this to his wife who was inclined to go along with the school.

So he put her on the phone. She listened politely. But when I told her of the shrinkage of the brain, she wanted to know if it produced any behavioral change. I said I didn't know, but I thought that more brain was better than less brain.

As far as I knew, no investigations had been made by medical researchers on what happens to intelligence when the brain atrophies. But I got the distinct impression that this boy's mother was not alarmed by brain shrinkage per se. If I could not demonstrate a definite loss of intelligence or nervous-system capability, then brain shrinkage was really nothing to worry about.

In fact, the Detroit News of Dec. 12, 2002, reported that there was indeed nothing to worry about. The article's headline said it all: "Ritalin is safe and it works." An excited reporter wrote:

For more than a generation, we've been "drugging" our unruly children to calm them down. And in doing so, we have risked damaging their young brains and setting them up for long-term drug addiction or so we have been warned.

But now, that mantra is being turned inside-out. The first long-term results of what some have called a huge drug experiment on our children shows what almost no one expected.

Not only do the stimulant drugs used to treat "Attention-Deficit Hyperactive Disorder" or ADHD as it is known not damage the brain, they appear to enhance brain growth, helping afflicted children catch up in brain size to their more "normal" peers.

That blockbuster finding, printed recently in the Journal of the American Medical Association, is finally easing the fears of parents afraid of these drugs and is sending experts on a mission to get the word out.

Apparently the article in the Journal of the AMA is based on a 10-year study by the National Institute of Mental Health. The study revealed that children with ADHD indeed have smaller brains to begin with, but those treated with psycho-stimulants such as Ritalin experience brain growth.

What is one to believe? The National Institute of Mental Health is a federal bureaucracy used by Congress to justify expenditures of billions of dollars to solve such problems as the genetic causes of dyslexia.

What about those studies cited earlier in this article showing that these drugs reduce brain size? Apparently they were performed by experts not on the payrolls of the drug companies and not geared to gaining federal funding. Which means that parents must still be wary of drugs that can kill young children.

Dr. Samuel L. Blumenfeld is the author of eight books on education, including: "Is Public Education Necessary?" "NEA: Trojan Horse in American Education," "The Whole Language/OBE Fraud" and "Homeschooling: A Parents Guide to Teaching Children." His books are available on Amazon.com. Back issues of his incisive newsletter, The Blumenfeld Education Letter, are available online.

THOUGHTS ON OUR ATTITUDES TOWARDS FOOD

Hello Ladies, My name is Tess and I am wife of 28 years. Mother of 6....4 "grown and flown".....and 3 grandbabies! I have crippling arthritis, and Crohn's disease. In the last 3 months God has graciously lead me to a naturopathic physician and I am so much better it amazes me! I can walk again! with very little pain! and my stomach problems are all but gone!

Praise HIS NAME! It seems I have gluten allergy and removing all gluten, eating a "Pure diet" and taking supplements has given me a new life. After 2 months my sinful mind and appetite has started working overtime. I have not cheated by using gluten! NO_too much pain! But I have picked here and there on sugar, and junk foods. (I also have gone off all pop! Impossible I thought for I LOVE diet coke) but I have

given that up too (except for 1 a week ago) and I paid for that with a breast infection the next day-sick all week!! Well, my point in sharing this is a passage I was studying last night that I thought might help others of you who struggle with eating to please the Lord.

I was reading in Psalm 78 last night. Read verse 18..."And they tested God in their heart By asking for the FOOD OF THEIR FANCY." and it goes on to tell how He provided food from heaven and they still wanted their old fancy food. I was so convicted of how God has given me so many things I can eat that support my health and I desire the **FANCY FOOD**. In verses 22 and 32 along with many other sins, it is declared that this amounted to unbelief!

SO our food desires and indulgences amount to unbelief! and to sum it up in verse 33...."Therefore their days He consumed in futility, and their years in fear." Ouch. It gave me a whole new perspective on why I ought to eat the good things He has provided and stop yearning after the **FANCY FOOD** that harms my body and makes me too weak and sick to serve Him and my family and church! Love, Tess

(Editor's note: Guilty as Charged!!!)

DOES YOUR SYSTEM NEED A BOOST!!!!!!

Bodywise has helped my family and I attain a greater level of health and energy. They offer products that offer support or help combat today's health issues from great pre-natal quality multi-vitamin to cancer, blood sugar, joints, hormones and cold/flu busters for more info. send me an email at **mskoehn@netzero.net** **or Sharon Koehn 1449 Chase Lane, El Cajon, CA 92020 or 619-447-2087**.

Almond Butter Balls, contributed by Sharon Gilbert

Combine equal parts of raw almond butter and raw honey. Add enough raw wheat germ to make it thick enough to roll into balls. Roll in fine coconut and freeze on cookie sheet. When firm, store in zip-lock freezer bag.
There are other variations as well for example, I've used tahini in place of almond butter and date sugar in place of honey. In that case, you would need less wheat germ.
These are good to have in the freezer to bribe the children to say "No thank you" to the gummy worms offered by their Sunday school teacher.

Produce with the Most Pesticides

by Arlene Kroeker, The Richmond Review

Why eat certified organic produce? To reduce health risks from pesticides in fruits and vegetables. What if you can t afford, or find, organic produce? Another option is to minimize consumption of the twelve fruits and vegetables that consistently carry the most pesticides and the most toxic pesticides. The Environmental Working Group says, If you eat in America, you eat pesticides.

Health risks include cancer, disruption of hormonal production, and nervous system toxicity. But, there are nutritious substitutes that have relatively lower levels of pesticides and still supply all the vitamins and nutrients needed. Strawberries top the list of most contaminated fruits, test positive for several pesticides and chemicals. Substitute with blueberries, raspberries, blackberries and kiwis.

Spinach in cartoons makes muscle, but in real life the chemicals used to treat it may cause cancer or interfere with hormone production. Wash spinach vigilantly. Substitute raw spinach with romaine lettuce. Broccoli and brussel sprouts for cooked spinach. There are more than 60 pesticides registered for use on green beans. Choose fresh over canned or frozen and wash well. Green peas, broccoli, zucchini, potatoes will provide the same amounts of vitamins C and A, and potassium. An apple a day keeps the doctor away, except that apples have more pesticides on them than any other fruit or vegetable 36 different pesticides.

Any other fruit or vegetable not on the most contaminated list works as a safe and more nutritious substitute for the apple. Cantaloupes from Mexico contain five of the longest lasting chemicals. Thoroughly wash the outside of the melon before slicing. Chilean grapes ripen quickly and mould. Multiple applications of pesticides are used and 17 pesticides have been found on one crop. Eat U.S.-grown grapes in season and avoid grapes from January through April, when Chile dominates the market. Cucumbers rank second in cancer risk and 12th in most contamination. Peel them before use.

Nutritious substitutes include any vegetable not on the contaminated list. Bell peppers from the United States and Mexico can contain up to 26 pesticides. Eighty-one percent of the 188 celery samples tested positive for pesticide residues, more than any other crop analyzed. Five different pesticides were found on a single sample. Use romaine lettuce, broccoli and carrots instead of peppers and celery.

Cherries, the summer peach, and the delicate apricot all contain consistently high levels of multiple pesticides. Blueberries, raspberries, oranges, watermelon and a host of other fruits rich in vitamin C make a good substitute. This doesn't mean that you should never eat a strawberry or an apple again, but you should be aware that there are nutritious alternatives to fruits and vegetables with far fewer pesticide contamination. By avoiding the most contaminated produce, you will substantially reduce your dietary pesticide risks. Foods with the least pesticides? Avocados, sweet corn, onions, cauliflower, asparagus, brussel sprouts, sweet potatoes, broccoli and watermelon.

Arlene Kroeker is a Richmond writer. Her column appears every Thursday in The Richmond Review.

...And After Reading All That...

(a) The Japanese eat very little fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.
(b) On the other hand, the French eat a lot of fat and also suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.
(c) The Japanese drink very little red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.
(d) The Italians drink excessive amounts of red wine and also suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.
(e) Conclusion: Eat and drink what you like. It's speaking English that kills you.

Bonded Together is published 3-4 times a year by Trish Evans, with careful, scrutinizing proofreading by Gary Evans. Its purpose is:
-To Glorify God through encouraging parents in raising their families for Jesus Christ and retreat coordinators in ministry.
*-To support the ministry of **Above Rubies** magazine and Colin and Nancy Campbell through the publishing of Above Rubies retreat information*
-To have a forum where mothers (and dads, too!) can share their experiences, joys, struggles and ask for help and prayer from others.
The opinions expressed in **Bonded Together** are those of the individual writers and not necessarily those of Nancy Campbell or ***Above Rubies*** magazine (or even the editor for that matter)

----------Above Rubies Family Camp----------
August 22-24th, 2003 in Pine Valley, California

Lodge and Dorm rates are for two night's accommodations and Friday night dinner through Sunday lunch. You must provide your own bedding for mattresses. Bring your own towels. Private Lodges have one double bed, one twin bunk bed and a bathroom and can sleep 3-6 people depending on ages/sizes of children. Lodges with a shared bath (between two rooms) and dorms (each dorm has its own bathroom) can be used for larger families.

Families with three children or less will be placed in *private* bath **lodges** until full. Then they will be placed in *shared* bath lodges. There are doors on both sides of the bathrooms separating the rooms. **Dorms** have six twin bunk beds (12 beds in all) and are available for families coming with five or more children. There are a limited number of dorms available and will be first come, first served. Please contact us first for availability before registering for this option.

Dad & Mom-$248.00 for private bath lodges, $235 for shared bath (double room) lodges $200 in dorms. Children, 2 & under**: Free;** 3-5**: $21;** 6-8**: $32;** 9-12**: $47,** 13 & up**: $92 in shared lodges, $99 in private lodges, $77 in dorms. Day Rates** (for those not staying overnight)**: $5 per day + $20 conference fee and meals; Breakfast $5.50, Lunch 6.50, Dinner $6 ea.**

Registrants coming without a spouse and/or children are half the couple rate and will be roomed in lodges or dorms based on number of others attending this way. A group of moms can request a room together. RV's pay the same as dorm rate. There are no hookup sites or separate showering facilities. **Add $10 late fee to adult rate if registering after July 20th.**

Installation payments in order to reserve space are accepted and encouraged. Please make checks payable to:
Trish Evans, P.O. Box 381, Norco, CA 92680

Total Enclosed_____

Parent's/Mom's Names_____

Address_____

phone_____**email**_____

Names of children attending & ages at time of retreat_____

DIRECTORY INFORMATION

The following information is for a listing of all the registrants that each family will receive at the camp. If you'd prefer not to have any or certain information included, please indicate this. For those who do not fill out questions in this section your registration information (names, address, phone, email, children) will be listed unless otherwise requested. If you need more room, feel free to attach a sheet of paper.

Special interests or hobbies_____

_____

Special needs or ministries_____

_____

Husband, children's names & ages if not registered_____

Bonded Together
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