

Are you, as a parent the cause of confusion in your children's lives?

asks MARTIE DU PLESSIS



A time to bring our children home

God is serious about the education of our children. More and more parents are choosing to home educate their children. People that do home education are more intentional about the nurturing of the soul of the child. They commit themselves to implanting traditional Christian values and to uniting the family. In the majority of instances God works to inspire the parents to take up this selfless task. This is also the only reason why so many home educators can persevere at this task. God calls and God empowers.

With public and private schools around every corner, it is hard for parents to imagine why there should be a need to take children away from such well organised institutions with all the needed facilities and equipped people. The reality is that God delegated the responsibility and authority of teaching and raising children to parents. (Psalms 127: 3-5) *"Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord. The fruit of the womb is His reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth."* It was never the task of the state to educate children. Some parents do give the authority for the education of their children over to a tutor or to schools, but God still holds the parents responsible. The question is - what kind of arrows are we making?

Parents do not own their children, neither does the state, but children belong to God and the parent should be a good steward of this task as it is close to God's heart. God's heart in the Word (Ephesians 6:4) is that fathers need to bring children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Fathers are the main educators and disciplinarians. In Deuteronomy 6:6-9 it speaks of parents doing this task diligently. This asks for parents to be deliberate about the education of their children. Children are to be brought up in the instruction of the Lord and disciplined in such a way that they can be a delight to the parent and others.

This task also speaks of a well-focused approach specific to the child. In

Proverbs 22:6 we are told - *"Train up the child the way he should go and even when he is old he will not depart from it"*. In most school scenarios all children are expected to respond to the learning environment in the same way. If they then cannot follow the programme or co-operate in the same way as the others, they get labelled. I find that many parents are in pain as words are spoken over their children in direct contrast to the heart of God and the parent. Our educational system labels children as *"learning disabled"*, dyslexic, ADHD, HDD, autistic and then asks the parent to, as part of the therapy, to remedy the problem by using medication such as Ritalin, Concerto or other chemical aids. This results in more than 75% of children in our schools being labelled as learning disabled and/or suffering from child depression. In so many instances a different learning approach could have been followed where the child could have been more actively involved in the learning act and more use could have been made of a different approach. For example, use could have been made of a kinaesthetic approach instead of an auditory one. A one-to-one scenario would have had the fastest results, without the heart of the child being damaged. Most angers in life have their birth from these moments of despair, resulting in angry adults raising angry children again.

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Many parents feel desperate when they realise that they have lost their influence over their children at a young age. *"The children suffers from a type of "spiritual schizophrenia" (Klicka: 2000) as we expect our children to be Christian in a non-Christian environment."* They have no other choice than to become lukewarm as the pressure from outside is just too strong and intentional. The Word says in Proverbs 23: 7 *"For as you think, so you are"*. Our children cannot think differently when the time that they spend watching television or in public education and with social networks exceeds the time they receive from a stable, godly base. Unbiblical mindsets and godly

mindsets are at war. Parents can cause children to be confused which is not their intention but it cannot be avoided.

One of the biggest reasons why parents do not consider home education is their fear about lack of socialization. Yet, these parents tolerate crime, drugs, pregnancy, gangsters, bullying and the effect of harmful social networking and negative socialization. I home educated my own daughter (a single child) for many years and the one thing she always says is that she is able to measure herself not by others but by what God has planned for her. She was able to grow her own identity without the pressure of peers. Today she is married with three children and she is a content mother who is still studying and who loves God. Is it still a value to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed? (2 Timothy 2:15)


The biggest reason in South Africa why parents choose to home educate their children is because they are concerned about the low academic standards in schools. In the current 21st century where INFORMATION is the commodity and to be able to assimilate information is the determining factor for learning and change, it is so important that children love learning and can read. In South Africa, we have nearly the lowest percentage of performance in languages and maths worldwide. A survey done in 2011 showed that our results are 28% in languages and 30% in maths. A matric certificate does not mean the person is functionally literate. More than half of high school graduates were found to have restricted abilities in maths and reading.

Prof. Jonathan Jansen: Vice-Chancellor and Rector: University of the Free State writes the following: *"If I had to make the choice with my own children today, I would seriously consider not sending my child to school in South Africa, for one simple reason: I do not trust a system that makes it possible for a child to pass Grade 12 with 30% in some subjects and 40% in other subjects. I would be filled with fear when I discover that you can get 32% in mathematics and 27% in physical science and still get an official document that says you can continue to study towards a Bachelors degree at university."* He goes on, *"A large percentage of the students who passed Grade 12 will struggle to pass in the first years of university, not only in fields that require mathematics and science. University lecturers will tell you that in their experience, students over the years have gotten weaker even as the matriculation results on the outside get stronger."*

"Where does this deficiency show up? In the workplace. Talk to any employer in business and industry and they will tell you the same story. Today's graduates are weak, even incompetent, in the basic skills of reasoning, writing, and computing; they cannot work in teams; they are inarticulate in public; they cannot solve complex problems; they lack the rigour of hard work; there is, in other words, a huge gap between what the school or university diploma says, and what graduates can actually do in the real world".

I hope that this article is an eye-opener to parents. In America, home education has been in existence for more than sixty years and in South Africa for more than twenty-five years with close to 100 000 families doing home education in South Africa. There are existing support groups to equip and support families, (www.tuisskolers.org) and a legal defence fund (www.pestalozzi.org) and various different curricula to choose from for real learning. Dynamis equips families to choose the right curriculum according to the giftedness of each child, and for parents to equip their children for real life. Dynamis does family consultations which help families to interact more effectively and to

celebrate rather than tolerate each other. www.dynamislearning.co.za

Public schools are failing, and parents need to realize that if they are seriously committed to having their children educated in traditional, biblical values, they need to make more intentional decisions. Thousands have gone before us and have made a huge success in raising leaders, even world leaders. Currently there is a network of home educating families in South Africa living a lifestyle of real learning and hope for the future in this nation. You can also have hope from what may seem like a hopeless situation. 

Dynamis is a ministry to support and inform families and educators. The goal is to serve and equip parents to make the most of their learning experiences by focusing on the uniqueness of their children and the realities of 21st century education.

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