

Training and Educating Children

Observations from a Church School Pastor and Administrator

by Leon King

Leon doesn't remember his first day at school, but he does remember the days shortly after the first day. He lived with his father, mother, and younger brother in a three-room shack of a house on the south side of Grandpa King's farm. Another brother and a sister were yet to be born into Leon's family. The way to school began on a red clay path leading through the pasture land for nearly a half-mile, then the gravel roads meandered nearly three miles on to the three-room school house. Leon's dad and mom sent him to school because they were interested to see him learn to read, 'rite, and reason. They were keenly aware that all children were required to start school in the government school system at the age of six years. So, with his biscuit and bacon lunch safely in tow, off to school he went. Herman School was in a rural area about seven miles west of Jonesboro, Arkansas. Leon's paternal grandmother was the teacher of the first, second, and third grades, which had classes in one of the three rooms that made up the "school complex.". Actually, his grandmother wasn't teaching the year he started to school, but she became his teacher when he came to the third grade. Grades four through twelve were in the other two rooms - and later in a **CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL**.

In 1941, there were compulsory school attendance laws in Arkansas just as there are now in most of the states. Leon's parents were God-fearing, law-abiding citizens, so they wanted to be sure they observed the law of the

land. Leon was six-years-old about the time school began in July, 1941. In those days, school began in July, then dismissed about September 1st for cotton picking and gathering of crops which usually extended to the last of October. About November 1st, school resumed and continued until the next May. Remembering via a child's recollection of those days, it seems that most folks thought of Herman School as **"their"** school. That was several years before the talk about school consolidation came to the Herman School community. Consolidation was a move to make the schools larger. It was a move to make the curriculum easier to control. It was a move to take away the involvement of the parents. The devil was successful in his bid for consolidation through the "educators" at the higher level. Turns out that was just a drop in the bucket because the process of consolidation has continued to this day. Most of the people in Herman Community didn't realize it at that time, so they went along with the idea.

Most all of the teachers that Leon remembers in the Herman School were Christians and usually were members of the same church where Leon and his parents attended. Hardly anything escaped the conversation between parents and teachers. Seems they were entirely of one mind when it came to training children. Leon couldn't say for sure that it happened in every family, but he does remember that if a teacher reported disobedience to the parents, it was immediately and forcefully corrected.

When report card time came, his dad and mom were very eager to take a look. He didn't have to make straight "A's" in order to get an "atta boy," as long as his parents believed he was really trying to do his best. Attention to immediate correction and a warm pat on the back for a good job were two things that little six-year-old, freckle-faced lad never forgot. That is the push and pull that is missing today from many homes. Leon's dad and mom

weren't scholars, and their formal education opportunities were limited by the demands to make a living in their growing up years. In later years as Leon's education progressed and the more difficult concepts of English Grammar and Math came along, they were at a loss to help. They did realize that if their son were to learn, he would have to do what most have done in the past, and that is to "dig it out for himself." After all, that is when one learns best, when he finds out for himself. His dad and mom also knew that a little encouragement went a long way.

Much happened in the next forty years. Those Herman Community folks would never had guessed the Bible would be thrown out of the schools - that prayer would be banned, or people would think it evil to stand and recite together the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America. Those folks would have shuddered to think that school teachers of future years would be in fear of their physical lives and well because of students bred in anarchy and rebellion. Too, they would have been appalled to think of school teachers seducing their own students to do lewd and lascivious acts - or students seducing their teachers to the same degree of wickedness. Who would have thought that text books would be thrust on the tax-supported system to extol sodomy? Anarchy? Socialism? Occultism? Unthinkable as it may have been to those people in the Herman Community, it all came to pass in just over twenty years and has continued rampant to this day.

Returning to Alaska in 1975 to be Pastor of the Bruin Park Missionary Baptist Church, Leon was faced with these satanic assaults on the children. Almost immediately, he knew that he must remove his two remaining school-age children out of the system and put them in a different learning environment. He chose a private, Christian school. At that point, he still

didn't really see the picture, but knew that something was dreadfully wrong with leaving his children to the devices of Satan. Several of the parents who were members of the Bruin Park Church put their children in Christian schools during the next year or two. It was in the early spring of 1982 when the Pastor of another Baptist church where some of our children attended school called. He said that 1981/82 would be the last school year that the Bruin Park children could attend. Right away the parents began to ask, "What are we going to do?" The Bruin Park Baptist Academy opened school year 1982/83 in the basement of the then existing church facilities with twelve students. 1997/98 completed sixteen years of operation for the academy. Leon has seen quite a lot of things happen in those sixteen years.

There are some basic questions we all need to ask ourselves now regarding our children - our grandchildren - and our great-grandchildren. Leon is writing this article, so at this point will change his voice to first person. I want to say that I believe there are probably five basic reasons why parents school their children, that is, that these things come to mind when it is time to begin formal training. They are:

1. Because it what everybody in America does. This is to simply continue to flow with the push of the tide. It's what everybody has done in this country, so we will just go right on with it. Grandma and grandpa did it, mom and dad did it, so we will do it.

2. Because we want our children to make a living. We want them to be able to stand on their own two feet and make something of themselves. We want them to do better than we did. Most still believe in the "American way" of raising oneself up

by his own bootstraps. There seems to be an innate something or other inside of us that causes us to rejoice and swell with parental pride if our children prosper in the world. We want them to work and prosper.

3. Because we want a baby-sitter. The happiest day in the life of a great number of parents is the day when the children board the school bus for the first time. Mom knows as soon as they are on their way to school, she has a free day for herself. Many parents want the school system to take their children off their hands during the school day so they can go on with whatever their own selfish goal is in life. As long as the child causes them no personal problems or grievances, they are satisfied. Grades and accomplishments mean little or nothing to this type of parent. One parent said, "I have had nothing but trouble with my child because of the school system, so I just need some peace and quiet." That same parent criticized the Christian school he placed his child into because the school staff insisted on learning and progress.

4. We want them to excel in their capabilities. Whether it be academics, sports, debating, or politics, most parents want their children to develop their talents to the fullest. If a child finagles a way to be in the first chair of the trumpet section of the band, parents are elated. If he (or she) is the quarterback of the football team, they rejoice. If he wins many games and becomes recognized, there is a great swelling of pride in the parent who exclaims, "that's my boy!" Many parents live their own fantasies of life in the accomplishments of their children. If

their children live and do well, then the parents simply transfer their own lives to their posterity in a figure.

5. Because of the Glory of God. A few, and very few parents want to train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. That means they want to instill in them the fear of the Lord and teach them God's commandments and laws. They want them to grow up to be useful, responsible people who walk with the Lord. These parents want their children to have some morals - in other words, they want to develop character in their children. The Godly parent wants his child to live for the Lord no matter what honest and honorable occupation he chooses in the life. I said there are *few* parents who want to do this for their children because that is what I have observed in these years of trying to help parents with their children.

When we instituted the Academy in 1982/83, I had high hopes of being a real help and blessing to the parents and their children. For some, it has worked out exactly that way. For most, the results have fallen far short of our expectation. When parents are committed to train their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, their children will certainly have abiding Biblical rules and values. They not only have those values, but they enforce them in a rather diligent fashion. Those whose objective is something other than training up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, usually gain that short-sighted objective in their child. In short, most of the children who have been students in the Academy eventually have gone the way of the world. Here is what I mean what I say that:

1. Many were here only for a relatively short period of time and because of marked value differences, they soon removed their children. These parents subsequently placed their children either

in the government schools or in a less stringent environment. Many of these children are now young adults and their thinking and aspirations are totally worldly. Their life-styles speak loudly that the professions of faith in Christ were meaningless.

2. Some came to us late in the schooling process (teen-age years), and the appeal was made by parents that they wanted to make a genuine changes. That really was not the parents' objective as the truth came to be realized. What had been lost in the earlier years of training weighed heavily on them, and the standards were not consistently enforced by the parents. When the school staff tried to enforce the rules, there was staff/parent conflict. Most of it was not expressed openly, but came later as murmuring. Those late coming students gained little or nothing except minute academic achievement. Their love for the Lord and commitment to his church waned quickly. Most of them with whom I have had personal dealings are living their lives either as unwed fathers and mothers or in homes broken by divorce, unfaithfulness, laziness, and wantonness.

3. A number of committed parents saw success in the instruction of their children. They were the ones who worked at enforcing the rules and encouraging their children. They worked with the school staff and ironed out the difficulties. The children of these parents have either graduated with obvious success - or are now in the Home School process. These parents have learned how to successfully Home School their children. They are committed, and Leon is grateful!!

4. Let me hasten to say that I believe Home Schooling to be the wisest and best choice that parents can make in educating their children. It is demanding and difficult. It is expensive and exasperating. But the expense and exasperation of the early years far outweigh the obvious hurt and heartache that will doubtless come to parents through neglected children. On the other hand, Home Schooling is certainly is far from impossible. It is rich and rewarding for the diligent, sacrificing parent who is really committed to *"training his children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."* There are no clashes with values between the home and another entity, for there is no other entity involved in the children's training.

Would I do it again? Yes, I would, should the need arise, but would be much more selective in choosing students - and parents!