

9/14/08

Sermon follow-up

Rich Lusk

My sermon content was heavily indebted to a sermon by Tim Keller on parents and children. Keller was especially helpful in pointing out ways in which grown children can honor their parents in culturally appropriate ways.

Just a few additional points:

Obviously, in different cultures, the family has been structured differently. It is possible that a number of these family models may be essentially compatible with biblical teaching. Some of those family structures are more patriarchal (e.g., grown sons living in very close proximity to family, often doing the same kind of work), others more bourgeois (e.g., taking advantage of the geographic and socio-economic mobility that comes into play after the Industrial Revolution; on the features of the bourgeois family, which is not that old, see Rodney Clapp's *Families at the Crossroads*, ch. 2). The biblical teaching on the family is quite flexible, and therefore adaptable to different cultural situations; the precise ways in which the generations interact is not going to be the same in all times and places. For much of human history, an agrarian and tribal economy necessitated grown children living with/nearby their parents in most circumstances. Thus, they rather naturally got help raising children and offered help to the aging generation. But the Bible clearly does not require this (cf. Gen. 2), even if it was often practiced in Israel.

Of course, we no longer live in a tribal, agrarian culture. Again, the biblical teaching on family relationships can be applied in vastly different cultural/socio-economic situations and we should beware making any past situation normative for today. We have to ask: How do we apply the Bible's teaching on family structure to our present situation? While there is quite a bit of freedom, varying social situations also pose unique threats to the integrity of the family, and Christians must guard themselves against such dangers. For example, our retirement system (e.g., social security) easily leads grown children into thinking their parents don't really need them in old age. And yet even if there are no financial issues to deal with, aging parents need all kinds of relational support from their children. This can be provided even if the generations do not live in the same place, but it takes some effort.

For parents in America today to demand that grown children obey them or live near them is a form of familial tyranny and legalism. God puts no such burden on grown children, and parents should not impose such restrictions. Parents must seek first the kingdom of God – and that means setting their grown children free to serve in the way that God calls them for the good of the gospel.

In recent times, patriarchal tyranny has become an issue in many Reformed and evangelical churches. This pro-family stance is, of course, set forth as an antidote to the breakdown of the family in America – but it is a cure that is almost as bad as the disease because it brings with it oppression and legalism. (On the “spirit of control” that often comes with the new patriarchalism, see materials by Norman Wakefield: <http://www.spiritofelijah.com/>.)

There is nothing in the Bible to support arranged marriages that do not take into the account the wishes of the young guy *and* girl. There is nothing that suggests a man *must* pursue the same vocation as his father. There is nothing to suggest that a newly married couple *must* live in geographic proximity to one of their families (and in our day, with easy communication and travel over long distances, there is no reason for parents to insist on this – at most it should be considered a luxury if it happens).

The core of the Bible’s teaching on the family is a husband and wife leaving their parents behind to cleave to one another, then raising their children to do the same (Gen. 2). Anything beyond that, e.g., multiple generations under one roof, is left to our discretion depending on the providential circumstances. In ancient Israel, it was often the custom for a young man to get engaged to a woman, and then begin adding a new wing onto his father’s house. When he completed the addition to his father’s standards, he would marry the girl and they would move in. (This is likely what stands behind Jesus’ teaching in John 14:2-4.) But there is no way we can make this normative for all times and places since it is not even all that common in Scripture itself.

In Scripture, water is thicker than blood, e.g., the church family created by baptism is our ultimate family. The biological/natural family, of course, is important, and normatively, we expect our natural families to come within the sphere of God’s grace. But that does not always happen, as I said (cf. Mt. 10:34ff). When forced to choose between church and family, we have to go with the people of God (e.g., Dt. 13:6ff). For a full scale exposition of this notion, see my essay, “The Church and Her Rivals.” See also the website, [patriarchy.org](http://patriarchy.org), and <http://www.patriarchy.org/archives.html>, including:

[http://www.patriarchy.org/family/angry\\_husbands.html](http://www.patriarchy.org/family/angry_husbands.html)

[http://www.patriarchy.org/church/super\\_submission.html](http://www.patriarchy.org/church/super_submission.html)

[http://www.patriarchy.org/education/solomon\\_temple.html](http://www.patriarchy.org/education/solomon_temple.html)

[http://www.patriarchy.org/education/social\\_engineers.html](http://www.patriarchy.org/education/social_engineers.html)

[http://www.patriarchy.org/general/legalism\\_oldandnew.html](http://www.patriarchy.org/general/legalism_oldandnew.html)

For your convenience, I have pasted in some of the more important articles below:

### **The Flaw of Formulaic Christianity**

*P. Andrew Sandlin*

Sinful man usually lusts for the easy, lazy way, rather than the difficult, correct way (Mt. 7:14). He wants to get away with as little work as possible, exerting minimal effort. This trait afflicts us Christians, who in this life are never fully sanctified; and it is reflected with particular clarity in a lust for formulas as a substitute for wisdom.

This trait often begins right at conversion, notably with evangelistic “strategies” that transform the salvation transaction into a cookie-cutter assembly-line technique. We’ve all heard of the Romans Road (or was that the Philemon Freeway and the Titus Turnpike?): “Read these Bible verses and then pray and then you will surely be saved.” The examples of the wide diversity of Jesus’ evangelistic approaches (from the woman at Jacob’s well to the taxman Zacchaeus to the thief crucified beside Him) do not seem to dent the self-confidence of the evangelistic formulizers.

### **Child-Rearing**

The formulizers are notorious when addressing child-rearing and other family issues. “If you just keep your daughters at home and never send them to college,” or “If you only spank your children for every act of direct disobedience,” or “If the mother always stays home and never works outside the home,” or “If only you avoid birth control,” or “If only you give your children communion,” or “If only you send your sons to small, private, Christian colleges,” or “If only you require of your older teen-agers courtship rather than dating,” or “If only you prohibit your children from listening to rock music” — and any one of a number of other stale formulas — “will your children be more

likely to love and serve the Lord." The validity of these formulas is so demonstratively wrong that you'd think formulaic Christians would give up on them; but they continue on, year after year, binding the consciences of overweening Christians, nonetheless genuinely committed to training their children in the Faith. The fact that these are nothing more than formulas and not in every case Biblical requirements doesn't seem to bother the Great Formulizers.

### **Wisdom versus Formulas**

Formulas are not usually successful, but they are a great deal more rhetorically impressive than wisdom, which is what God requires of us (Prov. 4:7). Wisdom requires knowing God; knowing His revelation in Jesus Christ, in creation, and in His Word, the Bible; knowing your divinely given personality and its strengths and weaknesses; knowing your spouse; knowing your children, knowing the particular culture in which you live. Paul reminded the Ephesian elders that he delivered to them the "all the counsel of God" (Ac. 20:27), but he was wise enough not to deliver that entire counsel to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 3:2). He was not less a faithful minister because he taught *less* of the Word of God. Indeed, he was a truly faithful minister precisely because he taught less of it. God granted him the wisdom to know how much truth to communicate in a particular historical circumstance. Solomon exhorts us to answer, and not to answer, a fool (Prov. 26:4,5). It takes wisdom to know when to do which.

### **Our Culture-Dependent Faith**

The Bible requires the saints to "salute one another with an holy kiss" (Rom. 16:16), yet it is evident this command is culture-dependent as, indeed, the entire Bible is. To those who recoil from this assertion, I would like to ask whether they really believe it would be possible to preach the electric chair or lethal injection rather than the Cross as the metaphor for the Christian Gospel. The great genius of Biblical revelation is that it met the original hearers right where they were, in their immediate historical circumstances and culture, and that it meets us today in our circumstances and our cultures. The wise believer interprets God's culturally conditioned but infallible Word for today's cultural exigencies, just as the New Testament writers interpreted the Old Testament for the exigencies of their cultural situation (Mt. 2:15; 1 Cor. 9:7-11).

It just so happens that many Christians would rather grow in formulas than in wisdom, and thus mature Christianity simply doesn't appeal to them. Therefore, they follow after ethical simpletons who claim to give every answer in a neat package. And when the formula fails them, well, they simply look for a new formula.

The Biblical alternative is wisdom (Pr. 6:20-22), and wisdom requires an intent walk with God (Ps. 25:4-9), filling of the Spirit of God (Rom. 8:14), examination of

the Word of God (Ps. 119:105), communion with the people of God (Ps. 73:2-17), and reflection on the providence of God (Mt. 67:28-30).

## **HOMERS**

*by Douglas Wilson*

The authority to name is part of the dignity of being human. God created Adam and gave him the responsibility of naming the creatures. Shortly after, that wonderful privilege extended even to the naming of Eve.

This action of naming goes far beyond a simple business of attaching labels. Naming requires ability in distinguishing appropriate categories of genus and species. Failure to do this properly can sometimes result in humorous collisions of ideas. One time one of our small children noticed a housefly buzzing around the room, pointed to it, and then proudly exercised the human prerogative of categorizing. "Airplane!" she said. No one thinks, for example, of categorizing animals simply by color or size. Large cockroaches and small field mice do not belong in the same category simply because they are both smaller than a breadbox. Adam did not reject the bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh because she was unlike him in a way that a male animal was not unlike him. Adam exercised right judgment, and did not go off to form a brotherhood with the chimps and dogs, leaving Eve to a barren and corresponding sisterhood. Unfortunately, in our politicized age, such right judgment is increasingly rare. The practice of collapsing wildly diverse collections of people into one or two handy pigeonholes appears to be a major indoor sport. And whenever people have a will to misunderstand, plenty of occasions for misunderstanding will soon present themselves. In the realm of education, one example of this problem is well-advanced enough to begin distinguishing two categories of educators with different names.

One category we should continue to call home-schoolers. These are people who have carefully considered all the options available to them in the education of their children, have prayerfully weighed them, and have decided to provide their children with an education at home. Homeschoolers rejoice when other Christian parents make the same choice, offering to provide help, and they rejoice when others make a different methodological choice and provide their children with a biblical education in a sound Christian school. They understand that all Christian parents who acknowledge and receive the parental responsibilities placed upon them by God are working in the same vineyard. But I propose another name for an entirely different kind of group. Homers have a completely different attitude toward the process of homeschooling. No longer an instrument or means of educating their children, homeschooling has become,

in their hands, a very modern manifestation of home as ideology. In this thinking, home is a defining principle to which everything else must conform. Even the church is brought into the service of the home. Father is no longer a father; he is a prophet, priest and king. Any home is capable of doing anything that is worth doing. A radical home-centeredness takes over, insisting that the home can not only replace the school, but also the church and the civil magistrate, not to mention Safeway and General Motors.

In contrast, homeschoolers are not defensive about what they are doing. They answer to God for how they bring up their children, and they know other parents will answer in the same way. They do not judge the servant of another; to his own master he stands or falls. Homeschoolers are thankful for the opportunities God has given them, and equally grateful for the challenges and problems. And when the challenges are pointed out, whether by someone who shares their method or not, that information is gladly received.

But homers are aggressive and imperialistic as they criticize other Christian parents who do not educate the same way they do, and they are prickly and defensive whenever anyone takes issue with them about anything. A conversation with homers does not remove confusions and misunderstanding, it creates them. And when a conversation has this effect, almost certainly an invisible ideology is governing the process and steering it into greater darkness. Not surprisingly, homers are frequently in the vanguard of church splits. Without proof, homers assume the authority of Scripture to be behind all their convictions. This is the biblical way to educate children, and anyone who thinks differently is not really sold out to biblical living. Sold out biblical living means that this curriculum must be used (not that one), this kind of jumper must be worn to the homeschool fairs (not that kind), this kind of natural honey is best for the growth of the brain (not that kind), and so on, ad nauseam. Homers have not taken very long in giving homeschooling a bad name.

This is a genuine tragedy because Christians outside homeschooling circles have not really distinguished themselves through an incisive ability in making necessary distinctions either. Many homeschoolers need only mention the fact they homeschool before they are asked where their seventeen runny-nosed kids are. And the answer is that there are only three children, they are all at Harvard, and they don't really have any sinus problems. But thanks anyway.

In all our dealings, the golden rule always applies. Do as you would be done by. Someone may say that this is all very well, but that Christian parents who have their kids in a traditional classroom would not really like the tables turned. (Let's call them schoolers.) Actually, those parents who do not like careful discrimination, whoever they are, need to learn to cope. And those parents who

are serving God in the education of their children will always rejoice whenever an accurate distinction is made.

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### **The Hegemonic Patriarchy**

*by P. Andrew Sandlin*

Today's secular culture is at war with the family. Lax divorce laws, radical feminism, rampant pornography, legalized abortion, "children's rights," mainstream homosexuality, and inheritance taxes — all these and other factors collude to assault the family, particularly the Christian family.

#### **The (Over)Reaction**

It is perhaps inevitable that the Christian reaction will at times become overreaction and that the family, a central institution in God's plan, should begin to monopolize all of life. In fact, a renewed patriarchalism in some quarters is working for hegemony over the other legitimate spheres of God's authority. But patriarchalists don't justify their (over)reaction only to the ravenous egalitarian society. They also (over)react to a reckless, egocentric Church that is oblivious to family prerogatives ("After all, I am the elder [or bishop, or pastor, or deacon, or what have you], and I am the supreme authority in the Church").

But the solution to social and ecclesiastical tyranny is not patriarchal tyranny, which, in fact, is no less culpable than the former. Tyranny is tyranny, and "spiritual" tyranny is perhaps the worst form of all (think: Spanish Inquisition).

#### **Old-Fashioned Conservative Tyranny**

Today's hegemonic patriarchalism seems at points to bear an eerie resemblance to the pagan patriarchy of ancient Rome (before the rise of the Empire). Pre-Empire Rome was a patriarchal culture.[1] The housefather was given virtually unlimited authority. His word was law — not metaphorically, but literally. If his wife bore a daughter, and he preferred a son, he could simply cast the daughter into the streets to die of starvation or be eaten by a wild animal. He could beat and otherwise abuse fellow family members at will. With limited exceptions, the father was the central authority in society.[2] Many other ancient cultures were similarly clan-based, and these extended families (not just Mom and Dad and Junior and Susie, but the grandparents and third cousins and "in-laws") ruled the countryside by blade and blood. At the center of this tyranny was the patriarch, generally the oldest surviving male of the family. (Mario Puzo's rendition of *The Godfather* furnishes an embellished, but generally accurate, portrait of this arrangement.)

For this reason it is sometimes ironic to hear Christians declare that they are championing a “conservative view of the family.” If they are conserving the old-fashioned pagan patriarchy, they are deviating from Biblical Faith, which repudiates this tyranny. We are called first to be obedient Christians, not card-carrying conservatives. Today’s Christian patriarchalists are far removed from the violence of the pagan patriarchalists (in most cases, at least!), but in their commitment to hegemony, they are too close for comfort.

### **Baby Machines**

Some Christian men that I have observed treat their wives as baby machines. The wife is never under any circumstances permitted to work outside the home, despite the fact that the Bible nowhere forbids such work. True, the young mother’s central Biblical responsibility is domestic — her family (1 Tim. 5:14). Today’s “career-minded moms” whose work is a separate track from her husband’s generally conflict with the Bible’s pattern of the woman as a suitable help to her husband (Gen. 2:18-25). However, the Bible does not prohibit women, including wives and mothers, from working outside the home. We must not, therefore, allow “conservative” standards to supplant Biblical standards.

### **Apron-Centered, Kitchen-Table Tutelage**

The authority that some patriarchalists arrogate to themselves truly borders on tyranny. One has written that a father who sends his daughter off to college is guilty of irresponsibility. Apparently, all daughters must maintain residence in their father’s household to be deemed “under authority.” Not a shred of Biblical evidence supports this theory and, in fact, at times the father may be guilty of irresponsibility if he does not dispatch an intellectually gifted daughter to college. (The idea that children should ordinarily stay home and take Internet college courses is fraught with peril. We will never train culture-reclaiming physicians, nuclear physicists, and engineers by such apron-centered, kitchen-table tutelage.)

### **Day Schools**

Other patriarchalists have gone so far as to suggest that Christian day schools are sinful or erosive of the family. While this sentiment is not true of most home-schoolers, among whom are the most dedicated Christians in the nation, an increasing number of patriarchalists are dedicated to squelching top-notch, culture-reforming educational opportunities by subordinating virtually all training to the four walls of the homestead. This is a formula for cultural — and familial — defeat.

### **Obsequious Sons**

Patriarchalists sometimes do even a greater disservice to sons. In ancient, clan-based societies, a son (even one in his thirties and forties) would remain

obsequiously apprenticed to his father and would become the new, blood-based patriarch only when his father died. This is a pagan idea, not a Biblical one, even though some patriarchalists today demand almost unswerving obedience and servanthood from their forty-year old married sons. Sometimes in the process they completely trample on their sons' obvious gifts, which could be used most profitably elsewhere. Any daughter-in-law that that permits such an outrage will suffer greatly for it.

### **Disservice to the Church**

Perhaps, however, the most hazardous element of the new hegemonic patriarchy is its easy diffidence or downright hostility toward the church. This patriarchalism emerges largely because too many churches are anything but "family-friendly"; and, of course, they abdicate their calling when they act so irresponsibly. The solution to this problem, however, is the reformation of the church, not the institution of "The Family Church," i. e., the Daddy pastor, the Mommy assistant pastor, and the kiddy members. The Church is authorized to do three things that no family in ordinary conditions is ever permitted to do: preserve orthodoxy; administer sacraments; and excommunicate heretics and egregious, unrepentant sinners.

Hammering out and maintaining proper belief is not the responsibility of the family, but the church, or more accurately, true churches throughout the world. A careful scrutiny of beliefs (both true and false) demands greater expertise than the individual father (or mother!) enjoys. Orthodoxy is a communal matter, and the community in question is the church, not the family. Similarly, the church administers the sacraments. Jesus vested the authority to administer both communion and baptism to His apostles as the human foundation of the church, not as fathers in their own families. And the same is true of discipline — and by this I mean ecclesiastical discipline. No husband may excommunicate his wife (though some husbands, I hear, have tried!). No father may excommunicate a child, and so on. Excommunication is the exclusive job of the church (Mt.18). It is for this reason that the family, even an extended family, does not constitute a church. Two or more families joining together pioneer a church, searching for legitimate oversight, may, in fact, constitute a church, but this is a different matter altogether. Simply put, the family is not the church.

### **Hubris**

The new patriarchalists would be less offensive if they couched their hegemonic views, well, less hegemonically. Why not simply say, "We're attempting to recover a more consistent view of the family, and we know some dear Christians will not agree, and we know that most of orthodox Christianity stands against us, but we would humbly ask that you consider these things."

No, it often is something like this: "Fathers, until we came along, have been irresponsible, and they are irresponsibly sending their daughters off to college, and they are sending their children to Christian day schools, and they are irresponsibly attending churches that sponsor age-graded Sunday School. They need to quit sinning, and start taking responsibility."

I am exaggerating, but not by much. Christians, like all humans, are susceptible to fads, and this hegemonic patriarchalism is one of the latest fads that has emerged popularly, and will eventually die quietly. Until then, it may harm a number of wives and children – and, yes, fathers – whom it is creditably trying to help. We will be less likely to fall into its seductive trap if we recognize that our life must be Faith-centered, not State-centered, Church-centered, or even family-centered.

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1. Robert Nisbet, *The Social Philosophers* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1973), 35-38.
2. Merrill T. Gilbertson, *The Way It Was in Bible Times* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1959), 43-45.

### **Is The Home Really The Primary Seat of Worship?**

*Pete Hurst*

This is what some would advance. The Christian wife married to her non-Christian husband hopes not, and she doesn't hope in vain.

Here is where I think I may have agreement with many in the patriarchy movement, that we agree the church's worship is in fact the primary seat of worship for the Christian. Nevertheless, for those not with us, and for any

evangelical independent types who exalt even private personal worship to the primary place, let this article be a corrective.

As important and valuable as family worship and personal worship are, as much as these need to be stressed and emphasized, we must not lose sight of the fact that the primary seat of worship for the Christian is with the people of God, the Church, not the family, not as individuals.

It is to the Church that God has given the keys of the kingdom and sacraments (Matt. 16:18; 18:18-20). It is the Church that exercises ultimate oversight over those for whom Christ died (Acts 20:28). It is the Church that is the pillar and support of the Truth (I Tim. 3:15). Other scripture examples could be given to show other aspects of the Church's primary role; for now, however, permit me to share thoughts on Ps. 87:2 by men who are probably respected, if recognized, by all who read this.

"The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob." (Psalm 87:2)

"God delights in the prayers and praises of Christian families and individuals, but He has a special eye to the assemblies of the faithful, and He has a special delight in their devotions in their church capacity. The great festivals, when the crowds surrounded the temple gates, were fair in the Lord's eyes, and even such is the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven. This should lead each separate believer to identify himself with the church of God; where the Lord reveals His love the most, there should each believer most delight to be found. Our own dwellings are very dear to us, but we must not prefer them to the assemblies of the saints."

(C. H. Spurgeon)

"God has a love for the dwellings of Jacob, has a gracious regard to religious families and accepts their family worship. Yet He loves the gates of Zion better, not only better than any, but better than all, of the dwellings of Jacob. God was worshipped in the dwellings of Jacob, and family-worship is family-duty, which must by no means be neglected; yet, when they come in competition, public worship is to be preferred before private."

(Matthew Henry)

"The Lord loves Zion herself; that is, the church, and therefore has chosen it for his habitation, took up his rest and residence in it, has founded it, and set Christ as King over it, and by whom he has redeemed it; and he loves her gates, the public ordinances; he loves them that come to Zion's gates, and wait and worship there, and who enter in and become members thereof; and he loves what is done there, he being there publicly prayed unto, and publicly praised by a large number of his people; where his word is faithfully preached, and reverently attended to, and his ordinances truly administered, and the graces of

his saints exercised on him: wherefore, because all this is done socially, and in a public manner, and so much for his own manifestative glory, he esteems these more than all the dwellings of Jacob; the private habitations of his people; yet he has a regard to these, the bounds of which he fixed from eternity, and where he was delighting himself before they were in being; and he loves the persons that dwell in them, and what is done there in a right manner, as closet and family worship; but when these are put in competition with public worship, the latter is preferred unto them, because done by more, and more publicly; Zion and its gates, the church and its ordinances, are preferable to all the dwellings of Jacob put together.”

(John Gill)

“No doubt the prayers which the faithful put up to heaven from under their private roofs were very acceptable unto him; but if a saint’s single voice in prayer be so sweet to God’s ear, much more the church choir, his saints’ prayers in concert together. A father is glad to see any one of his children, and makes him welcome when he visits him, but much more when they come together; the greatest feast is when they all meet at his house. The public praises of the church are the emblem of heaven itself, where all the angels make but one concert.”

(William Gurnall)

**Book Review: *Uniting Church and Home*, Eric Wallace, (Lorton, VA: Solutions for Integrating Church and Home, Inc., 1999, 283 pages)**

*Reviewed by Joe Morecraft, III*

One of the strengths of the Reformed Faith for centuries has been its doctrine of the visible, organizational church as *the house and family of God*.- Westminster Confession of Faith, 25.2. As a result of the preaching of this glorious truth, the practice of it and the working out of its implications for church and home, Reformed and Presbyterian Churches, faithful to that doctrine, have been used by God to transform families, cultures and nations for over four hundred years and throughout many generations.

It is only within the past hundred and fifty years that Presbyterian families have weakened, along with Presbyterian churches. Why? It is not because the great Reformed and Presbyterian principles defining and governing the church and home have failed and therefore need improvement, because these principles are firmly rooted in the unchanging Word of God. Rather our families and churches are failing because most of today’s professed Reformed and Presbyterian families and churches have left the faith of our fathers, have compromised or neglected our theology and failed to practice what we professed to believe.

So then, what is the solution? Innovations? No! A new paradigm? No! Rejection of all historical traditions and truths? No! New methods and theologies from other denominations? No! New ways of worship? No! New models for church life? No! Why do I say this? Because, *it is not the historical traditions, models, methods, and doctrines of the Reformed Faith and Presbyterianism, which are rooted in the Word of God, that have failed us. We have failed them! Preachers have failed them by not teaching their churches to love our faith. Elders have failed them by not defending, implementing and enforcing our faith. Deacons have failed them in not fleshing out our faith in service. Fathers have failed them by not leading their families into the truth and life of our faith. Families have failed them by trying to live as if our faith were irrelevant. Members of our churches have failed them by not "striving for the purity and peace of the church." And in failing our faith we have failed the world we have been commissioned to win for Christ.* As Robert L. Dabney once wrote with reference to the principles of republicanism and constitutionalism, but which words obviously apply to the Biblical principles of Presbyterianism: "But this century has seen all this reversed; and conditions of human society have grown up, which made the system of our free forefathers obviously impracticable in the future. And this is so, not because the old forms were not good enough for this day, but because they were too good for it." - "The New South," DISCUSSIONS, Vol. IV, p. 5.

How does all this relate to Eric Wallace's book, *Uniting Church and Home*? When he wrote this book he was a member of the Presbyterian Church in America . He sees the failure of the church to produce strong families and to carry out the Great Commission effectively, and it grieves him deeply, as it does me. In a sincere and earnest effort to remedy this present situation, he offers churches, including Presbyterian Churches, a new paradigm of ministry. However, although the church does need Wallace's counsel regarding the integration of the family into the church and the restoration of the role of father in the home, the church does not need his new paradigm for the church because many its aspects are unbiblical, leading to applications detrimental to church and home. What is needed in Presbyterian Churches is not a new paradigm nor a new model; but repentance and a return to and new application of the older principles, models and doctrines. [1] Repentance is needed by denominations, local churches, preachers, elders, deacons, fathers, families and church members, because we have deserted Biblical theology, worship, discipline, ethics, church polity and mission, and family life.

I love Wallace's passion for Christ and for the renewal of Christ's Church. I share many of his concerns about the breakdown between church and home resulting from the breakdown of church and home. I also appreciate many of his

suggestions about what it will take to restore the family and integrate it into the life and mission of the church.

He makes several important points especially in four areas: (1). The implications of programs for programs' sake; (2). The importance of fathers; and (3). The broad, cultural dimension of the mission of the church; and (4). The need for the integration of Biblical truth into the relationships in church and home.

First, with reference to programs for programs sake in the church, Wallace makes this correct criticism: "Our churches seem like monasteries when we put programs before people. Good programs that served a useful purpose at one time have become their own self-perpetuating entities. (p. 67-68) -- The prevailing model of church ministry [with its programs every night of the week based on age] does much to split up relationships in the family and church. (p. 124)"

Second, Wallace is correct in his desire to see the church help restore the office of father in the home to its proper position and functions: "Ministry would be much more effective over the generations if fathers started to discern and develop their children's gifts and then channeled those gifts toward a life calling! (p. 129)"

Third, I was glad to see his statements on the cultural dimension of the mission of the church and the home: "The solutions of redemption go far beyond our personal salvation thrusting into all of life—medicine, education, science, politics, law and finance, the arts and literature. Our goal should be to restore God's glory to every aspect of creation and the fallen world. Our sons and daughters must imbibe themselves in God's principles as we prepare them to live and work in a fallen world in order that they might be a willing instrument of God as He redeems it. The work of redemption is a mammoth challenge that requires a multi-generational vision. (p. 148) -- Redemption involves meditating on the big picture. Therefore, by focusing on the bigger plan, redeeming not just souls, but a whole fallen world in all its complexity, we can be the best witness. Our children must be equipped with this pervasive understanding of responsibility. Their commitment must be strong enough to pass on to their children. (p. 151)"

Fourth, Wallace's longing is mine as well: the integrating of the Biblical, Christ-centered truth "taught at church into our lives at home," and the integrating of "the love and support of the family into the life of the local church."- p. 19

However, I have several major problems with his book, because of a difference in our understanding of Biblical theology and the Reformed Faith.

#### A REDUCTIONISTIC MODEL

Eric Wallace makes a mistake similar to that of Rick Warren in his books *The Purpose Driven Life* and *The Purpose Driven Church*. Both are guilty of an arbitrary reductionism: Warren of God's purposes for His people, and Wallace on the

nature of the church. Reductionistic approaches exclude key ingredients, and present an unbalanced picture, as they try to squeeze a size ten foot into a size five shoe. An example of this reductionism in Wallace's book is this statement he quotes from PCA pastor Steward Jordan: "If the church is practicing hospitality, then there is no need for other ministries." - p.245. Hospitality is of critical importance, to be sure; but to say that the only ministry the church needs is hospitality, and that if it does that, it needs no other ministries, is absurd. But, as I trust we shall see, Jordan says this because it is a consistent application of his and Wallace's attempt to build churches "entirely upon household principles." - p. 245. But, the only institution that is to be built "entirely upon household principles" is the household; the church is to be built upon ecclesiastical principles set forth in the Word of God, as the state is to be built upon civil principles set forth in that same Word.

In *Uniting Church and Home*, Wallace's new paradigm for the re-creation of the functions of the church is based entirely on the nature and function of the home. More specifically, he wants to recreate the church according to the principles and methods of the home school movement. Wallace's denials to the contrary, "household-based ministry" is a "home-school thing." As Greg Harris says on page 1: "The time has come to apply the proven insights gained from the home schooling movement to the reformation of the local church. Eric Wallace makes a worthwhile contribution in his new book to that end." This attempt on his part is problematic on several levels, not the least being the use of the home schooling movement as the standard by which the church is to be reformed. The church is to be reformed by the written Word of God and by that Word alone. Using "proven insights gained from the home schooling movement" to reform God's church is a denial of the cry of the Protestant Reformation: *sola Scriptura*.

First, it is an arbitrary choice. On page 100, he writes: "In the scriptures, the church is described in several ways. It is the body of Christ, the bride of Christ, an army, and God's household. Together, all these and other descriptions are components of the church's identity." On page 89, he writes: "God uses 'household' terminology to reveal how the church is to function." Then, he proceeds to rebuild the church solely in terms of the household description, to the exclusion of the others. But the Bible also has other terminology and figures to show the church how to function, e.g., as an army, Temple, human body, bride, vine and branches, city, etc. Not all features of the household are to be imitated by the church; just as all features of the church are not to be imitated by the home. Home and church, though intimately related, are separate institutions with separate functions, separate jurisdictions and separate office holders. The "household" concept was not meant to define the mission of the church,

(although, of course, some similarities exist), rather it was meant to define the nature of the church as *the house and family of God*.

This arbitrariness is seen in the reductionistic way Wallace sets forth the “the core purposes of the church” on pages 59f. Whereas what he includes here is true, it sounds more like Rick Warren in *The Purpose-Driven Life*, than the writers of the Bible. There is much more to the core purposes of the church than those listed. The reason these five purposes are given is because they are also true of the family, and are not exclusively those of the church. This blending of the functions of church and home represents an attempt to prove his point that the church must be redefined in terms of the individual household.

Second, Wallace’s definition of “household” is deficient. He did not get his definition of “household” from Biblical exegesis. Rather, he appears to have read his preconceived view of the household into the Bible because it is essential to his new paradigm for the church. He writes on page 105: “The church finds its home in the household. -- A survey through the New Testament reinforces the household as the basis of the church.” [2] If the home of the church is the household, and not vice versa, and if the household is the basis and foundation of the church, then the household, not the church, has the priority and preeminence. Rather, the household finds its home in the church of Christ, *the house and family of God*. A survey of the New Testament shows that the basis of the church is **the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone**, Ephesians 2:20, not the home.

How does he define “household”? On page 36, he writes: “I need to define a term I believe is essential to understanding the concept of an integrated church. That word is ‘household.’ -- The word ‘household,’ as I define it, means much more than simply ‘family.’ -- In other words, it is any group of people in the church who live and fellowship together.” As a matter of fact, that is not the way “household” is used in the Bible. Besides being an unbiblical definition of “household,” such a definition would bring havoc in courts of law, allow for homosexual households, and destroy one of the central pillars of household baptism.

In the Old Testament, a household or family included all dependents of the head of a family, i.e., husband, wife, their children (adopted and natural born), and any slaves, bound together by blood and covenant, Genesis 7:1; Genesis 12:17; 17:12-13, 23, 27; 19:16; 20:17-18; 34:30; Exodus 12:27; Numbers 3:15; Joshua 24:15; I Samuel 3:12-14; II Samuel 12:10. “In the Old Testament, the parent-child relationship is organic; that is, God views parents and children not simply as individuals that happen to be related but as a divinely created unit or organism. This organism extends through the generations, Deuteronomy 7:9.” - Randy Booth, *Children of Promise*, p. 123. Whereas the family was to show hospitality to

visitors and strangers, e.g. Acts 16:34, they were not considered members of that household.

The New Testament continues the Old Testament concept of “household,” I Timothy 3:4, 12; Titus 1:6; Acts 16:31. “When the Bible speaks of a household, it includes every member of the family—husband, wife, children (including infants), and slaves. Kenneth Gentry expresses the Bible principle of family solidarity in God’s covenant dealings when he observes: ‘There is NOTHING in the New Testament that undermines and invalidates the Old Testament covenantal principle of family solidarity. In fact, everything confirms its continuing validity.’” - Randy Booth, p. 126.

Third, imposing this viewpoint on the institutional church is a reduction of the church in its preeminence, composition, goals and mission to the world. It also includes a downgrading of the institutional church. As Wallace writes: “Let me first define the term ‘church’ as the ministry of believers and not the ‘organized’ church as such.” - p. 78. He says this because he believes that it is detrimental to uniting church and home to view the church primarily as an institution rather than a community; because the first view is institutional and program-oriented and the second view is person-to-person ministry-oriented. However, this choice is not necessary if the church is seen as an organized community with its officers and constitution taken from the Head of the Church in His Word. A community without organization is a mob.

Wallace’s paradigm reduces the preeminence of the visible church as an institution and in its ministry of the Word. One of his major points is the primacy of the home and its relationships over all other human institutions. Because it is preeminent the composition and mission of the church must be redefined in terms of it. Here are Wallace’s own words:

He [God] uses relationships in the local church as the primary tool through which He gives us strength and guidance.- p. 82

An integrated ministry uses heart-level relationships as its primary method of ministry because they are most effective.- p. 91

The primary place for ministry is the home. - p. 103

But God has ordained household relationships to be His primary structure through which the work of redemption is accomplished over generations.- p. 156

God’s primary plan for reaching the hearts of children is to work through the parents.- p. 163

This emphasis on the primacy of the home in the ministry of God is simply incorrect. As important as the home and household relationships are to the work of God on earth, the church is God’s primary institution of the ministry of saving grace on earth—**The LORD loves the gates of Zion more than all the other dwelling places of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of God.-**

Psalm 87:2-3. Here the church is not only referred to as a “city,” rather than a household; but we are also told that God loves His Temple on Mt. Zion , i.e., a type of the church of Christ , Hebrews 12:22f, more than all the households of Jacob! Glorious things are spoken of the church, not the home, in this text.

It is to this *visible* church instituted by God, and not to the home, although it too was instituted by God, that Christ has given *the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints in this life, to the end of the world; and doth by His own presence and Spirit, according to His promise, make them effectual thereunto.*- Westminster Confession of Faith, 25.3. The Great Commission of Matthew 28:19f was given to the visible church represented in its officers, not to the home or to the officials in the home, i.e., fathers. As George Grant wisely says in his recommendation of Wallace’s book on page 1: “The responsibilities of the home ought to be facilitated by the church not co-opted. Likewise, the centrality of the church ought to be embraced by the home not resisted.”

“The primary place” and “primary structure” for the ministry of saving grace is the church, not the home. “God’s primary plan for reaching the hearts of children” is to work through the church. God’s “primary tool through which He gives us strength and guidance” and His “primary method of ministry” is the preached Word, along with the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper. *The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the Word, an effectual means of enlightening, convincing, and humbling sinners; of driving them out of themselves, and drawing them unto Christ; of conforming them to His image, and subduing them to His will; of strengthening them against temptations and corruptions; of building them up in grace, and establishing their hearts in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation. -- The Word of God is to be preached only by such as are sufficiently gifted, and also duly approved and called to that office.*- Westminster Larger Catechism Q. 155 and Q. 158

The church of Christ is not to be identified as “a family-oriented church,” (Wallace, p. 32), but as a God-centered church. This is not semantics. Its purpose is *the gathering and perfecting of the saints*, whether those saints are individuals or households. And the idea that all single individuals in the church are to be “adopted” (Wallace’s word) into households in order for them to be fully integrated in the church has two problems: (1). It is not demanded of the church in the Bible, either by express statement or inference; and (2). It fails to recognize that, Biblically-speaking, a real household can include only one person, and the church must respect the legitimacy of that authority structure as it also must minister to it. This is particularly relevant to voting in congregational meetings. Since only male heads of households should be allowed to vote in congregational meetings as the federal heads of their families, adult single males adopted into

families and placed under the governing authority of the father would not be allowed to vote.

In fact it would appear that the “household approach” to the church can result in a return of the church to its infancy, when the homes of men like Adam, Noah and Abraham were also the church. The church of God has come to maturity in Christ and the New Covenant. Its form under Christ’s apostles, as presented in the New Testament, is far more mature and glorious than any of its phases in the Old Testament.

Fourth, this reductionistic view of the church also broadens and limits the nature of evangelism in an unbiblical way . Wallace so broadens the definition of evangelism that he in fact destroys it. Although other examples in his book could be given, a sentence on page 199 makes the point: “Evangelism involves more than presenting the gospel; it [i.e. evangelism] includes helping our neighbors carry in their groceries, mowing their lawn...” Whereas Christians will serve unbelievers in many ways out of love for them and in order to create opportunities to evangelize them, such efforts are not evangelism. They could be called pre-evangelism. Evangelism is presenting the gospel! J.I Packer has correctly defined evangelism in his book, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* as follows:

To present Jesus Christ to sinful men, in order that they may come to put their trust in God, through Him to receive Him as their Savior and to serve Him as their King in the fellowship of the church.

On the other hand, Wallace limits evangelism in a way that the Head of the Church does not, with his “household approach to ministry.” “Keeping families together is a theme in Harvester’s evangelism program as well. Families are encouraged to take the class and go out on evangelistic visits together.”- p. 244. While this can be a good idea, Wallace’s book leaves the definite impression that the only effective kind of evangelism is one of households. It is as if he limits evangelism to households, because the book does not encourage individuals to do evangelism as individuals, although we see this method of evangelism far more times in the Gospels and Acts than we do evangelism by whole households.

Fifth, the sacraments are downgraded in this “household approach” to the church . Baptism is neglected. On page 82 the author says: “People need the church because it is where they partake of the Lord’s Supper.” Where is baptism? The Lord’s Supper is downgraded. On page 230, he writes: “For Communion: have elders serve heads of households the elements, who then serve them to their own households.” Members of Christian families admitted to the Lord’s Table by the elders do not partake of Communion as members of a household, but as members of the visible church governed by the elders. Fathers in the home

are not the guardians of the Lord's Table. The elders of the visible church, not the fathers, admit those with credible testimonies to the Lord's Table. Elders, not fathers, fence the Table. Elders, not fathers, serve the Lord's Supper. Children of the covenant are not only subject to their father's authority, they, along with their parents, are also subject to the authority of the elders of the church. Elders, not fathers, hold the power of the keys of the kingdom. Elders, not fathers, bar children and others from the Lord's Supper. A father may not forbid his child to take the Lord's Supper, if the elders of the church have admitted him to the Lord's Table; just as a father may not allow his children to take the Lord's Supper if the elders have not admitted them to the Table by the elders of the church. This suggestion from Wallace is a major blow at the authority of the church. This approach of making the home a model for the church almost gives fathers equal authority with elders in the rule of the church. It almost makes the church the home. (It is already being suggested by some that fathers baptize their own children.)

Sixth, the consequence of this household approach to the church and its ministry also downgrades congregational worship. The Bible is unmistakably clear as to how God wants us to worship Him: **Whatever I command you, you shall be careful to do; you shall not add to nor take away from it**, Deuteronomy 12:32. We may do in the worship of God only what He has commanded in the Bible, either in express commandment, or approved example or deduced principle. As John Knox, the Scottish Reformer said, God rejects all rites and practices of worship that originate in the brain of man. Wallace appears to have no awareness of this historical Reformed and Presbyterian principle taught several places in the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms, e.g., 1.6; 21.1. Wallace suggests that in the Sunday morning worship service, "church leaders can select from within the congregation to offer public prayers of confession. Focus on encouraging parents to share about scriptures and trials and victories. Having households stand up and give testimony encourages other adults and children to take on spiritual leadership of their households. Have fathers, single and even mature teenage boys deliver brief messages as a way of developing their leadership capacities." - p. 229. He makes these suggestions without any attempt to show whether they are commanded by God in the Bible for Sunday congregational worship. As a matter of fact, none of these things are commanded by God in the Bible for public worship. If these suggestions are followed, congregational worship, with all its joy, sanctity and beauty, is dissolved into an informal time of worship similar to what a father does in his own household. But, after all, that could be said to be his objective according to the "household approach."

Seventh, the household approach to education reduces Christian education . Many home schoolers assume, and some aggressively profess, that exclusive home-schooling is the Biblical model of educating children of the church. However, exclusive home schooling of children is not the Biblical model. Parents are not the only ones given the responsibility of educating their children; in the Great Commission Christ also gave that responsibility to the church— **teaching them to observe whatever I have commanded you**. The Biblical model is home-schooling plus institutional instruction of children. In the Old Testament education of covenant children included home-schools and institutional education from the Levitical priests, in some cases at “the schools of the prophets,” and in the synagogues, Psalm 74:8, which were places of local worship and catechetical instruction for children, as Jesus in the Temple when He was twelve years old, and for adults. In the New Testament, the church of Christ continued to exist as a Christian synagogue with the same educational functions toward children and adults. Exclusive home schooling offers inferior education of children.

Eighth, Wallace’s “household approach” to the church is based on the reduction of theology. In a large variety of ways, the author reveals his faulty theology, or faulty theological expression, that gives a superficiality to his solutions. Here are some examples.

On page 22, he writes that “God showed me a maxim...” Verbal revelation came to end with the completion of the sixty-six books of the Biblical canon. Now all we need to be thoroughly equipped for every good work is what God has spoken in the Bible.

On page 33, we read that “the world wants truth that is integrated with life and have stopped looking for it in the church.” This sentence fails to understand the total depravity and spiritual death that characterizes the world, which Jesus said, hates the light and loves the darkness. The world in its rebellion against God does not want the truth.

On page 44, the author writes: “I wondered why the place where we worship is called God’s “house” or “the sanctuary,” when the Bible teaches that our hearts are the sanctuary and home of God.” This reveals an individualism the author himself seeks to avoid. Not only are our individual hearts the house and sanctuary of God, but the New Testament also teaches that the church corporately is the house and dwelling place of the Spirit, I Corinthians 3:16. Moreover, both testaments speak of the building in which the church, or the “Christian synagogue,” met, as “the synagogue,” Psalm 74:8; Matthew 4:23 ; 9:35 ; Luke 13:10 ; James 2:2; etc.. We must make sure that our scruples are not higher than those of the Bible.

On page 61, we read that “in the first century church it appears that hospitality was used as the primary method of church evangelism.” How can such a statement be made in the light of the traveling evangelists, itinerant preachers and missionary journeys, not of households, but of ordained men, in the book of Acts. Individuals believers and believing families, of course, played their role in evangelizing the world; but the primary method of church evangelism in the book of Acts is not hospitality, as important as it is.

On page 74, Wallace claims that “churches should be places where people can go to be accepted and loved unconditionally...” But, is that really true? Conditions were placed on the acceptance and love one experienced in the church.

Impenitent apostasy led to excommunication from that acceptance and placed someone outside that brotherhood, albeit ultimately for his or her restoration, as well as for the preservation of the purity of the church and the honor of Christ. Believers are not to “love unconditionally,” but in terms of the Law of God, II John 6.

On page 106, we see two statements resulting from faulty exegesis. The first claim is that the Passover meal was eaten by everyone in the household. However, F. Nigel Lee, in his doctoral thesis, *Catechism before Communion*, has clearly shown that uncatechized children and women in the household did not partake of the Passover meal. The second statement is the presenting of the unfortunate practice of the disciples in Jerusalem of selling all their possessions so that all had everything in common as an illustration of the care the members of the church should have for each other. However, this practice, which was never commanded by God, led to abject poverty on the part of those who participated in this “voluntary communism,” so that Paul was always asking churches to receive offerings to give relief to the poverty-stricken Christians in Jerusalem .

On page 129, Wallace writes: “The spiritual gifts outlined in I Corinthians 12 are crucial factors in the maturity process and effective leadership.” The spiritual gifts outlined in I Corinthians 12 are “the word of wisdom,” “the word of knowledge,” “faith,” healing,” effecting miracles,” “prophecy,” distinguishing of spirits,” “various kinds of tongues,” and “interpretation of tongues.” Is Wallace saying that the restoration of these extraordinary, miraculous gifts of the Spirit, which the church has always viewed as having ceased with the completion of the Biblical canon in the apostolic age, is a crucial factor in the maturing process and effective leadership in the church today? Is Eric Wallace a charismatic?

On page 143, it is asserted that “the first truth is that God loves children...” If that assertion is meant to be universal and all-inclusive, it is mistaken, for God

hated the covenant-child, Esau, Romans 9:13. What does Psalm 21:10 reveal about the disposition of the Messiah toward some children?

On page 156, Wallace says that "God has ordained household relationships to be His primary structure through which the work of redemption is accomplished over generations." This is carelessness of expression on his part. He does not believe what he has written here. God accomplished the eternal redemption of His people once-for-all in the atoning death of Jesus Christ, Hebrews 9:12. That was the significance of Jesus' dying cry, **It is finished!**

On page 163, we are informed that "God wants to transform our hearts into His image." Then we are told to "notice the operative word here is hearts not minds." This comment fails to take into consideration that in Biblical idiom, the heart is also the seat of the intellect. Furthermore, it is insufficient to say simply that God wants to "transform our hearts into His image," because He also wants to transform our hearts, souls, minds, behavior, character and bodies into His image, Philippians 3:21. Here is another example of reductionism.

On page 165, Wallace says that if we are going to be used by God to change other people, we must "perceive the condition of the heart," although he carefully states that only God can "know and judge a person's heart perfectly." His clarification does not remove the problem with his statement that "we must perceive the condition of the heart" in order to help a person grow. If man looks on the outward appearance, and only God looks on the heart, how can man see the heart. He cannot. For that reason the one requirement for church membership is a credible profession of faith in Christ. Elders can evaluate the credibility of professions of faith, and even then they can be in error. All we have to go on is what we see in the life and hear on the tongue. To say we must be able to "perceive the condition of the heart" is more pietistic than Biblical. Moreover, this is not a peripheral issue for Wallace, for our alleged ability to perceive accurately the condition of hearts is essential to his paradigm: "The heart must be our goal, just as it is Christ's goal. We must evaluate the effectiveness of our ministry, not by numbers and money but by the conditions of people's hearts." - page 223

On page 180, the author tells us that "experience, especially bad experience, is a good teacher." Where in the Bible did Mr. Wallace get this maxim? It is not in the Bible, rather it is taken from the old, but misunderstood, maxim: "Experience is a dear teacher." The point of this ancient maxim is not that experience is a "dear," i.e., beloved and effective, teacher, therefore learn from her. Rather, it's point is seen when "dear" is understood as it was originally intended, i.e., "costly and expensive." The point, then, is this: "Experience is a costly and expensive teacher; learn by any other means, if possible."

Furthermore, time and again in his book, Wallace leaves the impression that he has a negative view of doctrinal preaching as it has been defined and practiced generally. For example, on page 158, he writes that children “need relationships in which they can ask any question and get more than a doctrinal or theological answer that they could have found in a Bible encyclopedia.” While it is true that children need secure relationships that enable them to ask honest, heart-felt questions, any answer a Christian parent or preacher gives them that is true will be “a doctrinal or theological answer that they could have found in a Bible encyclopedia,” if they were old enough and were inclined to search for it. The point I am making is that “doctrine” and “theology” are not bad words; they speak of that body of systematically-related revealed truths in the Bible. This also presupposes that those revealed truths that we give in answer to our children’s questions will also be modeled and “fleshed out” in our lives, so they can hear and see them.

On page 181, what does it mean to say that “truths are caught, not taught,” in terms of Reformed and Biblical theology? Without explaining this cliché, it means nothing and can be confusing. Truths are revealed objectively in the Bible and subjectively in the heart by the illumination of the Holy Spirit. Then as they are faithfully taught by the church and family, that same Spirit of Christ convinces God’s people of their divine authority and truthfulness and leads them into a saving understanding of these truths. The teaching of these truths become clearer as they are taught from the sounding board of a godly and loving life.

On page 192, Wallace claims that: “God does not rant, rave, and threaten us when we struggle with sin. God lovingly and patiently convicts us and promises never to leave us.” But is that the truth! It is a half-truth! God does “lovingly and patiently convict us” and He does “promise never to leave us,” but that is not all God does to keep us faithful and to cause us to mature in Christ. To “rant” is to speak in a vehement manner. To “rave” is to speak wildly, irrationally and incoherently. To “threaten” is to issue an intention to punish and to inflict injury. Although God does not rave, He does rant and threaten, even His people, in His Word, out of love for them and for the sake of His own holiness. The entire epistle to the Hebrews in the New Testament is full of threats from the Lord to His children to keep them on the straight and narrow. For divine threatening of the church at its best, read Deuteronomy 28, the OT prophets or Jesus’ rebuke of the Pharisees, who, at that time, were members of His church. As our loving Lord and Savior warns us in Hebrews 12:25, 29—**See to it that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less shall we escape who turn away from Him**

**who warns from heaven. -- ...for our God is a consuming fire.** God also makes serious threats to us through the apostle Paul in I Corinthians 10:1-12.

On page 226 we are told that “Christian teaching is often cerebral, theological, and abstract;” and on page 66 it says: “The church has an unbalanced focus on theology or doctrine. Theology and doctrine are most important. – Christians do need to learn theology and doctrine. The problem, however, is that there is a tendency to focus on inconsequential debates—such as ‘how many angels can stand on the head of a pin’—rather than learning how the study of doctrine helps develop our relationship with God and others.” Then, on page 109, he makes this same point: “...rule keeping and debates on “gray” issues...can and often do supersede relationships.” When I read such statements in the context of Wallace’s whole book, I wonder, “Who are these people that preach and teach doctrine in a “cerebral, theological, and abstract” manner? (Notice that the word “theological” is given a negative connotation along with “cerebral” and “abstract.”) And what are these “inconsequential debates” and these “debates on ‘gray’ issues” that “supersede relationships”? Wallace gives one illustration—“how many angels can stand on the head of a pin,” but he knows that no one debates that issue. I get the impression that he may be referring to those people and churches who are trying to be thoroughly Reformed in their teaching and defense of the whole counsel of God revealed in the Bible.

Ninth, much of what Wallace says, or how he says things, smacks of antinomianism, i.e., a disregard of the necessity of obedience to the revealed Laws of God in the Bible in the Christian life . I have heard before many of the clichés used by Wallace in obvious antinomian contexts. Here are some of his remarks that sound like antinomianism, or that can be interpreted and applied in an antinomian manner.

On page 78, we are told that because of the loss of sense of family and community by the church, “the result is that Christianity is viewed, even by some Christians, as a list of do’s and don’ts instead of the life-giving web of loving relationships.” But, Christianity is “a web of loving relationships” in Christ within the context of “a lists of do’s and don’ts” revealed in Biblical Law. Law is the eye of love and without law, love is blind. Equally so, love is the soul of law, and without love, law is dead.

On page 156, he correctly says that Christ “has saved us from our sins and we are to love and serve Him by seeking to govern our lives by *principles* found in His Word.” Why is Wallace so afraid of the word, *laws*? I cannot remember him saying even once that the Old Testament and New Testament give the believer in Jesus laws, as well as principles, to obey to the glory of God. Jesus does govern our lives by the principles of His Word, but He also governs us by the express commandments and statutes of His Word.

In the context of his whole book, when Wallace says that “we must avoid the legalism that has enmeshed many churches in guilt-induced, performance-based spirituality,” (page 186), I wonder: “Who is he speaking about?” What is this “legalism” he has reference to? Is it the man-made rules of American fundamentalism that rejects Biblical Law because, it says, it applies to a previous “dispensation”? Or is it the Reformed view that grace is not lawless grace, and that God saves us by grace through faith in Christ in order that we might be in a position to obey the laws of the Bible, in the strength of the Spirit? Is he throwing stones at fundamentalism’s legalism or the Reformed Faith’s emphasis on Law in the Christian life? [3]

How extensively are we to take his statement on page 192 that “rule-keeping leaves little room for loving those who don’t agree with the rules or follow them poorly.” In the previous sentence, Wallace says that “those who are ensconced in a whole list of man-made rules and legalism really do not understand the depth of their sin and the glorious remedy in Christ.” What is the significance of the conjunction “and”? Is “legalism” something in addition to “man-made rules”? I get that impression that Wallace is saying that any kind of rule-keeping hinders love toward those who disagree with our rules. However, the Bible says the opposite. It says that love is obeying from the heart the divinely revealed rules in the Bible by which God teaches us how to treat others. Jesus said, **If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love...** Paul said, **Love...is the fulfillment of the Law,** Romans 13:10. And John said: **And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments,** II John 6.

What in the world does Wallace mean when he says that “Jesus gave no entry requirements. He accepts us not on the basis of how we act but on the basis of what He has already done for us.” - page 193. He does accept us on the basis of His own finished work; but to say that He “gave no entry requirements” to His family, church or kingdom, is a gross overstatement at best, heresy at worst. He said in Mark 1:15—**The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.**

*Perhaps*, the reason Eric Wallace makes the emphases he does, and neglects or excludes the Law of God as he does, is because he is an adherent to the antinomian “Sonship” movement, so clearly exposed and refuted by Jay Adams, Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary and others.

Why do I say this? Because of what Wallace says on page 193: “As we preach the gospel to ourselves every day and experience God’s forgiveness, we live in Christ’s sufficiency, not our own. Our sin is no surprise to God, and because we are already totally acceptable to Him, we can run to Him not having to fear His reprisal or displeasure. We do not need to try to earn back His favor, because we

already have it through Christ's work. -- Living a life of repentance, preaching the gospel to ourselves every day, and living in the sufficiency of Christ is the way to live fully and joyfully. -- This also is the picture that we want others to have of what it means to be a Christian."

Although this is exactly what the "Sonship" movement teaches, every word in this statement is true. The problem is what it does not say and what it leaves out. This is not the way Jesus defined what it means to be a Christian. He said, **You are My friends, if you do what I command you**, John 15:14. This is not how Paul defined what it means to be a Christian: **Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but what matters is the keeping of the commandments of God**, I Corinthians 7:19. This is not how John defined what it means to be a Christian: **The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked**, I John 2:4-6.

The point I am making is that Eric Wallace and the "Sonship" movement are antinomian in that they omit or downgrade the Biblical doctrine and reality of sanctification and the abiding authority of God's Law for sanctified living by those who are justified by faith apart from the works of the Law. The historic Reformed Faith has always confessed, not the view of the book we are reviewing, but the following view from the Westminster Confession of Faith, 19.5, 6 & 7. *The moral law doth for ever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof; and that not only in regard of the matter contained in it, but also in respect of the authority of God, the Creator, who gave it. Neither doth Christ in the gospel any way dissolve, but much strengthen its obligation.*

*Although true believers be not under the law as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified or condemned; yet is it of great use to them, as well as to others; in that, as a rule of life, informing them of the will of God and their duty, it directs and binds them to walk accordingly... It is likewise of use to the regenerate, to restrain their corruptions, in that it forbids sin; and the threatenings of it serve to show what even their sins deserve, and what afflictions in this life they may expect for them, although freed from the curse thereof threatened in the law. The promises of it, in like manner, show them God's approbation of obedience, and what blessings they may expect upon the performance thereof, although not as due to them by the law as a covenant of works: so as a man's doing good, and refraining from evil, because the law encourageth to the one, and deterreth from the other, is no evidence of his being under the law, and not under grace. Neither are the forementioned uses of the law contrary to the grace of the gospel, but do sweetly comply with it; the Spirit of Christ subduing and enabling the will of man to do that freely and cheerfully which the will of God revealed in the law requireth to be done.*

## AN INACCURATE IDENTIFICATION OF PROBLEM

According to Wallace, one of the leading culprits in the breakdown of the church and family is age-segregated education and ministry in the church. He drives this point home time and again. On pages 22-23, he claims that more and more churches are moving away from "the hurried, superficial, age-segregated, activity-laden ministry. They are moving toward a whole different approach that centers on freeing up the body to build godly households through heart-felt relationships and age-integrated ministry. -- The equipping that people need cannot be provided through the traditional age-segregated approach... On page 128, he submits to us "that in order to successfully train future leaders, we must change our method of ministry from our current age-segregated program approach to an age-integrated household approach."

This is a simplistic and inaccurate identification of the problem in the family and the church. The real issue is apostasy in the heart and life. It is spiritual declension. The cause of the problem is neither conspiracy nor teaching method. The churches of God in America have left their first love. The fathers have abandoned their callings before God. Therefore, the solution will have to be far more profound and substantial than ending education according to age levels and beginning education that integrates all members of the family.

Many home-schoolers have developed this same enmity toward age-segregated education in church and school. For this reason many of them condemn all forms of institutional Christian education in schools. However, the home schools I am familiar with do not escape the method they criticize. Although the education takes place exclusively in the home with the parents as primary educators, the instruction itself and the curriculum used are based on the difference in ages of the children in the home. Parents do not require their five year olds to read G.A. Henty and R.J. Rushdoony; nor do they require their seventeen year olds to read G.A. Henty. The five year olds are not old enough to digest it; and the seventeen year olds have matured past Henty and should be reading Rushdoony. I John 2:12-18, which is referred to by Wallace on page 112, seems to imply a recognition of differences of comprehension or maturity in different age groups. Both age-segregated methods and age-integrated methods have problems. A paradigm that coordinates both wisely seems to me to be more effective and less limiting regarding good options to parents than having to choose one over the other.

## THE CHOICE WALLACE GIVES THE CHURCH

The point Eric Wallace makes repeatedly throughout *Uniting Church and Home* is that unless a church lays aside its dark, shadowy traditions that emphasize the institutional nature of the church, that focus on theology and doctrine, and that

breed programs from an age-segregated approach, and moves into the light of an age-integrated, household approach to ministry it will be a failure at developing leaders for the future, restoring fathers to their rightful place, cultivating personal heart-level relationships, making the church a dynamic witness that is free to minister to people where they are through relationships that go deep into the real issues of life.

All I can say about these claims is that they are not necessarily true and they are to some degree slanderous. Not all churches of “the old school” fit Wallace’s criticisms; and many of those who fit his praise, are in danger of leaving the Faith within a few years, as they move farther and farther from the truth of God.

I know of many faithful churches who are seriously critical of Wallace’s approach as detrimental to the church, who have some measure of age-segregated training, who appreciate the institutional nature of the church as Christ gave it, who have a Christ-centered focus on teaching and preaching and modeling the revealed truths of the Bible, who practice the old Reformed regulative principle of worship, who have a variety of programs for the gathering and perfecting of the saints, and who seek to be thoroughly Reformed in all aspects of the life, worship, doctrine, ethics, discipline, fellowship and mission of the church. And I know that these churches develop effective leaders for the future in church, home and state, are restoring fathers and mothers to their rightful place in the family, are cultivating personal heart-level relationships among their members, and are making the church a dynamic witness that is free to minister to people where they are through relationships that go deep into the real issues of life. Furthermore, they are faithfully doing these things without the reductionism of *Uniting Church and Home*. In fact, the burden on the heart of these churches is not only for greater spiritual growth and deeper heart-relationships among their members, but also for more numbers of people, because every number is a person made in the image of God, fallen, and in need of the glorious gospel of our blessed God. We work, pray and look forward to the day when the number of believers in Jesus will be more numerous than the stars of the sky and the sand on the beach.

#### Conclusion

Many who share Wallace’s viewpoint draw the line in the wrong place in the sand in the battle for the church in the 21st century. He draws it between those Christian churches that practice age-segregated education and have youth directors and those churches that work to bring the family and church into harmony and unity. As we have said, that is a false dichotomy. The line is to drawn between lovers and doers of the Biblical truth of God, on the one hand, and those who ridicule and reject that truth, on the other.

In the Foreword of *Uniting Church and Home*, Dr. John H. White of Geneva College presents us with three challenges before the church today: "How can we have a pedagogy that more accurately reflects Biblical norms? How can we communicate a Christian message free of legalism? How can our programs and structures be delivered from the endemic individualism of our culture?" The answers to these questions, it seems to me, are not to be found in Eric Wallace's paradigm, although as I have said his book contains many good criticisms and suggestions. The answers are to be found in repentance of our unbelief, impenitence and disobedience to God, and in a fresh commitment to and application of the historic Reformed Faith, which is Biblical Christianity in its purest human expression, as set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, beginning with the renewal of the heart and mind.

*Soli Deo Gloria*

[1] This is not to say that the Holy Spirit will not lead the church into a more clarified understanding of revealed truth as history proceeds, for, as John Robinson said, "the Lord has yet more light to break forth from His Word." However, it will not contradict true expressions of Biblical Faith in previous generations.

[2] In using a comment in *The Family* by Benjamin M. Palmer to support his household approach, that "under the New Testament economy, where the Church assumes her final form, the Family is again her home," (p. 207), Wallace show that he misunderstands Palmer. In the context of Palmer's comment it is obvious that he meant by it that the visible church found a "home" in the houses of its members, where it met for worship on the Lord's Day. He refers to several examples on page 207. It should also be pointed out that meeting in homes was not the first choice of the church, Acts 19:8-9. Furthermore, Palmer said the home was the "germ" of the church and the "radix" of the church, because it originated in Adam's home, Noah's home and Abraham's home during its time of immaturity; but Palmer did not say the home is the basis or foundation of the church.

[3] The Reformed Faith also emphasizes the central role of the Holy Spirit in the Christian life.

### **Courtship Horror Stories**

*Douglas Wilson*

The center must always be the law and wisdom of Scripture, and never our various actions and reactions. As the bankruptcy of the modern dating system becomes increasingly obvious, the temptation to react will be present with us on

every side. But reactionary behavior is always destructive, and this does not even include the calamities brought on by overreaction.

It is not enough that our children are "not dating." It is not enough that we call whatever it is we are doing "biblical courtship." Calling our driveway gravel gold doesn't make us rich.

A few cautions for parents considering the courtship model are therefore in order. First, the authority of the father must be applied differently depending upon whether a situation is a negative or positive one. In other words, a world of difference lies between a man refusing a suitor his daughter might like and a father insisting on a man his daughter does not like. In the first instance, he is providing a covenantal fence and it is likely that he knows far more than his daughter does. His wisdom is exercised the way a father's wisdom should be--in a defensive and protective way. But in the latter instance, it is far more likely that his daughter knows more about the situation than he does. A man who tries to insist that his daughter develop an interest in someone he likes is a fool; he is not choosing a hunting partner for himself. Far from being a protection for her, she now needs (and does not have) protection from him. A man with an attractive daughter will become accustomed to the routine of putting off suitors. But a wise man will be extremely reluctant to exercise his authority in this area in a positive, prescriptive way--"This is the man you must marry." Now the world is a complicated place, and so we can imagine situations where this rule might not apply, but as a general rule this is really the difference between a defender and a tyrant.

Second, the tendency to trust the "system" of courtship for "sure results" is actually the sure road to disaster. Fools can grow older and find themselves with children of marriageable age. When they do, we will start hearing the courtship horror stories as they trickle in. Suzie Q was excommunicated because she couldn't bring herself to like the pastor's son. Billy John was attacked by the parents of a plain girl in the congregation for his obvious lack of spirituality, as evidenced by his most grievous interest in that pretty one over there. But biblical patterns of behavior are only a blessing when they are followed by biblical people. As a proverb in the mouth of a fool reminds Solomon of the legs on a lame man, so the phrase biblical courtship in the mouths of fools is equally incongruous.

Third, we need to face up to the "too late" factor. A man who picks up a book on biblical courtship when his daughter is already living with a guy at college really ought to be reading something else. We glory in the truth that sin can be forgiven, but God has not arranged the world so that the consequences of sin are automatically erased whenever sin is confessed. We are individuals who will live forever, and in our children God has placed everlasting souls under our charge.

This means that disobedience by parents can screw someone up eternally. Disobedient children should always be in our prayers, but we must not intimate that twenty years of parental sin admits of a quick fix. When a seventeen-year-old daughter has been dating for five years, and the full-tilt courtship model is used to clamp down on her, the only thing that will come of it is some really interesting pastoral problems.

Fourth is the pernicious problem of the spiritual pride associated with courtship. "We practice biblical courtship." "Ooooooo. Can I touch you?" "No. That's kind of the point, actually." Such pride is often the result of embracing a practice which is not mainstream, and which sets the practitioner off as being weird. When pretending not to be weird would clearly be unsuccessful, the alternative frequently comes out in various weird and proud manifestations. But even if the pride is a defensive one, it remains pride and ought to be confessed as sin.

The last warning is that we must avoid allowing the courtship model to develop a subcultural uniform, which would then lead people to think that this is only a subcultural practice of a particular subcultural group, and not a biblical principle which God requires of humans. Unless we watch it, the uniforms will develop on their own. Just as we know that a kid is a skater, or at least a wannabe, by his baggy trousers hauled down to mid-thigh, we might soon come to recognize the courtship boys through their pants hitched up to the armpits. "Hello. I've come to sit on the couch in the living room with your daughter." And then you wake up with your sheets drenched with sweat.

The central principle involved in courtship is biblical and constant. The parents of a young woman are to be authoritatively involved in the process of her courtship and marriage. The cultural practices will vary. The amount of wisdom displayed by the young people and parents will vary. The humility and grace will vary. But at bottom, this is a normal pattern of living for normal people who want to live biblically.

### **Is Sunday School Really From the Pit of Hell?**

*Pete Hurst*

Granted, there have been more than a few Sunday School lessons from the pit of Hell, and sermons too, for that matter, because teachers didn't honor our Triune God and His Word; but does that mean Sunday School itself is from the pit of Hell? One leader in the patriarchy movement thinks so and has declared that when we ask the church where Sunday School comes from, "the pit of Hell" is the only right answer. Another informs us that even though the Bible mentions teachers, it doesn't mention Sunday School teachers; that wisdom nugget ought to save us all a trip to our Strong's Concordance. For others, Sunday School, or a

youth group meeting are viewed as obstacles to a son or daughter maturing into adulthood; therefore, children should never be separated from their parents whenever the church meets. Essentially, everyone should always be together all the time to promote family unity and not be fragmented into classes based on age or interest, thus succumbing to the influence of modern individualism. The logic behind "The pit of Hell" reasoning seems to be something like this: Hell gave us Darwin's evolutionary theory, evolution with its stages of animal development influenced education, education divided children by age, Sunday School divides children by age, Sunday School is from the pit of Hell. Since we as Christians must apply what we believe to all of life, this would mean that many other things like sports leagues, scouting, clubs, etc. would be from the pit of Hell as well. Are we to presume, then, that when church historians deal with the church's slide into liberalism and apostasy, Sunday School will be one of the Church's greatest enemies? Isn't the real problem what is being taught in the pulpit and practiced in worship, not that there's a class of junior high school age students?

What about children and the maturation concern, that age division leads to a child's failure to mature? Developing maturity for children should be a way of life, applying God's Word to children no matter what their age, certainly rejecting all the foolish ideas that others advance about the "terrible two's," or a son being "all boy" or withholding discipline for a temper tantrum because a child doesn't understand, or various adolescence theories, excuse making for what is nothing less than sin. It would be nice if keeping our children with us all the time was the pill to the maturing process, but it really doesn't work that way. Other arguments are just downright silly, like the point some make that parents depend on the church's Sunday School program to be the spiritual provider for their children. If there are parents who think this way, then correct their thinking, but don't trash Sunday School because a few are out to lunch in their understanding.

Should a church have a Sunday School program? It's up to the leadership of the congregation to decide. If a church has a program, should families be required to put their children in the program? I don't think so; our church doesn't; the leadership can address this issue as well.

Finally, there's an element of reforming culture, exercising dominion over God's creation, redeeming things by God's grace that many in the patriarchy movement seem to fail to appreciate.

Sometimes the argument is advanced that Sunday School as it is today is not what it was 200 years ago, that it began as a tool to teach poor children to read, evangelize them, clean up their lives, etc., and because that isn't what we have in our churches today, therefore we shouldn't have it. So what? If the name was

changed to Lord's Day School or Christian Sabbath Study Time, would that suffice? Can we give it a different name and continue to use it as an educational hour for the church?

Some purists in the patriarchy movement like to boast of how they only have and do those things for which they have explicit commands in Scripture. They reject things of man's invention in doing the work of Christ's Church (so much for pew Bibles, communion trays, overhead transparencies, etc.); however, I presume most are not consistent. For instance, almost all of them probably celebrate Christmas, but nowhere in Scripture are we commanded to celebrate Christmas. In fact, there was a time when my wife and I did not, and history records many Christians who were opposed to such celebration. Christmas had its beginnings in the Church's attempt to draw people away from pagan celebrations.

My wife and I in later years began celebrating Christmas because of verses like Zechariah 8:19: "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, 'the fast of the fourth month and the fast of the fifth and the fast of the seventh and the fast of the tenth shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladness and cheerful feasts; therefore, love the truth and peace.'"

Here were fasts the people observed that God had not appointed, and God's Word to them was not condemnation for their observance, but that He would redeem them.

What is wrong with something being adapted over time? What is wrong with taking something that is bad or even questionable (and I don't think this is what Sunday School is) and redeeming it? While the world celebrates Halloween, how much better that Christians get together for Reformation Day celebrations or Harvest parties of fun and games and thanksgiving to God.

Sunday School can be an excellent opportunity for educating God's people.

Where it needs improvement, improve it. Churches fail in many things, but some still take teaching and learning seriously. Contrary to what some might conclude, the pit of Hell is not from which their Sunday School program comes.

### **Only God Gets To Define Sin**

*Andrew Sandlin*

Whatever the Bible does not forbid, God permits. This is a theoretical way of saying that only God can define sin (I Jn. 3:4). When somebody charges that to advocate birth control or smoking tobacco or charging interest is *ipso facto* sin, he has replaced God's law with man's law. This is a mark of Pharisees (Mk. 7:1-16). **Only God is entitled to define sin.**

There may be many good reasons not to practice birth control, smoke cigars, charge interest, grow huckleberries, listen to the Beatles, drink Bushmills Irish whiskey, dance at weddings, drive a convertible, send your daughter to Ivy League colleges, sport Afros, invest in mutual funds, play slots in Las Vegas, watch R-rated movies, learn to whittle, or wear linen sport coats--but none of those reasons have any inherent bearing on sin. If you cannot practice these things in good conscience, then don't practice them (Rom. 14:23). Just don't criticize Christians who do practice them.

In my home, I did not allow my younger teenagers to smoke tobacco or drink alcohol. But I did not shroud my home regulation list in the moral authority of, "God forbids it." I merely said, "Your mother and I are God's delegated authorities in this home and we require you abstain from these acts right now." To enlist divine sanction not merely for parental authority but also for preferential prohibition is to assault the authority of the Bible.

The reason I raise this issue, in fact, has nothing to do with cigar smoking, interest charging condom-wearers and everything to do with the functional authority and integrity of the Bible. God has laid out what He requires. Beyond what He requires, He grants freedom: we term this "Christian Liberty." We could use a revival of it today. Bible-toters and -quoters who forbid what the Bible does not address dilute the authority of the Bible, a serious matter indeed.

The Bible (of course) does not address all issues, we have civil and ecclesiastical and parental authorities that (when necessary, but only when necessary) fill in the legislative lacuna: citizens may not jay walk, members must attend church at 11:00 a.m. and not 3 in the afternoon, and minors may not try alcohol in my house until they are 16.

But these, let it always be understood, are men's permissible laws, not God's prescriptive laws.

We have enough sin around today (homosexuality, slander, abortion, lovelessness, schism, drunkenness, covenant-breaking, unbelief, worry, statism) that we need not add to the list birth control, smoking, and full-bodied merlots.

The bottom line is:

*Only God gets to define sin.*

## **The Giant Youth Meeting**

*Pete Hurst*

Youth meetings and youth conferences seem to be a definite no-no for some in the patriarchy movement. One gentleman has said that youth camps, trips, and conferences have produced little fruit because of separation from fathers. I agree that some conferences may not produce fruit, but it isn't because fathers aren't

present; instead, it is because those in charge may not maintain Christian morality and fail to give instruction based upon God's Word. God promises that His Word will not return to Him void (Isaiah 55:11), and Jesus says it is by His Truth that His people are sanctified (John 17:17).

I have good memories of church youth camps, retreats, and mission trips. I have seen the Lord greatly bless these on occasions when I have had the privilege to serve with others as a counselor or in leadership positions.

While in seminary, I presented an idea to Ben Wilkinson who was with the Presbyterian Evangelistic Fellowship. The idea was to have summer student evangelists. He recruited a half dozen of us fellows and we traveled around conducting youth services and retreats. I remember I had a couple of sermons against easy believism and decisional regeneration, and the rest of my material was taken from J.C. Ryle's *Holiness*. It has been 35 years, and someone mentioned to me this week his family's fond remembrance of one of those weeks, so I guess Ryle's material bore some fruit.

Upon graduation from seminary, Wayne Herring, Wayne Rogers and myself were disappointed in the lack of knowledge of the Reformed Faith in youth in the Presbyterian Church in the United States, so we began the Reformed Youth Movement. Each summer we held one or two conferences with speakers like Al Martin, John Reisinger, Palmer Robertson and Jack Scott. With the formation of the Presbyterian Church in America we saw some return to a knowledge of the Reformed Faith that had not been present in the PCUS. Although all of the original organizers of RYM have long since resigned, the Reformed Youth Movement continues today, and many who have been used profitably in it have been associated with Reformed University Fellowship, a good campus ministry. Around the early 90's I learned of the Life Preparation Conference in Atlanta led by Gary DeMar and Gary North. My wife and I, together with other parents in our congregation, sent our children to it. Besides profiting from instruction from these men and others like Greg Bahnsen, they also got to know their teachers personally and spend time with them.

When it appeared that DeMar and North were not going to continue this conference, I wrote to them and told them our church would like to do something along the order of what they had done. They had no immediate plans to continue, so in 1994 the Christian Worldview Student Conference was born. CWSC's emphasis went beyond the Reformed fundamentals; its goal was to assist parents and churches in ministry to their youth by helping them develop a Biblical Worldview. Students would learn there were answers to all the humanist garbage on various campuses and they would be encouraged by the numbers of fellow students who were in the battle with them. Young people from all over the United States and some foreign countries have come to this conference and

have benefited greatly. At CWSC students have met their future spouse, formed lifelong friendships, come to understand their calling in life, and received great instruction in applying God's Word to all of life. Consider this list of teachers and recognize that listening to them will bear fruit, by God's grace: Calvin Beisner, Joel Belz, Norm Bomer, Michael Butler, Gary DeMar, Richard Ganz, Ken Gentry, George Grant, Peter Leithart, Joseph Morecraft, Howard Phillips, Tom Rose, R.J. Rushdoony, Andrew Sandlin, Steve Schlissel, Herb Titus, Gene Veith, Ed Welch, Steve Wilkins, Douglas Wilson and others. Even though these men may not agree with each other on everything, they are good men for whom I thank the Lord.

I don't believe it is true that youth conferences and such produce little fruit. Folks who say this need to broaden what they observe, talk to a few more people, maybe come into town a little more often.

Conferences like CWSC bear fruit and they break many of the rules that some in the patriarchy movement hold so dear. CWSC is a giant youth meeting(not good), it gathers students together with their peers(not good), it is age segregated(not good) and it allows fathers to delegate responsibility to others to teach their sons and daughters for a time(not good).