

The *Inform*er

Winter 2015

a publication of the Indiana Association of Home Educators

Unleashing
World History

You Can Be
Your Child's
Reading
Specialist

When *Brains*
Turn to *Mush*

The *Secrets* to
Finding a Novel's
Theme

**2016 IAHE
Convention
Info**
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The Informer Core Values

- To be Christ-focused
- To be Indiana-focused
- To be encouraging
- To be a resource

IAHE

The IAHE is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1983 for the purpose of serving the Lord Jesus Christ by supporting and encouraging families interested in home education. We define home education as parent-directed, home-based, privately-funded education.

Our primary functions are maintaining visibility as home educators with civil government leaders, influencing the legislative process, sponsoring seminars for parent education, and publishing.

The IAHE is governed by a volunteer board of directors. Sixteen regional representative couples are in direct contact with local support groups across the state.

Our major source of income is our annual convention. With the growth of the home education movement, both our needs and responsibilities continue to grow, and we welcome your tax deductible contributions.

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Welcome

a note from the editor

While the calendar may tell us that winter doesn't start until December 22, something seasonal starts to change in mid-November. The excitement of a new school year is gone. Colorful fall leaves have given way to bare branches. Temperatures are cooler and the days are shorter. And holiday planning begins to consume our days.

This changing season often comes with a lot of distractions and interruptions to a weekly school schedule.

How do you plan ahead for the holidays to make sure you don't lose valuable time? Be intentional. Keep time outside of the home to a minimum each week.

We'd love to hear your ideas on how to stay focused this time of year! Join our Facebook Discussion Group and tell us how you avoid distractions: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/IAHEchat/>

In This Issue

- Articles from Indiana writers: Sharon Watson's *The Secrets to Finding a Novel's Theme* & Robyn Moore's *Raising Citizens*.

- Articles from 2016 IAHE Home Educators' Convention speakers: Faith Berens's *You Can Be Your Child's Reading Specialist*, Hal & Melanie Young's *When Brains Turn to Mush*, and Linda Lacour Hobar's *Unleashing World History!*

- Check out the results of the National Home Education Research Institute's Gen2 Survey. Brian Ray's fascinating study is the most comprehensive research project done to date chronicling the impact of home education on recent graduates.

And much more!

Tara Bentley

The Informer Magazine

The Informer is published quarterly by the Indiana Association of Home Educators (IAHE) to provide information, inspiration, and support to homeschool families. Subscriptions are FREE upon request. The mailing list for *The Informer* is never sold or rented.

The articles in this magazine reflect the freedom of home educators in Indiana to choose from a wide variety of homeschool philosophies and teaching methods. Opinions and attitudes expressed in articles do not necessarily reflect the beliefs of the Indiana Association of

Home Educators. IAHE does not endorse or advocate any one method or philosophy. The Board encourages each home educator to seek God's will in determining what is best for him, his school, and his students.

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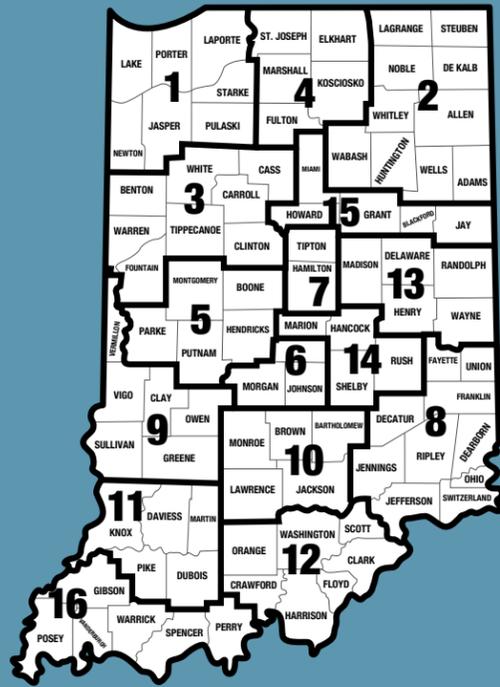
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IAHE Regional Representative Map



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If you do not receive a response in a timely manner, please contact the IAHE office.

New Reps for Region

5

Dwayne & Melissa Sawyer

Dwayne and Melissa Sawyer have been homeschooling their 3 children since 2007, when their oldest was in preschool. They call Brownsburg in Hendricks County, home. Dwayne and Melissa are involved in their church, local homeschooling group and their community. Dwayne works for Ionetix as a Software Architect of Automated Products. ■



New Reps for Region

11

Forrest "Kip" & Donna Jones

Forrest "Kip" and Donna Jones live near Velpen, Indiana in Pike county. They have been homeschooling for 15 years and have three children. Kip is employed by Sunrise Coal as a maintenance planner. Being able to homeschool their children is a wonderful blessing! They look forward to serving Region 11 families. ■



Welcome our Newest Board Members!

Greg & Kimberly Laskowski

Greg & Kimberly Laskowski reside near Bedford, Indiana (Lawrence County). They have homeschooled for 14 years and have three children ranging in age from 7 to 18 years. The Laskowskis believe one of the most important goals of home education is giving their children a love for The Lord in which they know, serve, and seek Him each day. Next, they desire to give their children a love for learning. During the twenty years that Greg served in the United States Navy, the Laskowskis home educated in five states. They served as Regional Reps for three years. Greg and Kimberly seek to help men and women in their God given biblical roles and encourage others in their journey as home educators. ■



New Reps for Region

10

Marty & Lisa Pieper

Marty & Lisa Pieper live between Bedford and Bloomington, IN. They are in their 9th year of homeschooling since bringing their oldest daughter home from public school in the early elementary years. Their three daughters are ages 15, 12, and 8. The Pieper family has a heart to serve the Lord and the homeschooling community. They have been involved in the leadership of a local homeschool support group for several years. ■



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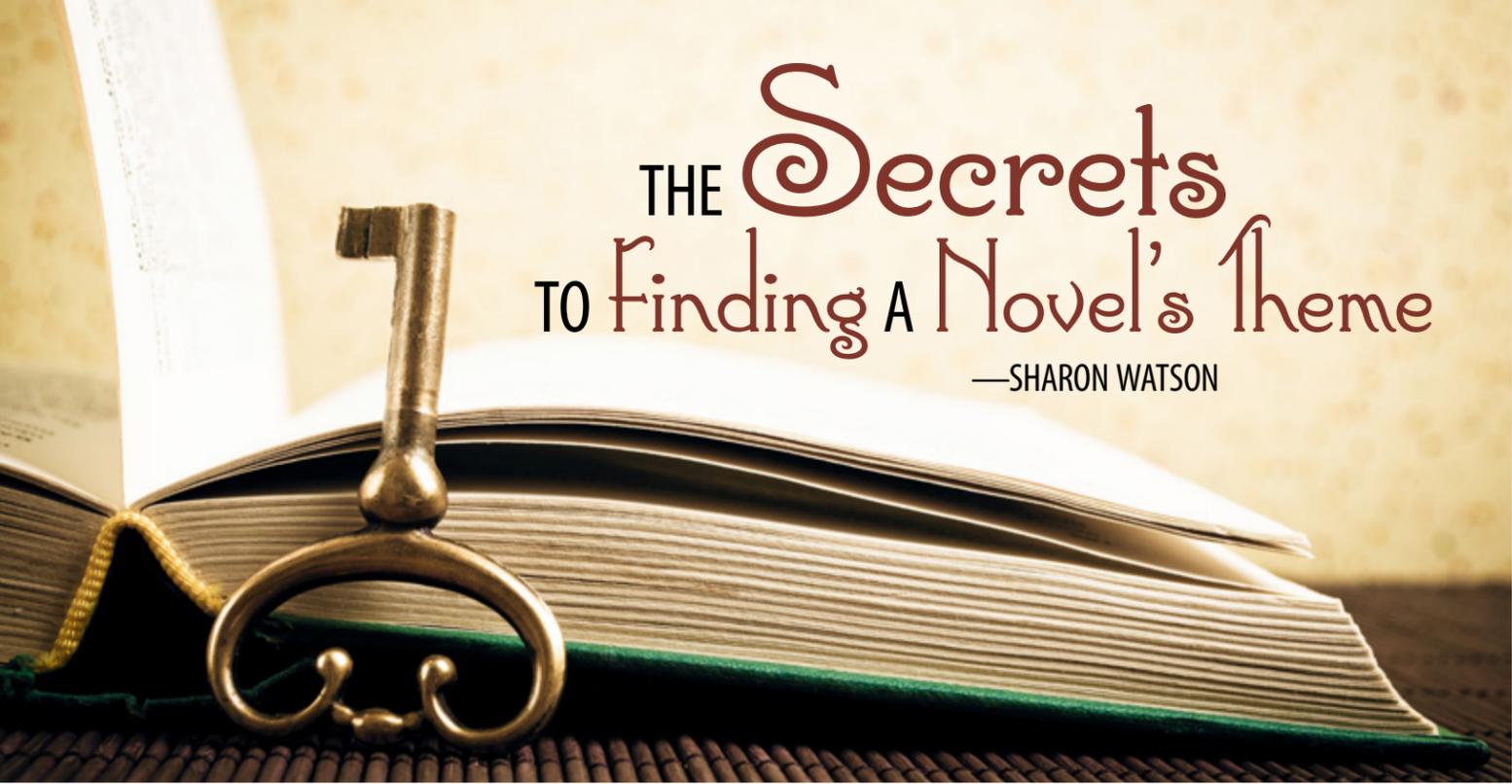
Regional Representatives

serve the homeschooling community throughout Indiana. Each representative is a veteran homeschooler who can help answer the questions of a family just starting out. They also communicate with local support groups in their region and keep them up to date on changes in the law and activities throughout the state.

You can contact your regional representative for information about spelling bees, sport clubs, book fairs, curriculum advice, workshops, standardized testing and convention information. They can also help you find a support group in your area, or if none is available, they'll help you start one.

THE SECRETS TO FINDING A NOVEL'S THEME

—SHARON WATSON



Mark Twain introduces *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by warning that “persons attempting to find a moral in it will be banished.” Twain could afford to be humorous; he did not have to help students identify a theme. But we do.

“What’s the book about?” Most literature students cringe when they hear this question, and for good reason. It’s a tough question. Authors are supposed to be subtle about their novels’ meanings. The good news is that authors do leave clues along the way. Student readers are detectives looking for those clues, but which are they looking for? Here are six concrete ones.

REPETITION

If a certain symbol, phrase, imagery, or idea keeps popping up, most likely it is pointing the way to a theme. Take, for instance, Charles Dickens’ *A Tale of Two Cities*. He underlines burial and resurrection with descriptions, chapter titles, story events, quotations, dialog, and character actions. By the end of the novel, students understand that sacrificing oneself—dying to oneself, literally or figuratively—so another can live is a worthy endeavor.

Ask your students this question: “What image, color, phrase, symbol, or idea repeats itself in this book?”

OUTRIGHT STATEMENTS

In *A Christmas Carol*, Dickens puts his theme into the mouth of the ghost Marley, who is regretting his misspent life: “Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business.... The dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business!”

While Scrooge, busy at his trade, believes that poor people ought to die and “decrease the surplus population,” Marley reminds him that his true business should be mankind.

Ask your students this question: “What statement or dialog stuck out to you as being important?”

CHARACTER ACTIONS

Consider a book in which one character is an incoherent churchman who quotes Scripture, and the main character kills him when his ravings threaten to reveal their location to an enemy.

This is what happens in *The War of the Worlds*. Through the main character’s actions, author H. G. Wells tells readers that, in his opinion, Christianity is useless in times of real distress. You may think I am stretching things a bit here and seeing opinions where there are none; however, Wells writes in his autobiography that he hates the Church so much that he would like to push it off the earth and that God is “an ever absent help in times of trouble,” referring to Psalm 46:1.

Ask your students this question: “If the protagonist had done something different at the crucial part of the book, how would that change the meaning of the story?”

THE AUTHOR’S LIFE

If students know something about the author, they may have an easier time of detecting the theme. The author is not a blank slate but has opinions, experiences, and a worldview that seep into his novel, as you can see from H. G. Wells’ life.

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Ask your students these questions: “What opinions, experiences, attitudes, or worldview of the author make it into this book?” and “What do you think the author is trying to tell us by these?”

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE, DESCRIPTIONS, OR IMAGERY

Figurative language like similes, metaphors, hyperboles, and so on, along with the imagery or word pictures the author paints, should all support the theme, much like the points in an essay support the thesis statement. This clue is related to the repetition clue.

Dickens often highlights the burial/resurrection theme of *A Tale of Two Cities* with descriptions and imagery. When he describes a room in an inn, he intentionally underscores the darkness of death by writing that the couch was black, the tables were dark and heavy, and the candles in the room reflected on the tables in such a way that it seemed “as if they were buried, in deep graves of black mahogany, and no light to speak of could be expected from them until they were dug out.”

Ask your students this question: “What figurative language or word pictures does the author use that may point to the novel’s meaning?”

HOW THE NOVEL ENDS

Think of how different *Moby-Dick* would be if Captain Ahab had fulfilled his obsession of conquering the white whale that had ruined his leg. Instead, he ends up dead, tethered to the whale in a snarl of tangled lines, one lifeless arm waving in a mockery of life. This is not a happy ending nor is it an optimistic message from the author.

If Sidney Carton’s sacrifice had not worked in *A Tale of Two Cities*, and Charles Darnay had been captured and beheaded anyway, what would Dickens have been telling us about life and the impulse to sacrifice for others? Sometimes turning the story on its head helps students see what is really there.

Ask your student this question: “Think of an opposite ending for this novel. How does this change the meaning of the story?”

If your students still cannot identify the clues, read some children’s books together like *Horton Hears a Who* by Dr. Seuss or *The Ugly Duckling* by Hans Christian Andersen. It is easier to identify themes in children’s stories, fairy tales, or *Aesop’s fables* than in literature course novels that were originally written for adults.

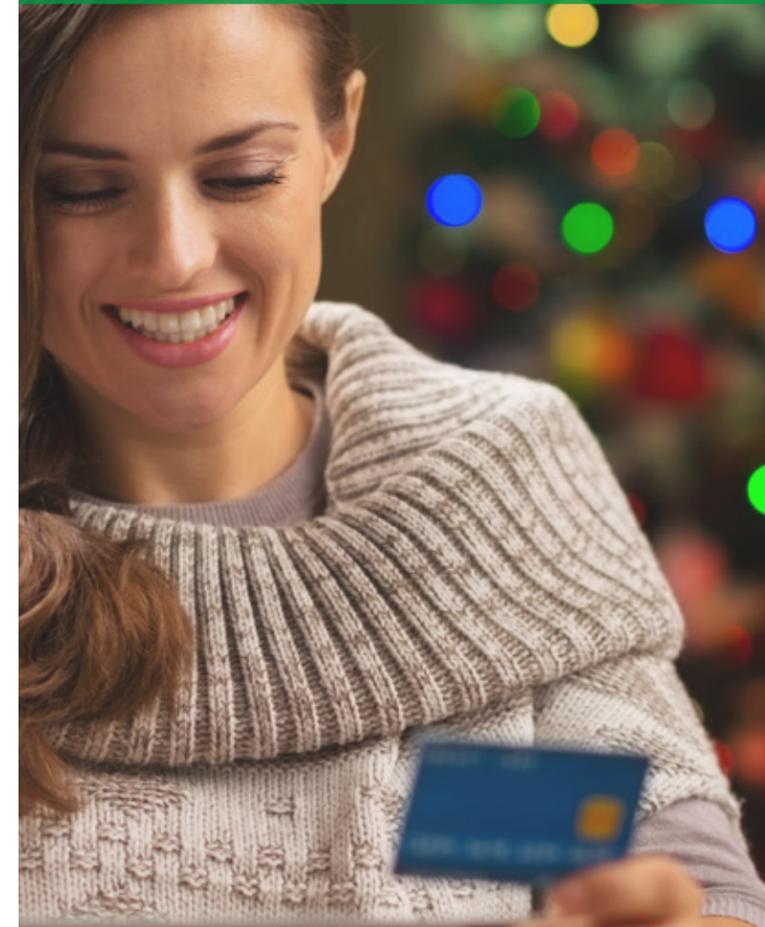
When all else fails, visit www.sparknotes.com or www.cliffsnotes.com for specific titles and their themes.

Despite Twain’s threats of banishment, finding the theme will be worth it. ■



SHARON WATSON is a “retired” homeschool mom and the author of *Apologia’s Jump In*, featured in Cathy Duffy’s 102 Top Picks for Homeschool Curriculum. She’s also the author of *The Power in Your Hands: Writing Nonfiction in High School. Make a literature class possible with Sharon’s newest course Illuminating Literature: When Worlds Collide. Visit her at WritingWithSharonWatson.com*

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2016 IAHE
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SPEAKER

You Can Be Your Child's READING SPECIALIST

—Faith Berens, M.Ed./Reading Specialist and Special Needs/Struggling Learner Consultant

"Can I really teach my struggling child to read? I feel so frustrated. I did fine with the others, but this child is different."

(Concerned homeschooling mom)

In the Struggling Learner department, we often hear from parents who are overwhelmed because their child seems to be "behind" in reading and the curriculum is not working! Many bright, hard-working children struggle with reading for various reasons. Although some experts in the field of reading tell parents "teaching reading is rocket science" implying that it should be left to "professionals", we rely on God's Word and His Word commands parents to instruct their children diligently in the ways of the Lord, and that includes reading His Word. We trust parents can help even the most struggling students and we are here to support you in that endeavor. As you seek to serve as your child's reading specialist at home, here are some steps for success:

1. **EQUIP** yourself with knowledge: It is necessary to have some specialized knowledge about reading development and reading disabilities/dysfunctions.
2. **DETERMINE** where your child is struggling in reading and detect the level or severity of his difficulty
3. **CHOOSE CAREFULLY** the curriculum, materials and remediation strategies based on your child's specific needs.

In this article, we will equip you with background knowledge on reading development, discuss the 5 Pillars of Reading Instruction, and provide some informal assessments and check lists to assist in determining your child's stage of reading development, as well as detect any areas of reading difficulty.

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So let us discuss some foundations of reading:

WHAT IS READING?

Reading is making meaning from printed symbols on a page and it is a highly complex problem-solving activity. In fact, Dr. Sally Shaywitz, a leading researcher in the field of dyslexia, in addition to professor and director of the Yale Center for Learning and Attention, states "Reading is the most complex of human functions" (Shaywitz, 2003).

Decoding, or sounding out words, is certainly the most basic step in reading. In deed, quick and automatic recognition of words is necessary for fluent reading and for comprehension. But reading also involves drawing on knowledge, experience, vocabulary, as well as employing a variety of strategies to construct meaning.

Efficient readers re-read, make and confirm predictions, apply fix up strategies, clarify, use context clues and graphics, as well as break words into smaller recognizable units, for example, in order to make meaning of unfamiliar text. Engaged readers interact with the text, involving not only what the author has written, but also bringing their own ideas to the writing.

According to Jean Chall, world-renowned psychologist, reading expert, and professor emeritus at Harvard University, reading is a skill which is built upon through stages. All life-long learners climb this on-going, stair step process of reading development. Keep in mind that this is a continuum of development and each person progresses at his/her own rate, so the ages/grades that one progresses through these stages are stated in general.

5 STAGES OF READING DEVELOPMENT

Stage 0

Pre-reading Stage

At this stage, there is an unsystematic accumulation of understandings about reading that are picked up in the pre-school and kindergarten years. At this stage, beginning at birth up to kindergarten age, by providing the child a language-rich, conversation-filled home with story books, playing with spoken words, nursery rhymes and the rhythm of language, the pre-requisite skills of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary and comprehension are all being put into place.

Stage 1

Initial Reading or Decoding Stage

(Grades 1-2; Ages 6-7): At this stage, the student's main task is learning arbitrary letters and associating them with corresponding parts of spoken words. Learners also acquire knowledge about reading, sight words, and phonics skills.

Stage 2

Confirmation, Fluency, Automaticity Stage

(Grades 2-3; Ages 7-8): At this stage, there is a consolidation of what was learned in Stage 1 and students begin to become more automatic and "unglued" from print. This stage requires much reading and reading many books with ease; rereading familiar books for developmental reading to increase fluency is recommended. There is a gradual increase in functional and recreational reading; at this level, the common practice in reading instruction is to use a "basal" reading program and leveled readers. It is important at this level, too, to increase non-fiction and functional reading.

Stage 3

Reading for Learning: A First Step

(Grades 4-8; Ages 9-13): At this stage, readers bring their prior knowledge to the reading and also acquire facts and information from reading.

Stage 4

Multiple Viewpoints Stage

(High School; Ages 14-18): At this stage, reading instruction should also include reading and study skills and offer strategies for reading success, such as deeper comprehension.

Stage 5

Construction & Reconstruction Stage

(College/Adulthood: Ages 18 and up) At the stage of adult literacy, acquisition of skills needed and useful to the reader, as well as the ability to apply those skills is stressed.



Armed with a solid foundational understanding of the stages of reading development parents can best serve as their children's literacy specialists. As you observe your child climb each level, you will be there to intervene should they get stuck in one stage, as well as assist them in moving on to the next phase. Also, by knowing these stages, parents can document children's progress in their homeschool records, narratives, or summary reports. Simple check lists or charts can be created on which to graph each child's stage of reading development.

RESOURCES TO HELP ASSESS AND TEACH READING SKILLS/DEVELOPMENT

- Dr. William Eckenwiler and Kristen Eckenwiler, www.TheStrugglingReader.com, assessments and intervention materials designed for homeschooling parents
- Dianne Craft, www.diannecraft.org
- Tracey Tutor, www.traceytutor.com
- http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/all_reading/milestones.html
- Reading Skills Pyramid Poster, <http://www.reading-skills-pyramid.org/>
- On-line Phonemic Awareness assessments:
- <http://www.positscience.com/games-teasers/brain-games-kids/sound-discrimination/bear-wear/play> or <http://www.pps.k12.or.us/curriculum/literacy/video/assessments/k-phonemic.pdf>
- *Scholastic Books Teaching Resources, 3-Minute Reading Assessments* by Timothy Rasinski and Nancy Padak and *35 Rubrics and Checklists to Assess Reading and Writing* by Adele Fiderer
- The following websites offer free screenings for reading difficulties/dyslexia: www.lexercise.com, www.dynaread.com, and Barton Reading, http://www.bartonreading.com/students_long.html#screen



- Quick Word Recognition assessment, http://www.hslda.org/strugglinglearner/CraftDocs/Quick_Word.asp
- Fluency Assessment and Chart, http://www.hslda.org/strugglinglearner/CraftDocs/Fluency_Assess.asp

FIVE PILLARS OF READING INSTRUCTION

It is simply not enough for struggling readers to be assigned reading or even be read aloud to and then asked comprehension questions. It should also be stated that phonics instruction cannot stand alone as a reading program either. So what should daily reading instruction and a good reading program look like?

According to the National Reading Panel (1993), any solid reading program or curriculum should address five core areas, referred to as the five pillars:

- **PHONEMIC AWARENESS** (pre-phonics skills; phonological processing involves an awareness that words are made up of sounds and those sounds can be combined, broken apart, and manipulated)
- **DECODING/PHONICS**
- **VOCABULARY** (to include sight words)
- **FLUENCY**
- **COMPREHENSION**

Daily instruction for mildly or moderately struggling readers should include training in phonemic awareness skills, as well as fluency practice, such as timed repeated readings, choral, and or echo reading, if needed. Each day, all readers need time for independent/easy reading (95%-100% accuracy), in addition to oral, guided instructional level reading (94%-90% accuracy) to work on phonics, sight words, and vocabulary development. When looking for specialized homeschooling reading curriculum, as well as planning for your child's reading instruction, be sure these five core areas are addressed. Keep in mind that it may be necessary to use an eclectic approach, compiling various resources in order to address the reading skills your child needs to develop the most.

Students with severe struggles in reading and particularly students with dyslexia need a very structured and sequential, explicit, and multi-sensory program. The best type of intervention for students with dyslexia is a program that is Orton-Gillingham based. Some of the most well known Orton-Gillingham based programs include the Barton System for Reading and Spelling, Wilson, Recipe for Reading, and All About Reading and All About Spelling.

To access lists of recommended reading curricula and materials, a list of Intensive Phonics Intervention programs, and sample reading lessons, please go to: http://www.hslda.org/strugglinglearner/sn_articles.asp

To read Dianne Craft's e-newsletter on "Understanding Reading Difficulties" and Faith Berens' article on Reading Comprehension be sure to visit: http://www.hslda.org/strugglinglearner/sn_newsletters.asp

Part 2 of this article on Reading, provides a prescriptive guide for matching your child's specific reading problem with targeted teaching methods and curricula. You will also learn how to accurately determine what level of reading difficulties your child has, whether Level 1-mild reading difficulties, Level 2-moderate, or Level 3-severe (often referred to as dyslexia). This article may be found in the HSLDA Court Report magazine, Vol. XXVII, No. 6, November/December 2011 issue with the on-line version available at following website: <http://www.hslda.org/courtreport/V27N6/V27N609.asp>

SUMMARY

While there can be various reasons for reading difficulties, you can rest assured that reading problems can be handled in the home school setting very successfully. In fact, the one-on-one, tailored instruction of home can be the very best setting for a struggling reader!

We believe that those He calls, He always equips! We trust parents can teach their struggling readers and we will come along side , not only to encourage you, but also to equip you with the best methods, materials, and teaching strategies to match your child's unique learning style. ■

 **FAITH BERENS** lives in Stephens City, VA with her husband, Matthew, daughter, Hailey and son, Hayden. Faith joined the HSLDA team of Special Needs Consultants in 2008 and homeschools her children, as well as works as a private educational consultant and evaluator.



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2016 IAHE CONVENTION

Don't Forget!

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April 29th-30th!

Mark your calendars
today!

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SPEAKER

When Brains Turn to Mush

Hal & Melanie Young

All of our children have had a time when it just seemed like they fell apart, usually sometime between nine and thirteen years old. If you gave them a task, you'd find them wandering around clueless forty-five minutes later. Math suddenly started taking three hours. Their brains turned to mush.

That isn't even the hardest part! We'd say something we thought wasn't a big deal, "Take a shower before you leave, your hair's a mess!" and they would fly into a rage.

"You criticize me all the time! Why don't you tell him to take showers???" Well, he does, for one thing.

Then when they get the fight they're spoiling for, they burst into tears, "Nobody cares about me!" Good grief.

It can feel like aliens took over your sweet child. Or you've failed as parents. Or you are all losing your minds. It can make you doubt

your parenting, doubt your homeschooling, doubt everything.

It's normal. Really. Perfectly normal. Ordinary children turn into green rage monsters every day.

What no one tells us is that the hormonal changes of puberty start way before the peach fuzz, cracking voice, or need for new undergarments. The hormones that cause those physical changes cause emotional and mental changes first. It's kind of like PMS (we call it Pre-Manhood Syndrome around here), but it lasts a couple of years instead of a couple of days.

The irrationality gets to you. "Why didn't you ever take us back to visit Rocky Mount? You said you'd take us back! You broke your promise!" Uh, son, that was seven years ago and you haven't mentioned the town since.

It's overwhelming, too. When the accusations start flying around, it's easy to lose your temper and start throwing around a few of your own. Pretty soon everyone is acting like a toddler. Not good. So, what do you do? How do you live through this and still have hair at the end – both of you?

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KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON

Hormonal changes cause some emotional stability. You know how you might feel twitchy and irritable certain times of the month? Well, before when they felt angry, someone had done something to make them mad, so now when they feel a surge or irritability, they look around for the cause. It must be you! They usually get angry and sad easily and often have a hard time getting along with anybody at all.

They have an intellectual growth spurt at this time, too. For the first time, they are able to use logic and to make connections between different classes of things. This can be pretty exciting as they begin to understand how science impacts history or how literature reflects the politics of the time. It can also be maddening as they seem to live in their heads an awful lot. They get addled and distracted constantly. Doesn't exactly make homeschooling a piece of cake, does it?

Those changes can often cause spiritual and philosophical doubts and that makes parents panic. They ask questions that make you go, "What in the world? Who are you?" but really, it's a good thing. They are developing an adult's conviction, not just imitating yours anymore. It's a stage they have to go through to become confident, stable adults. Just answer their questions calmly and find the answers if you can't.

SOMEBODY'S GOT TO BE THE ADULT

Calm and confident is really the key to all this. Somebody has to act like an adult. It won't be them, so it's got to be us. We've got to resist the urge to act like maniacs ourselves, much as we might feel like it. Instead, listen. Talk to them. Hold them accountable, but don't freak out or get too harsh. You can be the rock they need in this storm of emotions and change.

The good news is that they get over it. In fact, if you handle it right, this time can actually make the teen years great. Our children learn to trust us when the world is spinning around them and learn to control their emotions and do what's right.

One of our sons was a model kid: diligent, cheerful and obedient. He was that way through most of his ninth to twelfth years. We thought we were golden. So glad we dodged the bullet with this one, we thought. Then it hit. His brain didn't turn to mush, it turned to molten lava, exploding molten lava. For a few months, every big event was seasoned with a dose of hot pepper in the form of his anger. We thought we'd lose our minds.

We struggled desperately to maintain calm, confident parenting. We listened to him – a lot! We reasoned with him, disciplined him, taught him. It's been a couple of years now and recently his football coach spoke to us at a banquet. "He's a real cerebral player. Always cheerful with a great attitude. I wish they were all like that." No, we didn't faint. He's like that at home, now, too. He's a joy to have in our family, responsible, happy, diligent, even wise.

And we still have our hair. Mostly. ■



HAL & MELANIE YOUNG are the homeschooling parents of six sons and two daughters and the authors of *Raising Real Men*, the 2011 *Christian Small Publishers Book of the Year* and the new release, *My Beloved and My Friend: How to be Married to Your Best Friend Without Changing Spouses*. Find them on the web at www.RaisingRealMen.com and on Facebook at www.Facebook.com/raisingrealmen.

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Unleashing World History!

-Linda Lacour Hobar



If you grew up in a traditional classroom of the 70s or 80s, like I did, you probably developed a “meh” attitude toward world history that started around junior high. And if you are honest, now that you’re homeschooling, you’re terrified of passing on this grim view of history to your children! Well, I’ve got good news. There is hope and help for unleashing world history for you and your children! To get there, we first need to examine what may have “leashed” you down and held you back from this subject to begin with. I have four possibilities.

First, I think the most common complaint against world history is a memory of it being boring. Why? Because it was! Truly, most of our history lessons came packaged in dull, dry textbooks that emphasized dates, events, and treaties to cover the entire history of the world. Written by committees, shackled by political correctness, these textbooks weren’t “living books.” They were dead—and they put us to sleep.

Second, I have heard rumblings from history-haters that the subject was irrelevant to them in adolescence. Their protests would sound something like this: “Who cares what happened thousands of years ago!” Or worse, “History is just about dead people!” I hate those rants now, but like most kids, I’ve thought them before.

Third, I have heard some parents say, in all sincerity, that they think world history is just too morbid for their sweet children. These folks want to protect their children from the gruesome stories and images they remember from their history books. Well, being that I first learned about the Holocaust through black and white pictures of emaciated corpses, I can be sympathetic to this objection! But stay with me. I’ll get to a positive spin on this point.

Fourth, and last, there are those of us who were only taught world history as a secular subject to fulfill a high school credit. As a matter of fact, if you attended a public school, then you were taught history only through the eyes of man, and it was required to graduate. Those are two ingredients sure to spoil any good subject!

To summarize, four leashes that may restrain homeschool parents from teaching or enjoying world history are memories of boring, irrelevant, morbid, or secular material. Worsening the situation, some of us experienced all these factors together—and are chained by the fear of repeating history! (All pun intended.) Well, I propose to you my friends that with proper emphasis, the study of world history doesn’t have to suffer under any of these restraints! Here are my four counterpoints and suggestions for unleashing world history in your home.

1. To counteract boredom. Dig into the personal lives of the people that lived it. In other words, keep it about the people! My favorite example is that of Cleopatra. If you look her up in a typical textbook, you’ll find one paragraph stating she was the last of the Ptolemy rulers in Egypt. I don’t know about you, but that fact is not enough to keep my eyes open! What will interest me is learning that Cleopatra rolled herself up in a carpet to be smuggled into a meeting with Julius Caesar, the most powerful man in Rome, so that she might secure the throne of Egypt. After the sudden assassination of Caesar on the windy Ides of March, Cleopatra married Marc Antony, another powerful Roman, in hope of taking over the known world! And, after her lavish warships lost the Battle of Actium to Octavian (yet another powerful Roman), she took her life dressed up like Isis, an ancient Egyptian goddess. (That’s pretty juicy stuff! But there’s more.) Upon the death of Cleopatra, and that of Marc Antony, Octavian founded the Roman Empire, changed his name to Caesar Augustus, and ran a census “that all the world should be registered” (Luke 2:2) including Joseph and Mary who traveled to Bethlehem—and fulfilled prophecy in doing so! Most would agree that that kind of history, which is personal and significant,

isn’t boring at all and may even lead you to fall in love with world history. (That’s what happened to me!)

2. To ward off irrelevance. I suggest whenever possible to connect it to today’s headlines. It’s not that hard to do. For example, in *The Mystery of History* Volume III, I wrote a story dating back to 1501 that describes how Persia became Iran and how a young king named Ismail decided that Iran would be a Shiite nation rather than Sunni. (FYI, Islam is sorely divided between Shiites and Sunnis, who differ in their theology.) Well, if you’ve watched the news lately then you know this theological decision from as far back as 1501 is very relevant to today since the Shiites of Iran are not interested in joining the growing caliphate of ISIS—which is predominantly Sunni! World history is always embedded in the news and brings intrinsic value to today’s headlines.

3. As for being morbid. I must first agree that world history can be uniquely dismal. I would know because I’ve been researching and writing it for 15 years. But, properly handled, we should use it to inspire the heart. With some discretion, we should allow painful stories to provoke a natural response. For example, we ought to be shocked by the destruction of Pompeii at the eruption of Mount Vesuvius—because natural disasters can take us out of this world in an instant! We ought to weep over the Trail of Tears—because it was unjust and still affects the lives of Native Americans! And, we ought to be horrified by the Holocaust—because it was utterly inhumane and should never, ever be repeated! Yes, as uncomfortable as it might be, the reality of evil, found in the pages of world history, can teach us valuable heart lessons about the brevity of life, the sinful nature of mankind, and our need for salvation.

4. Speaking of salvation, my last counterpoint is this: if you only looked at the stories of history as a secular record of the past, you’ve missed half the story. You see, history is not just the record of man’s doings—it’s the story of God’s doings! World history is the culmination of God’s sovereignty in the affairs of mankind, as well as the story of the Lord drawing us in our sinful mess toward salvation, which is the gospel. So, at every opportunity, use the study of history to search for God’s sovereignty and the hope of the gospel. The truth is there, written and woven between every line and paragraph of world history. But please don’t take my word for it. Turn instead to God’s Word, which says:

“He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us.” (Acts 17:26-27, NKJV)

As you seek to unleash world history in your home, remember to keep it about the people; connect it to today’s headlines; use it to inspire the heart; and search for God’s sovereignty and the hope of the gospel. If after all that you still find yourself a little “meh” about world history, then pray for enthusiasm; add some exciting resources; and repeat these suggestions until conditions improve. For the sake of your students, and for the glory of God, work wholeheartedly toward “unleashing world history!” You won’t regret it. ■

LINDA LACOUR HOBAR, author of *The Mystery of History*, is a self-proclaimed “people-person” and passionate follower of Jesus Christ. Through homeschooling, missionary service, and a love for history, she felt called to write *The Mystery of History* for her children, grandchildren, and generations to come. For more information, visit: www.TheMysteryofHistory.com.

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Thursday, April 28

"They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit." —Jeremiah 17:8



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at the Indiana State Fairgrounds
April 29th-April 30th, 2016

Registration Type: Individual Family

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Linda
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Name _____
First Last

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Total Number of Children Attending # _____

Names of Children Attending (ages 4 and up) TEEN CREW 4:12
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_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
<small>First</small>	<small>Last</small>	
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<small>First</small>	<small>Last</small>	
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_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
<small>First</small>	<small>Last</small>	

Contact Information

Address _____

Phone () _____

Mobile () _____

Alt Mobile () _____

Email _____

Attending Grandparents' Names

Must not be the primary home educator.

_____	_____
<small>First</small>	<small>Last</small>
_____	_____
<small>First</small>	<small>Last</small>
_____	_____
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| Fort Wayne SW – F/E, A, I | Fort Wayne N – F/E |
| Fort Wayne Brookside – F/E | Winona Lake – F/E |
| Warsaw – F/E | Upland – F/E |
| Muncie – F/E | Munster – F/E, A, B, I |
| Munster Mercy Hill – F/E | |

For more information on these communities, contact Shawna Howell at showell@classicalconversations.com.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Avon – F/E, A, B, I | Franklin – F/E |
| Greenwood Wed – F/E, A, B, I, III | Greenwood Thurs – F/E |
| Mooresville – F/E | Trafalgar – F/E, A |
| Bloomington N – F/E, B, I | Bloomington S – F/E |
| Columbus N – F/E, A, B, I | Columbus S – F/E |
| Terre Haute – F/E, A, B | Seymour – F/E, A, B, II |
| Evansville Mon – F/E | Evansville Wed – F/E, A, B |
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A,B=Middle School I-IV=High School



Tuesday,
January 26, 2016
*Home School Day
at the State Capitol*

Are homeschool rights important to you?

Let your legislators know. What is the best way to show them? Attend IAHE's Home School Day at the Indiana Statehouse!

IAHE has an educational, civics, and advocacy event for the whole family. The day begins at 9:00 a.m. The Rally, featuring homeschool grad and State Representative Tim Wesco, is our main event at 11 a.m. He will talk about the importance of civic involvement and share how his parents developed that love in him as he was home educated.

Additional events include:

- Historical re-enactors
- Scavenger hunt
- Letterboxing
- IAHE Town Hall
- IAHE Legislative Impact Session
- Prayer Walk
- Presentation about early American flags.
- Statehouse Tours: Each tour is limited to 75 people. See website for details.

Visit the IAHE website for an updated schedule and to register:

<http://www.iahe.net/home-school-day-capitol>

Page for A Day Program

Families with a student ages 13 and older may like to be a Page that day. The Page for the Day program is an excellent way for your student to gain a first-hand glimpse of how the legislative process works at the Indiana Statehouse. During IAHE's Home School Day, the rest of the family will have other events in which to participate while your child serves. This program fills up quickly, so check the IN.gov website for details and deadlines.

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction:

Worthy of
Homeschool
Scrutiny
— Ian Slatter

For those who have been following education related news over the past two years in Indiana, it was impossible to avoid the ongoing conflicts between Governor Mike Pence and Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) Glenda Ritz.

While this article is going to explore how the SPI affects homeschoolers, it is important to recognize there are real issues concerning the direction of public education policy. Indiana allocates an estimated \$15 billion in taxpayer funds each year to education.

The SPI is the head of the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE), and is tasked with implementing the laws related to education. The position was created in 1851 with the adoption of the Constitution of Indiana. It is an elected office with the election falling in the same year as the four year Presidential cycle. The SPI also serves as chairman of the state board of education.

Since the SPI is the head of the public education system should Hoosier homeschoolers care who is elected as our state's SPI?

Unfortunately, like most situations, there are other factors to consider. Due to the role and responsibilities assigned to the SPI, homeschoolers should care who is in this office.

The conflict between Pence and Ritz has created quite a bit of confusion about the actual role of the SPI. The SPI should be viewed as the CEO of IDOE. This person must implement the provisions of the law to provide a free and appropriate education for all Hoosiers who choose a public education.

The SPI does not have any law or direct policy making authority. This role is reserved to the state board of education which in turn receives its authority from the state legislature. As with any executive office, there are areas of dispute and conflict since executive agencies have discretion where the guidelines are not explicit.

Consequently, interpretations of law and policy by the SPI can affect homeschoolers.

This is most pronounced whenever homeschoolers come into contact with the public system. Some homeschoolers wish to participate in public school activities. One example would be a homeschooler who desires to take an extra-curricular activity, such as band, at a public school. In this situation the ideal arrangement would be for the homeschooler to simply be considered a participant in band. Unfortunately, many school systems insist that the homeschooler be enrolled, even if they only take one extra-curricular activity. Public schools then often use this one elective class as a pretext to force the homeschooler to take the ISTEP exam.

An SPI who supports a parents' right to homeschool and understands the value of homeschool families will be less likely to use the discretion of the office to make life unnecessarily difficult for homeschool families.

Another way the SPI can affect our rights is pressuring public schools to strongly encourage homeschoolers to report enrollment. This often occurs when a parent tries to transfer their child from public school. Officials sometimes insist the family report enrollment as a homeschooler. This is not a requirement in Indiana. We are free to homeschool without notifying the state.

It should be remembered the SPI does have some statutory authority over homeschoolers. At any point the IDOE can inspect the attendance of your homeschool. State law requires homeschoolers keep attendance for the same number of days as their resident school district, generally 180 days. The best advice is to keep an attendance log. There is no need to create an exhaustive record unless this is genuinely helpful to you. Fortunately, the current SPI does not seem to be pursuing homeschool families in this manner, but we should remember the SPI does have this authority which could cause problems for homeschoolers if inspections became common practice.

As has been shown, there is much discretion in the role of SPI. Supporting an SPI who recognizes a parents' right to homeschool and will find ways to accommodate homeschoolers when we inevitably interact with the public system is a prudent course of action. How can we best ensure the right person, who respects and appreciates the contributions of homeschool parents, is selected?

The method for nominating a candidate for SPI is done through a party convention, not a primary election by registered party voters. A rather small number of people, around 2,000 each for Republicans and Democrats, gather every 4 years as delegates to their respective conventions to vote on a nomination for SPI. The process of selecting delegates varies by county, but registered voters can file with the county clerk and place their names on the primary ballot for delegate. If a delegate candidate succeeds, they become delegates and pay a delegate fee to attend the convention. This process is significantly different than a primary where a much larger number of voters choose the candidate.

As a result, relatively small groups of motivated people can influence this process by organizing and encouraging people supportive of their candidate to run for delegate. The process for selecting the candidates who will receive their parties' respective nominations begins in earnest January 2016. The filing deadline to be a convention delegate for either the Republican or Democratic parties is noon February 5th, 2016. The 2016 state party conventions will typically be scheduled during the summer in preparation for the general election on Tuesday, November 8, 2016.

The SPI has an important role which can significantly affect homeschoolers. It should be an interesting race to watch in 2016. ■



IAN SLATTER is a homeschooling father of three from Greenwood, Indiana who has been a long-time education advocate, communications director for HSLDA and public office holders. He earned his Master of Public Administration from Regent University.

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Is Homeschooling Measuring Up into Adulthood?

New Gen2 Study Offers Encouraging Findings

—Brian D. Ray, Ph.D.



Professor Dr. Gregory Cizek wrote about the “mismeasure of homeschooling” over twenty years ago. He pointed out that large portions of Christian homeschool parents claim they home educate to provide for the “...the perceived spiritual, moral, or religious needs of their children” (Cizek, 1993, p. 2) but researchers kept putting their attention on academic achievement. Then about a decade ago, researcher George Barna hit the Christian community hard with, “Most twentysomethings put Christianity on the shelf following spiritually active teen years” (Barna Group, 2006).

Both of these men were indirectly giving a call to action to the homeschool world, the Christian community at large, and researchers studying both. How are graduates of homeschooling doing in terms of their Christian beliefs and behavior? Further, are they faring any better than the disappointing norm?

PURPOSE

The Gen2 Survey directly addresses these questions. It is a first-of-a-kind study that many have dreamt of doing for a decade. The researcher wanted to know what connections there are between family life, cultural inputs, church experience, and schooling history growing up and Christian beliefs and behaviors in adulthood.

The purpose of the study is to examine adults who were church-ed while growing up and to understand the key influences that either encourage or deter them from believing and practicing the faith of their parents.

METHODS

The Gen2 Survey (Generation 2, Generation two, second generation) was hosted online, and was open to any person aged 18 to 38, largely members of the Millennial generation, who was church-ed while growing up. The nationwide survey was advertised as an opportunity for participants to describe how they felt about their upbringing. Participation in the Gen2 Survey was designed to be attractive to all Millennials, regardless of their particular background traits and how they were raised by their parents. Despite the sizable proportion of those who had been home educated

growing up, special effort was also made to target and engage those who attended Christian schools, public schools, and private secular schools for their elementary and secondary school years.

Dr. Brian D. Ray, president of the National Home Education Research Institute, is the principal investigator for the research project. The study’s data were collected during 2013-2014. The total sample size was 9,369 subjects. As part of this, a nationwide representative sub-sample of 907 subjects was purchased from a national, independent, third-party business and used as a comparative baseline to enhance the integrity and validity of the study. The participants’ average age was 27 and 70% were female. In terms of marital status, 40% were married, 44% never married, 5% were not married/living with significant other, and 3% fit the “other” category.

FINDINGS

Myriad findings are emerging from the study [http://www.nheri.org/Gen2SurveyASpiritualandEducationalSurveyonChristian-Millennials.pdf] and here are some of the key ones. Frequency of early church attendance (age birth to 8) was significantly and solidly positively correlated with all of the seven following measures in adulthood: core Christian beliefs (orthodoxy), broader Christian beliefs, Christian behaviors, satisfaction in life, civic/community involvement, similarity to father’s beliefs, and similarity to mother’s beliefs. Later childhood church attendance (ages 9 to 18) was also solidly correlated with all seven variables.

The following chart shows the relationship between various inputs into a child’s life and the corresponding influence on their belief and behavior as adults. (Example: How does a strong relationship with a father affect Christian Orthodoxy as an adult?)



Inputs in Adult Life	Outputs						
	Orthodoxy	Christian Behavior as Adults	Christian Beliefs as Adults	Satisfaction in Life as Adult	Civic/Community Involvement	My Beliefs Similar to Father’s	My Beliefs Similar to Mother’s
Strong Relationship with Father	+++	+++	+++	+++	++	++++	++++
Strong Relationship with Mother	+++	+++	+++	+++	++	++++	++++
Attend Church at Early Age	+++	+++	+++	++	++	+++	+++
Attend Church at Older Age	+++	+++	+++	+++	++	+++	+++
Homeschool*	+++	+++	+++	++	○	+++	+++
Christian School*	--	--	--	○	++	--	--
Private School*	--	--	--	--	○	--	--
Public School*	----	----	----	--	--	----	----



*Compares those educated at least 7 years in their respective educational method

Although the researcher tried to include multiple survey items in a family-relationships scale, only two made sense in explaining variation in these participants' adult beliefs, behaviors, and values. The two questions simply asked the participants, "How was your relationship with your Father [and then Mother] when you were 16-17 years old?" Their answers to both of these were firmly and positively associated with all seven outcome measures in adulthood.

The type of schooling or education that these adults received while growing up also had clear connections with their lives today. Data included their 13 years of grade K to 12 schooling history. The number of years homeschooled was firmly and positively associated with six of the seven adult outcomes (with the one exception being civic/community involvement). [see table]

The number of years spent in Christian school was negatively correlated with five of seven outcomes, to the surprise of many observers. Six of seven adult variables were negatively associated with the number of years spend in secular private schools. And the number of years in public/state schools was firmly and negatively correlated with all seven of the seven outcomes.

Several other individual relationships between variables were explored. For example, when examining only those participants who had been in one of the four types of schooling for seven or more years and churched growing up, it was found that an adult who was homeschooled is 2.2 times as likely to be a Christian believer as one who attended Christian school, and 2.5 times as likely as those who attended public school. Further, those who were home educated are 2.1 times less likely to have been sexually abused while growing up as those who attended Christian school and 2.6 times less likely as those who attended public school.

WHO PLANS TO HOMESCHOOL THEIR CHILDREN?

The current or planned education of the participants' children was addressed for these adults who experienced seven or more years of one of the four types of schooling. Of those homeschooled, 57% plan to exclusively homeschool their children and 25% plan to homeschool along with other choices. That is, 82% of the home educated currently or will use homeschooling for their children. About 54% of those who attended Christian schools will use homeschooling. And some 50% of those who were churched growing up and attended public school will use homeschooling for their children.



INVITING CONVERSATION

Does this study bring Christians closer to a proper measure of what is connected with whether people follow the Lord God in adulthood? Does it give insights on the effects of homeschooling? It certainly does. The survey addressed core biblical truths and beliefs of the adults who participated. It addressed adult behaviors that do, or do not, reflect the fruits of a regenerated life. It gathered data on a person's upbringing, such as involvement in church life, cultural inputs, relationship with parents, and type of schooling he or she experienced.

Not only did it address biblical concepts and behaviors, the study found some fascinating and significant connections. So far, several standouts should be mentioned.

A teenager's relationship with both his father and mother appear to be extremely important if Christian beliefs and behaviors are to be seen in adulthood. Attending church while growing up is clearly associated with whether she will participate in Christian life as an adult. Finally, being homeschooled has many more positive connections with Christian beliefs and behaviors in adulthood than does having spent years in in public schools, Christian schools, or private secular schools. The findings are pretty stark.

Who plans to homeschool of Millennials who were churched while growing up? Many of them, regardless of whether they were public schooled, private schooled, or homeschooled themselves. About 64% of those in the study currently homeschool their children or plan to use homeschooling with their children, compared to only 3% to 4% of school-age children now being homeschooled in the United States.

Who should care about this study? Church leaders ought to take a very close look at these findings if they care about whether "twentysomethings" veer away from the Christian faith. All Christian parents who care about scriptural thinking and child training would benefit from a close look at this study. And finally, pioneers and current members of the homeschooling community can praise the Lord for giving them more tangible glimpses of the benefits of parent-led home-based discipleship. ■

BRIAN D. RAY, Ph.D. National Home Education Research Institute (NHERI) (www.nheri.org) is a nonprofit research organization – a think tank – dedicated to doing basic research on parent-led home-based education (homeschooling, home schooling), serving as a clearinghouse on all such research, and educating the public and parents about home-based education. Donations are a critical part of what keeps NHERI doing this kind of research and showing the effects of homeschooling to church leaders, parents, the media, policymakers, and courts.

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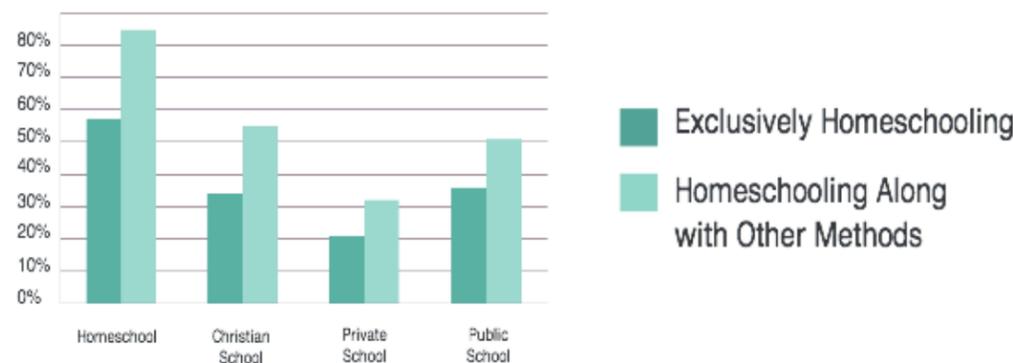
Data tables used from <http://www.nheri.org/Gen2SurveyASpiritualandEducationalSurveyonChristianMillennials.pdf>

Editor's note:

The next goal Dr. Brian Ray has for this study is to see it published in a scholarly peer-reviewed journal. This will give the findings much more publicity and opportunity to affect the thinking of Christian parents and scholars and church leaders. Funding is needed for this project so please contact Dr. Ray (at mail@nheri.org) if you know of a potential donor, or you may make a donation. We can thankfully say that Generations With Vision were the major advocates behind funding and helping this research project happen.

What percent of Millennials intend to homeschool their own children, based on their own educational background?

Example: 36% of public-schooled Millennials intend to exclusively homeschool their own children. 51% of public-schooled Millennials plan to use at least some amount of homeschooling with their children, though they may combine it with other schooling choices, such as Christian, private, or public school.



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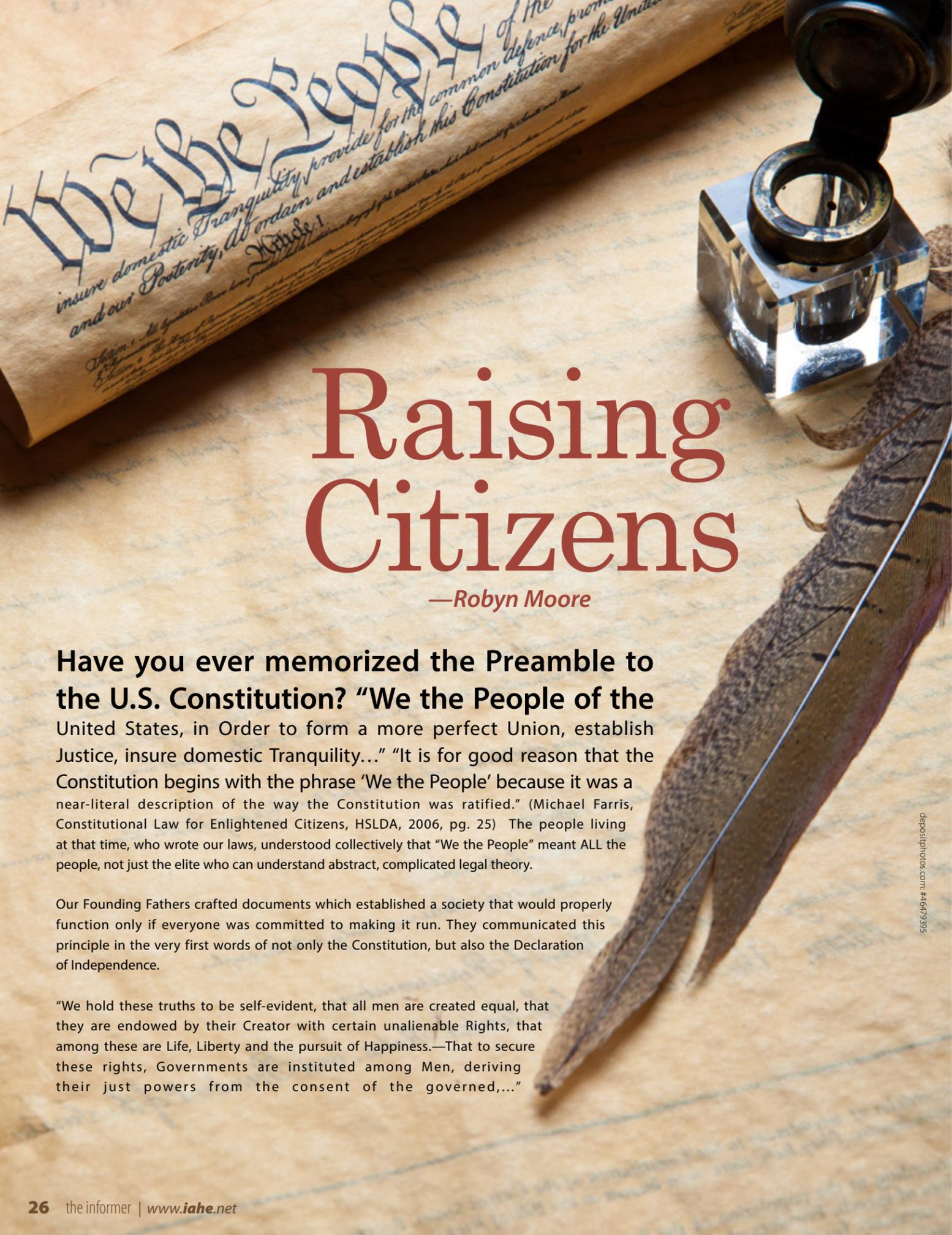


Did You Know?

Your attendance at the IAHE Convention supports homeschooling in Indiana all year long.

As a nonprofit ministry, the IAHE depends on your support to help us Encourage, Protect, and Serve Indiana families. Our annual convention provides the majority of the revenue for our organization each year. It's also an important event for elected officials to see the face of homeschooling in our state.





Raising Citizens

—Robyn Moore

Have you ever memorized the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution? “We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility...” “It is for good reason that the Constitution begins with the phrase ‘We the People’ because it was a near-literal description of the way the Constitution was ratified.” (Michael Farris, *Constitutional Law for Enlightened Citizens*, HSLDA, 2006, pg. 25) The people living at that time, who wrote our laws, understood collectively that “We the People” meant ALL the people, not just the elite who can understand abstract, complicated legal theory.

Our Founding Fathers crafted documents which established a society that would properly function only if everyone was committed to making it run. They communicated this principle in the very first words of not only the Constitution, but also the Declaration of Independence.

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.—That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed...”

In order for our Republic to endure, we must all, as a People, have a common basis for morality. This simple truth has enabled our country to exist, but, sadly, as it is disabled, the bands of tyranny are taking its place.

Many home educators do so in order to teach their children the precepts of their faith. These families desire that their children carry on their beliefs. Homeschooling is the best means in which to accomplish this. However, many families overlook one vital aspect in crafting their curriculum: the duties of citizenship.

We, as homeschoolers, can turn the tide of our decaying society by adopting a philosophy in the education of our children. This philosophy is that we are raising Christian citizens who feel an obligation to our society to be an informed electorate. We must instill into our students the idea that they have a moral obligation toward society, an obligation to put in place people of integrity to lead us all. This next generation, as a whole, must believe that our freedom rests upon their shoulders. We must convincingly teach them that they are part of our American government system and that for it to continue they must step up and do their part.

What is their part? Not everyone must run for public office or start a PAC (Political Action Committee). But as American citizens, we each must exercise the rights afforded to us in the US Constitution: the right to vote, the freedom of speech to voice our opinions about the government, and the freedom of assembly, to meet together to protest the bad and encourage the good.

The indifference toward our self-government system has led to the mess we are now in. The state of our government now is the result of “good people doing nothing.” Let’s change the way things are and let’s begin with our children!

How do I start, you say? Academically, teach your children US History and Constitutional Law. We use *Constitutional Law for Enlightened Citizens* by Michael Farris, which is available through HSLDA. HSLDA also sells other outstanding American History materials, as does WallBuilders.

TeenPact is another valuable resource available here in the Hoosier state and 42 other states across the country. It is a week-long, hands-on class that teaches, not only how government works, but that it is your duty as a Christian to participate in it. Your teen will spend a week in Indianapolis praying for our leaders, interviewing lobbyists, listening to influential, inspiring speakers, participating in elections, a mock legislature, and committee meetings. They will learn more in one week of TeenPact than in an entire year of a traditional civics class. Learn more at www.TeenPact.com.

Our family participates in service-based organizations, such as American Heritage Girls. (<http://www.americanheritagegirls.org/>) Begin at an early age to teach your children that they have an obligation to serve the community in which they live. Instill patriotism in your young children by celebrating National Holidays, explaining the meanings behind the commemorations. Daily recite the Pledge of Allegiance and sing the National Anthem. I bought a CD of patriotic music and we would do exercises to patriotic songs.

Involve your children in a political campaign. My homeschool graduates thought this was the most influential part of their civics education. They handed out fliers on Election Day, went door to door, and stuffed envelopes.

Most importantly, visit the National Monuments, Parks, and other historical sites. As homeschoolers, we have unique opportunities to craft our curriculum around field trips. I believe every patriot should take their children to Washington DC and show them the monuments erected in honor of the men and women who died to keep us free. Even if you cannot afford a trip to DC, there are many places in this state to take your children to show them the value of being an American citizen. Children remember viewing these sites personally much more than seeing a picture of them on a screen or a page in a book. And you plant the seeds in their minds that they are a part of something much greater than themselves. They are Americans.

When your student turns 18, register them to vote. Drive down to the courthouse or library with them so that the importance of this act will be impressed upon them. Discuss the candidates and the issues. Let us have as our goal not only to graduate Christians, but also to graduate citizens. ■



ROBYN MOORE holds a Bachelor of Science, Marketing, Miami University and Juris Doctorate, University of Cincinnati. She is the wife to Albert Moore and a homeschooling mother of 9 since 1992. She also keeps busy teaching Constitutional Law & American History in her local homeschool co-op and serves as a Speech & Debate Coach.

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Creating an Educational Home

—Stacy Hanaway



As homeschoolers, our homes naturally become one large classroom and our lives an opportunity for multiple educational experience. It is important that we make our homes as learning-friendly as possible. By doing this we create an educational household and lifestyle that will last a lifetime.

One of the goals of many homeschool families is to help foster our children's love of learning, so that they become lifelong learners. We do this by making their educational experience a natural way of life. This starts in our home, where a child feels safe to explore their world and make the natural connections that will encourage and stimulate their learning.

We start this process often even before birth by reading aloud and surrounding ourselves with music while the child is still in the womb. The next child receives these benefits naturally because parents are doing these activities with older children. As they grow, we encourage learning by books we read, toys we purchase, and music. We are often working with them to learn their ABC's, colors, counting, and the foundations of learning. Activities like these should continue and grow with your children and their educational levels. Fill your home with music, posters, games, toys, books, puzzles, and activities that build on these foundations.

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In our home, we enjoy games. There are so many different concepts students can learn from simple card and board games! Preschool-aged children learn colors, numbers, letters and patterns. As they move into school age I used these same types of card games to teach letter sounds, organization skills, and basic mathematics such as skip counting, missing numbers, simple addition and subtraction. Begin introducing games where more critical thinking is involved, as well as speed, organization, planning, and strategizing. Start young and basic and then change things up by making the objects a little more difficult.

Here is a real life example: I purchased cards that had capital and lower case letters. I would take 5 cards and match the upper and lower case together, saying the letter name until I knew they had a grasp on which letters went together. Then, we'd play Go Fish to check their understanding. When they were getting ready to learn to read I then introduced the letters' sounds and played the game using only sounds. You can then use the cards to spell beginning words as well as blends and diagraphs. One deck of letter cards can be used to introduce a complete reading and phonics program! With a little imagination this can be applied to many different types of card and board games.

Puzzles are also a wonderful way to encourage many educational concepts. Little hands love puzzles of all shapes and sizes. It is a great way to children to start teaching students spatial concepts, critical thinking, and organizational skills. Art, geography, and history can lend themselves to instruction through puzzles as well. One example in our home is a three level puzzle of the continental United States. The first level teaches history through land purchases, the next level consist of the states, and finally mountains and other land marks--a whole year's worth of United States history from just one puzzle!

Having materials accessible is an important factor in creating an educational home. Allow space for posters with all types of concepts and information; from the alphabet and numbers, to maps, science, math, language arts, timelines, presidents, and so much more. Books of all levels, types, sizes, shapes, and subject matter... you can never have too many books! Natural curiosity and continued exposure to these materials encourage students to make them a part of their lives and gives them confidence in knowing that information is always accessible.

Access to the virtual world, movies, computers, and other media can be beneficial to your home school. These activities can be overdone. In the proper context however, and with moderation, they can be of beneficial value. Competitions such as spelling, history, or geography bees, science fairs, and 4-H can be used to encourage a student's love of learning. They encourage students to

dig much deeper into subject matter and take ownership of what they are learning. In our home the research is solely done by the student. I am there only to help develop concepts and organize information or thoughts they may need help understanding.

Another real-life learning experience is trips. Whether it is trips to the store, field trips, day trips, or vacations, take your students to places that they have learned about. There are many great areas to visit within a day's travel from Indiana: caverns, plantations, zoos, museums, farms, fair, battle fields, parks, and more! We also make a point of our vacations having a history and geography lesson built in. There is a great set of books written by George and Michele Zavatsky, titled "Kids Love..." packed with fun and inexpensive trip ideas for families. I would encourage you to look them up--their website even has a whole homeschool section!

By creating an educational home, we encourage our children's natural curiosity and allow them to make natural connections in learning. This will give your students ownership in their education and help them become lifelong learners. ■



Jason & **STACY HANAWAY** live with their two sons, on a small farm in LaGrange County. They have been homeschooling for the past seven years. Jason is in management with INDOT. Stacy has taught in parochial, public school, and now homeschool! They feel blessed to be called to homeschool.

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AFTER EDEN by Dan Lietha

TODAY IS A **BIG BIRTHDAY** FOR MOMMY. SHE'S 40 YEARS OLD! BUT SHE DIDN'T KNOW ANYBODY FROM BIBLE TIMES.

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