

The Elisabeth Elliot Newsletter

ISSN 8756-1336

July/August 2001

Anarchy or Discipline?

A Houston high school principal described the new educational system as a "cross-graded, multi-ethnic, individualized, open-ended learning program with the main objective being to learn respect for the uniqueness of a person."

Perhaps that is what the parents of most children nowadays accept as education. I am sure that my parents would have considered such a program absolute nonsense -- each little individual permitted to do what he or she chooses? The result is chaos, if not downright anarchy.

A short lesson, emphasized in the hall or vestibule with a narrow "board of education," i.e. a rod, might do wonders to teach small individuals respect for the persons around them, who were there not to provide an audience for their antics but to be educated.

The trouble starts, of course, not when the kids tumble out of the mini-van and charge into the school. It starts at home, before they can walk, with parents who believe that love means giving them what they want and letting them do what they choose. They don't like ordinary food. They blow it out when they're babies and throw it on the floor or down the garbage grinder later on. They scream for other foods, and the screams are rewarded.

On a talk show, the mother of a seven-year-old was asked about her son's diet.

"Oh, he won't eat anything but store-bought white bread and jam, ever since he was about three."

"Have you tried anything else?"

"No. He won't eat anything else."

Training children, like corralling calves and

lambs, is a great deal of trouble. It takes sacrifice. It's much easier to let them go. But you can't do that if you care about them. Only the one who cares will go to the trouble of bringing them under control. "The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep." The sheep don't take kindly to the crook he uses, to the dogs who herd them where they don't want to go, or to the disinfectant baths into which they must be plunged in order to be cleansed. It is the shepherd's sole purpose to take care of them, to see to their well-being according to his wisdom, not according to their whims.

My parents loved us enough to make us wear galoshes when "nobody else had to wear them" (those awful rubber boots in the 1930s with black metal clasps, so hard for little fingers to fasten); to see to it that we got five meals a day (three for the body and two for the soul, the latter including hymns, Bible reading, and prayer); to say no to things like candy and coming in when we felt like it, or skipping piano lessons and church; to give us chores to do around the house and to make it clear that if we didn't do them they wouldn't get done and there would be consequences; to give us an allowance even during the Depression and teach us that some of it belonged to God; to stick by what they had said-line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little.

They drew lines. We knew where they were drawn. They were not moveable. They knew more about life than we did, and had a fairly clear picture of what was good for us. Like other kids we complained that they didn't love us or else they

would do such-and-such. "When you have children of your own," Mother would say (smiling), "you can let them do that if you want to." She knew we wouldn't want to-if we loved them.

We've got it backwards-love says don't restrain, hate says restrain. God puts it the other way: "The Lord disciplines him whom he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.... If you are left without discipline ... then you are illegitimate children and not sons" (Hebrews 12:6, 8, RSV). "When we fall under the Lord's judgment, he is disciplining us to save us from being condemned with the rest of the world" (I Corinthians 11:32, NEB).

It is not difficult for adults to see what's wrong with other parents and other people's children. But how blind we are in our childish reactions to the dealings of a kind Heavenly Father! The motive for discipline is love. Its purpose is salvation.

The people of Israel muttered treason against Him and said, "It was because the Lord hated us that he brought us out of Egypt" (Deuteronomy 1:27, NEB). Freed from slavery, they missed onions. Led by the Lord of Hosts Himself with His angels and a pillar of cloud and fire, they were terrified of the Amorites. "You saw how the Lord your God carried you all the way to this place as a father carries his son. In spite of this you did not trust the Lord your God" (v. 32).

Discipline or "chastening" can be a painful thing for us poor mortals. We think of the "rod" itself--the hard experience, the prayer that was answered with a No, the shattered hope, the misunderstanding, the blow to pride--forgetting the loving Hand that administers the lesson and the Savior who like a shepherd leads us. We forget how much we need His tender care!

As parents, let us faithfully remember that the keeping of order sometimes requires the use of the rod. As children of the Father and sheep of his pasture, let us remember humbly to accept His discipline, praying:

We are Thine, do Thou befriend us, be the
Guardian of our way;
Keep Thy flock, from sin defend us, seek us
when we go astray.

**From the hymn
"Savior Like a Shepherd Lead Us"**

Letter From a Radio Listener

"Your study on [Elizabeth Rice Handford's book] *Me? Obey Him?* changed my life. Last year your study on obedience changed me drastically. It made me realize why my husband wanted no part of Jesus!

"We were both miserable and ready for a divorce. But after hearing this lesson, I realized it was me who needed to change the most. I started praying for God to change me and to give me the strength to be the obedient wife I was supposed to be. (Let me add that I was a women's libber.)

"Well, God more than answered my prayers. After a few months of truly 'selling out/ my husband was noticing the changes. He didn't say anything to me about it, but he said plenty to other people. The anger he had always had started to change. Because God changed me to be the obedient wife I am supposed to be, my husband is not only now saved, he is a big worker in our church. Your teaching guided me to the correct path to being a true witness to my Savior."

Thanks be to God!

Up to 100 copies of an article may be made for private distribution but not for resale. Please cite full credit as given below. For permission to make more than 100 copies of an article, please write to the newsletter.

(c) 2001 by Elisabeth Elliot Gren
The Elisabeth Elliot Newsletter is published six times a year by Servant Publications. The cost is \$7.00 per year. Tax-deductible donations make it possible for those who are unable to pay to receive the letter free. Please send donations to: The Elisabeth Elliot Newsletter, P.O. Box 7711, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107-7711. Foreign subscribers: Please send donations in U.S. dollars drawn on a U.S. bank.

The Purpose of Trouble

"Whatever else trouble is in the world for, it is here for this good purpose: to develop strength. For trouble is a moral and spiritual task. It is something which is hard to do. And it is in the spiritual world as in the physical, strength is increased by encounter with the difficult. A world without any trouble in it would be, to people of our kind, a place of spiritual enervation and moral laziness. Fortunately, every day is crowded with care. Every day to every one of us brings its questions, its worries, and its tasks, brings its sufficiency of trouble. Thus we get our daily spiritual exercise. Every day we are blessed with new opportunities for the development of strength of soul."

George Hodges

No Hour Without Guidance

"Whatever bad times may come, or whatever perplexity, there is almost always close at hand, waiting for one, some plain thing to be done. It may be a mere matter of routine, an item in the day's regular business; it may be the exercise of some consideration for another, it may be only silent patience; but it is always something. And always one has the choice to do it or decline it. One can go through his work well or shirk it. One can consider his neighbor or neglect him. One can repress the fever-fit of impatience or give it wild way. And the perpetual presence of such a choice leaves no hour without guidance."

George S. Merriam,
from *Mary Wilder Tileston's devotional, Joy and Strength*

I Have Been Wronged

by Eugene Howard

I have been wronged, Lord, I who seek the right,
I cannot love this one who without cause
Has, out of hatred, selfishness or spite
Brought me injustice, I who seek your laws.

I have my rights, Lord, I who seek your name,
I cannot give to him who takes my share-
Who bends and breaks the rules that make the
game
Equitable, so all is just and fair.

I'm willing, Lord, to pardon and forgive
If only he who wronged me will relent.
It's only fair that if I have to give,
The one responsible should yield, repent.

My child, I suffered evil, shame and wrong
And yet I love all those who brought me pain.
I have not sinned, yet for a murderous throng I
gave my rights, and for their sins was slain.

My child, my love was spurned by hateful men
And yet I gave, expecting no return.
They mocked and beat me, adding to their sin,
Yet I forgave; from my example learn.

My child, my law-my first command I give,
Love me, your Lord, with all your strength and
soul,
Then love your neighbour-when he's wrong,
forgive.
Forgive again, let love thus be your goal.

My child, come follow me, my words obey,
One thing only, seek my will to do.
And give your love when wronged by men,
for they
Will answer me, and I've forgiven you.

My Dear Aunt Anne

My father, Philip E. Howard Jr., was the eldest of four children. His youngest sister was our dear Aunt Anne who never married, but gave herself, in quiet, hidden ways, unstintingly to others. She cared for her parents until they died. How I loved her! She called me "Betsy Bubble," and when we were vacationing in our beautiful Gale Cottage in Franconia, New Hampshire, one summer she took me into the woods and taught me the names of flowers and ferns and helped me press them in a book. What a thrill it was to find one day, in a deep and soggy place near "our" river, just a single wild orchid, too beautiful to cut. I went back again and again to look and marvel at this exquisite flower, planted there by the Lord Himself who surely must have gazed with perfect satisfaction at His precious handiwork. Do we take time to look and listen and adore?

Aunt Anne is over ninety now, totally deaf, living in a Christian retirement home in Pennsylvania, able to steer her walker and smile, hoping always to cheer others-who, alas, may not always wish to be cheered! God bless her-a quiet, gracious, loving soul-she will have her great reward in heaven.

Travel Schedule August 2001-October 2001

August 19 Christian Conference Center, Alton Bay, New Hampshire, (603) 875-6161.

August 25-29 Family Reunion.

September 19-29 Romania & Hungary.

October 5-7 Ridgehaven Conference Center, North Carolina, with Valerie.

October 11 Reno, Nevada, Crisis Pregnancy Center, (775) 826-5144.

October 12, 13 Reno, Nevada, Christian Fellowship Women's Ministry, (775) 853-4234 or e-mail ref@refministries.org

October 20 Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, David Horn, (978) 468-7111 x 4142.

October 27 Marblehead, Massachusetts, First Baptist Church, Pam Derringer, (781) 631-5386.

When a Loved One Has Died

"It maketh not much what way we go to heaven; the happy home is all, where the roughness of the way shall be forgotten. He is gone home to a friend's house, and made welcome and the race is ended."

Samuel Rutherford (1600-1661)

The Elisabeth Elliot Newsletter

Servant Ministries, Inc.
Post Office Box 7711
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107-7711

Non-profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 14
Ann Arbor, MI

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED