

General Topics :: Puppet Ministry

Puppet Ministry - posted by narrowpath, on: 2008/8/25 11:13

Recently we had a team of puppeteers in our church. They used some pop songs and gave them a Christian makeover. I put up with this for a while but when God was depicted as a cartoon figure, and puppet nuns sang a funny song, I had enough and left the assembly. Outside waiting were some of the unbelieving relatives and spouses of some church members. I wondered if it was actually better for them to keep out of this anyway. The sad thing is that this was a presentation for children. This is not just harmless banter but will affect the view of God of our future generation. I wonder how much we should put up with in a church where the teaching otherwise is rather solid :-)

Re: Puppet Ministry - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2008/8/25 11:36

Quote:
 -----The sad thing is that this was a presentation for children. This is not just harmless banter but will affect the view of God of our future generation.

I can commiserate with you. This is just one of the many facets of how we've come to cope in Christian ministry without the Holy Spirit. I just got through watching a video of an Assembly God church where their "step team" evidently won first prize of \$500.00 at some competition. This "step team" was comprised of 6 girls dressed in army fatigues, wearing black t-shirts and BDU (battle dress uniform for all you non-vets) caps and they danced around the sanctuary slapping their knees like Bavarian folkdancers and hopped about in a cheesy cheerleading skit, stomping their feet and clapping in unison and chanting pep-rally like: "Jesus Christ means s-a-c-r-i-f-i-c-e". I had to turn it off at 30 seconds. It was just too embarrassing, too painful to watch. Brethren, this is what happens when the Holy Spirit is gone, and Jesus is outside the church.

Who is responsible for these monstrosities? Can the blame be put on any one man or pastor or organization for the cause of Christ and the call of the cross to deteriorate to this level? Two hundred years ago, in the eras of Wesley and Whitefield and later with D.L. Moody did we need this? Talking vegetables, cucumbers and tomatoes to tell the story of Jonah? The colossal dumbing-down of the toothless gospel begins early. We just can't serve it for what it is, as Whitefield and the Puritans did; we must wrap it now with the clever artistic merits of man. It has to be cartoonized and satirized and danced and filmed by actors and laughed at through puppets.

Zac Poonen asked the question of why Jesus just didn't give His gospel to an advertising agency; surely He could have saved Himself a lot of footwork and trouble and maximized the usage of His and the disciples' time.

You know, I've read some Puritan children's prayers, and I've seen the curriculum that ministers and teachers of the gospel from those times exposed the children to at an early age. How Susanna Wesley raised her two boys John and Charles, how Matthew Henry and Issac Watts taught on prayer for little boys and girls without puppets and talking vegetables. I've read accounts of youngsters praying with wisdom and power and tears and establishing early on a disciplined regimen of prayer set aside each day and quiet time with God. It's not not possible with children, but how can they be influenced when it's the adults that must fall in line first?

When the adults grow, the puppets will go.

Re:, on: 2008/8/25 12:37

Well, my wife and I and our kids have always enjoyed Veggie Tales. By the time they were 8 years old the kids were usually over it. I don't see anything wrong with presenting the gospel in that manner for little kids.

However, I think we also, as a church, underestimate what kids are able to understand.

The problem comes in when the church thinks they need to "entertain" adults in order to keep them. In order to reach them. Everyone wants large numbers of people in their churches, yet I can't find anywhere in the NT where large numbers was a goal to go after. In fact... Jesus said "few are those who find it".

I refrain from saying this at times because I know it's not 100% true all the time... but if you're in a church with a large crowd there is probably something wrong with that church.

The first red-flag for me concerning a preacher/teacher is if he is immensely popular. Like Osteen.

I heard an excellent sermon yesterday by a local Baptist preacher. I wish I could get a recording of it, but dont think I can. Anyway... the basic premise of his message was we should always make the gospel applicable to the non-believer, but we should **never** make it acceptable to the non-believer. Amen.

... but lets get back to reaching children:

I can tell you this, if you take a room full of 4 and 5 yr olds and start teaching as Spurgeon taught... you're going to have total and complete chaos on your hands in about 3 minutes. We're raising 4 boys in our house, I know what I am talking about. So presenting the gospel on their level is completely acceptable in my opinion... so long as it is presented truthfully and plainly.

I'm reminded of when the little children came unto Jesus, and the disciples tried to shoo them away. Jesus rebuked the disciples. Be sure that in our "great wisdom" as mature adults and mature believers in the Word that we dont become so mature that we forget what it's like to be a little 5 yr old boy. I have a 3 yr old and 5 yr old boys... if you've never been a parent please dont presume to offer opinions on how to reach children with the gospel. (thats not directed at anyone who posted on this thread since I dont know if they've had kids or not)

Anyway... I think we should all lighten up a bit without compromising the gospel. Entertain adult non-believers? No. Present the gospel to children on their level? Absolutely!

Krispy

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2008/8/25 12:45

Quote:

-----Talking vegetables, cucumbers and tomatoes to tell the story of Jonah?

Oh my, this subject of relying on cute humor to engage children and teenagers, (and even adults) is an overlooked topic. How many spend years recovering from unbelief in scripture due to their Noah's ark bath toys?

I just had an important conversation with a young man this weekend, which was also a good reminder for myself. This youngster has a clever quick wit, and people like him for that. Yet I warned him, "Humor can seem to help make friends, but be careful not to become the comic. Don't build relationships with your jokes. Jesters can't be leaders. (Thankfully, he understands that.)

(edit: While a little silliness isn't worth caring about, I think always relating to children with cartoonish antics is a misguided policy. Perhaps this issue belongs in the same category as the "What Fire..." thread currently being discussed.)

MC

Re: - posted by ccchhrrriiss (), on: 2008/8/25 13:52

Hello...

Like Brother Paul, I also understand your dilemma. It isn't that I see anything wrong with puppets – but the rationale behind them. In the past, I have helped out with puppet ministries that were meant to illustrate Biblical truths in a way in which children might learn via such "visual" help. I suppose that puppets can be used to extrapolate or illustrate a message. I suppose that they can be used like parables to express truths. However, they are often used simply as a form of entertainment.

We have a real problem in the Body of Christ. The church has taken certain forms of entertainment and attempted to use it as a primary method of evangelism. In fact, in many larger churches, the ONLY form of church-sanctioned evangelism come from various "shows" that are meant to draw people into the "fold" – such as plays, dramas, music or comedy. Many churches take out large advertisements in order to explain just how "different" their churches are – that they aren't "boring" since they have so many of these sort of activities integrated into the church's weekly objectives (unaware that they have equivocated other forms of Christian living – such as agonizing prayer, Bible study and simple worship – as "boring"). In fact, I think that entertainment is the first and most important precept in Mega-Church Growth 101. Church growth experts often "guarantee" that your church will grow if you provide such things to your congregation on a regular basis. It is effectively pouring chocolate on the plates of children and youth hoping that they will somehow learn to eat their vegetables. It is as if the church is admitting that the Gospel itself is boring and unable to reach the people of this earth WITHOUT resorting to such gimmicks.

Now, it isn't that "entertainment" is evil in and of itself. I am "entertained" when I read the Word of God – in the sense that I find myself consumed and gladdened by it. I enjoy reading, walking, running, spending time with my wife and involvement with some sports. But the Word was so clear that even physical activities as such "profiteth little" (I Timothy 4:8). In other words, they do have some value. Similarly, activities that are meant to educate, strengthen knowledge, and even impress upon our hearts and minds the things of God have value too. But whether the focus is on the things of God or mere entertainment is a sharply different matter. I don't believe that we can simply "entertain" people into the Kingdom – because entertainment doesn't convict the heart.

I once read about a large Mega-Church that actually has a "comedy club" during the late nights and weekends at its official "coffee house." Again, it isn't that humor is in and of itself a bad thing. There are some things that are just naturally funny! But many "church comedians" do their best to laugh people into the Kingdom. However, I don't believe that a person can truly find Christ except through tears. They must weep over the realization of their own sinful conditions! We must approach the throne of God with reverence – and not with futile levity. Our eternal King doesn't need any "court jesters."

I certainly don't know the ultimate conclusion of such a matter. I suppose that it comes down to deciding just what the puppet masters are trying to accomplish with their shows. Are they trying to help children by illustrating the Gospel so as they can unlock the "secrets of the Kingdom" (ala parables)? Or are they meant to simply entertain a generation of "church kids" who simply have a short attention span when it comes to the things of God? Like much of the contemporary Christian music industry, I fear that many of our efforts just cannot pass the test of Christ's example for ministry.

I fear that, far too often, the Church and Christian parents are exchanging pacifiers for bottles of pure milk. They might help a child stop crying for a little while, but the child just isn't gaining any nourishment from a piece of plastic.

:-)

Re:, on: 2008/8/25 14:08

I agree w/ what Chris just wrote.

Let me add something else to what I said. As a Christian parent the training of my children in the Word of God is **not** the responsibility of the church.

It is **MY** responsibility. I'm the one the Lord will hold responsible on that day.

Children of Christians should be learning at home about the Word of God. Now, sometimes that may take the form of Veggie Tales (especially if I need a nap on the couch! Ever take a nap with kids sitting on you as you lay on the couch?).

Most of the time it is in the form of homeschooling, or family devotional time just before bed. For my older boys it is in all those forms, plus their own personal "closet" time.

I'm actually not in favor of age segregated churches anyway. The family comes to church and the church immediately splits them all up the second they walk thru the door. A wedge is driven between kids and their parents in the name of "youth ministry"... and the main perpetrator is the so-called "youth ministry", generally some recent Bible college grad who has never raised any kids of his own.

No, my kids will generally learn at home, just as scripture prescribes. Thank you very much.

But in the course of their learning we use many different avenues. Veggie Tales, puppets, etc... it's very effective. And they outgrow that stuff eventually.

Krispy

Re: - posted by HeartSong, on: 2008/8/25 14:53

"And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 18:2-3

I was working with some children in the AWANA program - from what I observed most of these children were simply hungry for love. The problem with the program was that it interfered with the teaching of the children as they were called away to play.

After a prayer meeting at the church, where we prayed for the children, the Lord showed me the fatal flaw of the AWANA program. It is based upon rewards. The children get badges and points for memorizing bible verses. These points are then used to buy things at the "AWANA store." This program is actually teaching children to be materialistic - to value things above God - for that which is the reward is necessarily more valuable than that which is done to receive it.

How can it be that we are teaching such things to children? How can it be that we are doing it in the name of God?

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Galatians 6:7

Re:, on: 2008/8/25 15:02

Yea... thats a real problem. The intent behind AWANA is a noble one, but the greatest flaw of all is that it relieves the parents of the responsibility before the Lord to train up THEIR children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Sunday School wasn't started in the 1800's for the Christian families... it was started to reach the street kids. The unchurched kids. But now it's a mortal sin to not have your kids in Sunday School. It was never meant for Christian kids!

Christian parents need to wake up.

Krispy

Re: - posted by narrowpath, on: 2008/8/25 15:41

I do not mind puppets per se to entertain children in an edifying way but when it comes to preaching Christ we should not take out the offense that the message causes to the natural man, even in children.

When we dum down, defuse, dilute, excuse, distort, omit, trivialize or popularize the gospel we should not wonder why or kids can't wait to leave church once they can no longer be forced by us parents. Or they stay in the church with the false assurance that they are saved.

I am still looking for material to teach our children that presents the whole counsel of God. Any suggestions? I will start another post about it soon.

narrowpath

Re: - posted by Miccah (), on: 2008/8/25 15:54

I agree with not dumbing down the gospel, but we need to teach our children the proper way of the Lord. There is a reason that Paul states to the believers:

Hebrews 5:12-14 (NKJV)

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. **But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.**

Our children need to be taught discernment through our guidance. Until my children can comprehend the Word in its fullest, I will refrain from preaching the "Turn or burn" messages. At the same time, we teach our children the truth of unbelief, which includes "the burning pit".

Kid gloves for kids. :-)

Re:, on: 2008/8/25 16:24

Quote:
-----I am still looking for material to teach our children that presents the whole counsel of God. Any suggestions? I will start another post about it soon.

There is a book we have used for a long time... I think it's called "Leading Little Ones to God" which is very good. It's geared more for kids probably 6 and 7 or under.

You can find it here:

<http://www.amazon.com/Leading-Little-Ones-God-Teachings/dp/0802851207>

Because it isn't in your face "turn or you're going to hell!!!" and wasn't written by Spurgeon, some of you more spiritual folks won't like it... but for us redneck hillbillies it does just fine!

(that was humor...)

We use it, and y'all know how I am about truth and substance.

Krispy

Re: - posted by tjservant (), on: 2008/8/25 17:49

This site has many excellent Christian books for instructing children in the ways of our Lord.

It has the one Krispy suggested...and one by Charles Spurgeon :-D

You can check them all out (http://www.graceandtruthbooks.com/young_children/default.asp) here

Re: - posted by growingholly, on: 2008/8/25 18:40

i would like to ask you to check out a sermon series on this site given through denny kenaston called the godly home series. it will bless you, i'm certain of it. this is a sermon series for parents, and it will help you to know some really Biblical principles on teaching them.

also, i taught preschool children for several years, and they really do understand much more than our society gives them credit for. teach them the truth. you know your kids and how they learn. just remember that you are teaching individuals. one of them will learn very differently than the next. if you guys would like to discuss specific creative ideas for teaching children, feel free to pm me and hopefully i can help. but first, i recommend you check out some of the sermons in the series...it is wonderful.

be blessed in the name of Christ, brethren.

Re: - posted by mamaluk, on: 2008/8/25 20:52

Quote:
-----Oh my, this subject of relying on cute humor to engage children and teenagers, (and even adults) is an overlooked topic. How many spend years recovering from unbelief in scripture due to their Noah's ark bath toys?

I just had an important conversation with a young man this weekend, which was also a good reminder for myself. This youngster has a clever quick wit, and people like him for that. Yet I warned him, "Humor can seem to help make friends, but be careful not to become the comic. Don't build relationships with your jokes. Jesters can't be leaders. (Thankfully, he understands that.)

(edit: While a little silliness isn't worth caring about, I think always relating to children with cartoonish antics is a misguided policy. Perhaps this issue belongs in the same category as the "What Fire..." thread currently being discussed.)

Can't agree more here.

We hear so much about "parents are responsible for teaching the Word to their children". While I have often wanted to tell them this "please don't teach my kids at all". Why set up these classes on the one hand and tell the parents to take responsibility on the other. Whoever teaches is and will always be doubly responsible, kids or not.

When I was a young mother, it was serious enough to teach my kids at home to reverence God without having to re-teach them when they come home from all the bubbly jumpy, candies passing, gum chewing nonsense they learn from these "churches". What a battle. Song and dance, muppets and puppets, cartoons.....

In my view, if these places can only tell the parents to teach the kids to sit still and be quiet each Sunday before a solemn God is a God-honoring lesson enough already.

sigh..call me proud

Re: - posted by mamaluk, on: 2008/8/25 21:23

Humbly before God, I would like to add, for all you Godly young parents out there, please use only the Word in introducing our GOD to your children.

Children, in the long run, respect our GOD far better and take HIS Word far more serious when we do that. By using substitutes, one is undermining the God-given spirits in the children's capacity to know HIM, and is almost as telling them that our BIBLE is a boring book at the same time.

We are a living testimony in this regard. I raised my girls with the KJV and IT alone, and with absolutely nothing else, as soon as they turned 3. A few verses at a time.

Pampering our children in this regard is most unnecessary. Furthermore, bribing our children with reward tickets and toys to memorize Scriptures, in my mind, is most insulting to God. If God does not charge us for His Blood, why do we encourage our children to "charge" Him for learning Him?

So many of these bible camps and programs instill nothing yet furthering a spirit of greed and pride via the use of Scriptures in our kids. This just doesn't make any Godly sense.

mamaluk

Re:, on: 2008/8/25 21:36

(http://www.gcp.org/church_resources_catechism.asp) Westminster Catechism

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2008/8/25 21:54

I believe there is something fundamentally wrong with allowing animated pieces of fruit and vegetables to convey the earliest rudiments of the gospel to a child, and it has nothing to do with being inconsiderate of teaching children at their own level - no one is saying that you turn the full gospel cannon on them ala Whitefield in Boston or Wesley on his father's tombstone.

But you don't present Mickey Mouse either. The makers of Veggie Tales put a lot of thought into the production, to create animated characters resembling fruits and vegetables with big eyes and silly voices to allure their attention. These are psychological concepts found in secular marketing, people go to school for graphic design to learn the colors and sounds that arrest the attention of a certain demographic. Like fast food chain restaurants, the bright red, the bubbly plastic, the bright neon, the toys. McDonalds with Ronald the clown, and the old characters like Grimace and the Hamburgler, etc. These are specifically designed with careful psychological implications to trigger the desired response in the eyes of the young beholder. One of the earliest efforts - and surely the most notable - in causing children to make a connection with an undesirable inanimate to a desirable animate is found in Popeye and his spinach. With Veggie Tales you have the gospel as the spinach and the vegetable as the Superhero.

You may be laughing, but there is a truth behind all this. I do not doubt for a minute that an influence birthed in behavioral analysis had a role to play in the design of the Veggie Tales characters. I am not saying there's a conspiracy behind it all; I'm only saying that this is the product of man's reason, independent of God, of a synthesis of worldly concepts meshing with spiritual truths to arrive at the end result of fakeness and entertainment embroidered with truth.

Now, if we relegate the gospel in children's eyes down to cereal box cartoon level, the sugar they ingest along with the gospel will harm their spiritual teeth later on. Intuitively they will learn to link the gospel on the same mentality level as with Cocoa Puffs and Big Bird and Ronald MacDonald. It will condition them to anticipate entertainment and laughs to lace the climatic, quasi-seriousness of the gospel message the makers endeavor to convey in each episode.

This can have terrible consequences later when they get a bit older and are ready to be brought to the accountability of the gospel and sin. They will nod and remember what the fat, juicy tomato said (even though they will be beyond it, maturity-wise), yet the words and antics will have placed a deeply indelible etch upon their own psyche. They will listen and nod, and agree with what God says, but not enter into a serious relationship with the Lord that will safeguard their souls from other worldly entertainment and Hollywood and Disney and whatever else. Remember, Veggie Tales and Disney and Telly-Tubies are all subspecies of the same kind of organism: namely, children's entertainment. The principles of God have thus become a conglomerate of colors, funny faces, Pirate battles, and fish-slappers. In later years the Lord will have to remove much of what this imagery is associated with, and recondition their minds and spirits to accept the true seed of His Word which is able to transform, lead to repentance and the new birth.

Brother Paul

Re:, on: 2008/8/25 22:19

Here's some books you might be interested in:

<https://store.ligonier.org/product.asp?idDept=B&idCategory=PU&idProduct=CAS02BH>

http://www.christianbook.com/Christian/Books/product?item_no=81262&event=CF

http://www.christianbook.com/Christian/Books/product?item_no=358164X&kw=358164X&event=PPCSRC&p=1010575

<http://www.graceandtruthbooks.com/listdetails.asp?ID=913&RP=/men/>

Re:, on: 2008/8/26 7:15

Brother Paul... do you have children?

Krispy

Re:, on: 2008/8/26 7:27

Please understand, folks... I am in no way saying that we need to dumb everything down for kids. But we also have to have some concept of the developmental stages of children.

At our house we have family devotions in the morning and before bed. We read scriptures. We read from the book I suggested in an earlier post. Sometimes we act out Bible stories.

Things like Veggie Tales or Puppets are extremely peripheral, as they should be. I don't think anyone here is suggesting that VT should be the only exposure to the gospel that a child ever gets.

My 5 yr old has 47 verses of scripture committed to memory. My 12 & 13 yr olds are memorizing whole chapters, and are working their way thru the "Route 66" curriculum. There are some serious things going on in our house. It should be this way in EVERY Christian home.

I would agree that if the only exposure to the gospel is thru a cartoon... those parents ought to be smacked around a little.

I disagree that Veggie Tales is some commercially motivated conspiracy to corrupt kids ideas on God. Most of the Christian homeschool kids we are around all the time watched VT when they were little... and most of these kids now are mighty warriors for God. Most have been to the mission field... some are even street preaching at the age of 15. Not because of VT, obviously... but at the same time, VT didn't corrupt their belief in God. In fact, I believe VT probably taught them some very valuable and godly lessons.

Personally I find it rather humorous that Christians can get as upset as they do about Larry the Cucumber. With internet pornography, drugs, secular music, TV and everything else that society throws at our kids... Christians are mad about Bob the Tomato.

... sigh.

Krispy

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2008/8/26 7:49

Quote:

-----Brother Paul... do you have children?

Yes, I have a 10 year old son and 14 year old daughter, and some years of ministerial experience teaching other parent's kids (aged 6-10). I also have a bunch of nieces and nephews, from my wife's side all of that age. I see them every week - they practically live with us!

In addition to challenging my qualifications (which you are entitled to do, of course), can you also address my last post?

Quote:

-----I disagree that Veggie Tales is some commercially motivated conspiracy to corrupt kids ideas on God.

I think I also said this. I don't say it's a conspiracy, and I believe the creators of the show have well-intentions, but I do think the design and storylines are based more on man's design and understanding of behavioral concepts than God. Please, let the children learn ABC's this way, and about color and simple geography and addition and subtraction, but we should be extremely careful when presenting the gospel this way to their little minds, for reasons I've already listed in my previous post.

The TV and DVD has now become the spiritual nanny; parents turn on a disc and let Bob the Tomato and Larry the Pickle dress up like pirates and teach a watered down version of the gospel. It is but a microcosm of what we have for the adults in regular church. I can't imagine parents 200 years ago, dropping their kids off at the puppet master's shop for the day as they go off to work or go back home to sleep on the couch...and let the puppetmaster put on shows with cute pirates (pirates were villains - the equivalent of a drug dealer or mafia bandit today - and they were hanged when caught) and talking fruit and vegetables to teach them about Jesus.

So we see the parents spiritually reproducing, replicating their own values and worth of the gospel into their children, and this is partly the reason why we have the limp gospel today that we have, and the norms are so low and everything is steeped in amusement and entertainment. It all begins early, the conditioning, and the parents don't know any better, because they themselves are hooked on entertainment and sports and movies and other types of worldliness. Their Veggie Tale is Mel Gibson's Passion of Christ, or Joel Osteen, or Rick Warren or other actors in other movies - puppets for the big people. And it even spreads to those who don't subscribe to this kind of emergent theology; it can proliferate even within the ranks of conservative evangelism and homeschooling.

Re:, on: 2008/8/26 8:27

Quote:

-----Yes, I have a 10 year old son and 14 year old daughter, and some years of ministerial experience teaching other parent's kids (aged 6-10). I also have 5 nieces of nephews, all of that age, that God has allowed me to minister to extensively and successfully.

OK... then we're on the same page.

Quote:

-----Instead of challenging my qualifications (which you are entitled to do, of course), can you also address my last post?

No, wasn't questioning your qualifications, just wanted to understand where you were coming from. Helps me understand you better.

Quote:
-----I think I also said this in my post. I don't think it's a conspiracy, but I do think the design and storylines are based more on man than God. Let the children learn ABC's this way, and about color and simple geography and addition and subtraction...but I think we should be careful when presenting the gospel this way, for reasons I've already listed in my previous post.

We agree this should never be the primary education of kids... I think I made that clear already.

Quote:
-----The reason parents settle for fruits and carrots to teach our kids the ABC's of God is the same reason why they drop their kids off Wednesday nights and hope the youth pastor can also instill spiritual truth. Most of the time the parents go back home, and pick them up later. The TV and DVD has now become the spiritual nanny; parents turn on a disc and let Bob the Tomato and Larry the Pickle dress up like pirates and teach a watered down version of the gospel. It is but a microcosm of what we have for the adults in regular church.

Absolutely, we agree 100% on this.

Quote:
-----I can't imagine parents 200 years ago, dropping their kids off at the puppet master's shop for the day as they go off to work or go back home to sleep on the couch...and let the puppetmaster put on shows with cute pirates (pirates were villains - the equivalent of a drug dealer or mafia bandit today - and they were hanged when caught) and talking fruit and vegetables to teach them about Jesus.

I don't know... wasn't there. Neither were you (I'm assuming). You don't happen to own a Delorean that can hit 88 mph, do you? Unless you do, we're just speculating.

Quote:
-----So we see the parents spiritually reproducing, replicating their own values and worth of the gospel in their children...and this is why we have the gospel today that we have, and the norms are so low and everything is steeped in amusement and entertainment. It begins early, and the parents don't know any better, because the parents themselves are hooked on entertainment and sports and movies and other types of worldliness - and to compensate and appease the conscience, they avoid the 'R' pictures.

Well... I certainly understand your point here. This is true. That's why I go back to what I was saying: It's the parents. If the parents are responsible, and are teaching their children the Word of God the way it ought to be taught, then something like VT can be a good supplement. The kids are grounded well, and VT can reinforce what they are already being taught.

This is why I am reluctant to put a blanket condemnation on something like VT. It's like anything else, it all depends on how it is used. TV can be a great tool... or it can be a dumpster of sin and depravation.

Krispy

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2008/8/26 8:31

Good post, Steve, fair. I edited my last post a bit. Hey, you were right about me not living 200 years ago. I based what I said off of reading Matthew Henry's accounts and sermons of how to raise young children in the admonition of the Lord and the children's catechism of Isaac Watts. Are you familiar with them?

I know you love Henry.

Re:, on: 2008/8/26 8:57

I do love ol' Matt... but I'm not familiar with the children's catechism of Isaac Watts, or Matthew Henry's accounts and sermons on how to raise young children.

Please advise as to where I can get my paws on them. They may be something of interest to our homeschool group.

Thanx!

Krispy

Re: Rewarding children - posted by mamaluk, on: 2008/8/26 9:47

Surely the parents are primarily responsible for the learning of our children. But so are their teachers in the professing church buildings.

So are you and me, parents and elders within the Body. We who are in Christ are *all* responsible for being the spiritual "shepherds" and examples in feeding the entrusted sheep.

"Walk in the Spirit" " Walk not after the flesh"

"Mortify the deeds of you members" " Be not conform to the world"....these Words should all dictate the way we lead the young as well. Or do we help them to walk in fun and walk after their desire, to focus them back on the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and pride of life? All the while thinking to ourselves that we are leading them to Christ, with our this and that, aside from the Word and the Word alone.

While we do know that spiritual things are to be spiritually discerned, even for us, so why should it be any different for our children. The current churchian methods have nothing to do with dumbing down children, rather than perhaps, chiselling away more of this spiritual discerning capability in them, at their individual level moving forward.

Children are saturated by materialistic "rewards" and allurements of pride everywhere they go in the world already, why should they have a double dose from the churches, assuming we are indeed referring to the Church. They go to Sunday schools to look for shimmering stars, rewards, and AWANA for crowns, jewels, trophies, recognitions...???? What did our LORD get for HIS CROSS???? On earth? Is it not far better to teach them traits of patience, contentment, gratitude and love for the Christ Who died for them? To learn and know Him just for the sake of gratitude and obedience? Rather than throwing material stuff toward them?

We are told of heavenly rewards, so they will be received in heaven from The Lord's Hands. Why do we pay or reward them now in the flesh? Wouldn't some brief verbal reinforcements suffice? Spiritual pride in ourselves from time to time is horrible enough, try standing around religiously prideful youngsters....(I was around many of them in my homeschooling years.)

This topic is dear to my heart, though deeply saddened in my spirit. Let us not agree amongst ourselves, but agree with Scriptures, in everything, to the accord of One Spirit.

edit: Adding: Reverence, teach reverence.

sincerely,
Margaret

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

Re:, on: 2008/8/26 10:23

True... we all within the Body of Christ have some responsibility in setting godly examples for the young. And God has gifted a few within the Body to teach children.

However, the commandments within scripture pertaining to the raising of godly children are **all** given to the father. Nowhere else will you see anyone other than the father being given that charge. Not even the mother is given that charge.

This is serious business with God, and he will judge spiritually deadbeat fathers.

The mention of anyone else's influence on children is condemnation of those who would harm a child, or cause a child to spiritually stumble. And if you're found guilty of that, it's better a millstone were tied about your neck and you be cast into the sea than stand before God.

Krispy

Re: - posted by mamaluk, on: 2008/8/26 10:42

Krisp,

Absolutely true, the ultimate accountability falls back on the father, yet, the fruit of the work of all teachers, whoever they might be, are still responsible for whatever they teach before the Body and God. Needless to say, look around us, where are these fathers, in terms of spiritual leadership, in our time? Very very few! Perhaps it is for this same reason, i.e. the lack of spirit-filled fathers, we now have what we have everywhere...in my mind, so much distorted quereness in all of all.

Brother Krisp, be ever so thankful that God has brought you this far in life to be that Godly father for your/His children. I have been very thankful and admirable for men like you and some of the brothers here on SI...all too thankful indeed, to be comforted by some remaining spark in God's families.

Sigh...as for me, at times, I take comfort in the female saints such as those who influenced Timothy..the Hannahs, the Susanna Wesleys...and believe me, I'm not at all of such caliber, in faith, alike these women. Nevertheless, still grateful to Him, especially for His blessed Word.

Keep up, beloved brothers/dads

Re:, on: 2008/8/26 11:14

Well... none of my kids are old enough to be out on their own yet, so the measure of my success as a father is still to be seen. Hopefully I havent screwed them up too bad! lol

Krispy

Re: - posted by narrowpath, on: 2008/8/26 16:08

Thanks everyone for the helpful resources you all pointed me to. A while ago we started to have family "famy" time with our little ones and the 16 year old.

I regret that I did not start them a long while back when I could have exercised more positive influence over our oldest son who does not walk with the Lord. For years I selfishly pursued my own walk with God and neglected our family. I will check out these books and see if we can use them in our devotions. As for now I am trying to explain the doctrines in Romans to our 6 year old which is more challenging than to preach to adults.

narrowpath

Re: - posted by vico, on: 2008/8/26 16:18

Quote:
-----You know, I've read some Puritan children's prayers, and I've seen the curriculum that ministers and teachers of the gospel from those times exposed the children to at an early age. How Susanna Wesley raised her two boys John and Charles, how Matthew Henry and Isaac Watts taught on prayer for little boys and girls without puppets and talking vegetables. I've read accounts of youngsters praying with wisdom and power and tears and establishing early on a disciplined regiment of prayer set aside each day and quiet time with God.

Hey, brother Paul. Could you share with us some of the resources where you found this. Especially the Puritan children's prayers, and the teaching on prayer for children by Matthew Henry and Isaac Watts. I would be very interested in this. Thanks so much.

-victor

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2008/8/26 20:58

(http://books.google.com/books?idqaYTAAAYAAJ&pgPA291&lpgPA291&dqisaac+watts,+catechism+for+children&sourceweb&otsrRn5Ce1qvp&sigJp3CjylaQl6UTYy4UDT5MCfgSsY&hlen&saX&oibook_result&resnum1&ctresult) Isaac Watts' Children's Catechism

And I believe he wrote more than one catechism. They're actually pretty hard to find. Matthew Henry wrote an excellent one too; it would be a great find in a second-hand bookstore, worth its weight in gold easily. For now, you can peruse this scanned one by Watts in google books.

As for Matthew Henry, his sermons regarding children and family worship are exemplary. I'll try to find some on the internet. The only reason I know about them is because my wife sometime back bought me the complete works of M. Henry in an 8 volume set. If I print out some of the model prayers for children, you would be absolutely astounded. One little prayer is able to put a four-year seminary school education to shame.

(<http://www.dr-fnlee.org/docs4/tchlormh/tchlormh.pdf>) The Covenantal Home Life of Matthew Henry

(<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article1018&contextetas>) Milk for Babes Drawn Out of the Breasts of Both Testaments, 1646

(<http://www.archive.org/stream/tokenforchildren00janeiala>) A Token for Children

This last book is written in olde English and is in a narrative style similar to Foxe's Book of Martyrs. It gives the individual accounts of many conversions in early New England by children younger than 10 years old. It is quite an amazing read, and I have never heard anyone talk about this stultifying book before in Christian circles.

Brother Paul

Re:, on: 2008/8/27 7:11

Very cool... thanx!

Krispy

Re: - posted by vico, on: 2008/8/27 19:30

much appreciated. thanks brother. :-)