

LIBERTAS

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736 N 1100 E American Fork, UT 84003
(801) 642-0055



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Last month, the Desert Morning News featured an in-depth report on character education in public schools. It cited the 2004 Utah Legislature's passage of a law requiring character education in public schools. "Character education", as currently defined in the law, means "values and qualities of character that promote an upright and desirable citizenry" and "values" are defined as "time-established principles or standards of worth."ⁱ The law further requires that students be taught "...in connection with regular school work, honesty, integrity, morality, civility, duty, honor, service, and obedience to the law..."ⁱⁱⁱ

We honor and respect the efforts of policymakers to restore a moral center to public school classrooms. Words such as "honesty" "integrity" and "morality" are powerful. But they are only powerful because their Source is powerful. Sadly, efforts to legislate these disciplines into public and charter school classrooms (and ultimately into children's hearts) will continue to fail so long as teachers are commissioned to teach moral discipline void of faith in the Disciple. At best, the result is a confused curriculum "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof..."ⁱⁱⁱ At worst, the result is a law that is virtually dead on arrival at the classroom door, with teachers paralyzed about teaching "morality" in a court-mandated classroom culture hostile to prayer, God, and the Ten Commandments, and with students "ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."^{iv}

This year, as in past years, new charter schools are opening their doors in an effort to give parents an alternative to traditional public schools. Many charter schools attempt to draw families into their classrooms with the siren song of "character education". Though most people understand the following concept, some do not: Charter schools are public schools. Charter schools are bound by the same federal and state restrictions pertaining to "character education" as traditional public schools.

As consumers of education, we should all ask ourselves the following questions: What is character education? How do we personally define it? Is it important to us? If so, what is the difference between the character education offered in public/charter schools and the character education offered in our homes? How would the character education offered at a school such as American Heritage School compare to the character education offered in our homes?

No school or classroom should ever supplant the home as the primary source of children's moral training and character education. In the case of public schools, where moral laxity is the order of the day, and prayer, scripture study, and religious expression is vehemently prohibited, the home must clearly be the bulwark of Christ-centered moral instruction.

But so also in the case of Christ-centered places of learning, such as American Heritage School, where the type of education offered might well be described by the Apostle Paul: "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."^v – the home must still stand as the primary classroom of faith, buttressed by truths consistently and faithfully taught in other institutions such as churches and schools.

With respect to both public and private schools, the question remains: Are our homes the primary source of Christ-centered character education for our children, or have we relinquished this responsibility to another institution, public or private?

One of the first and greatest revelations in this dispensation on the subject of education is found in Doctrine and Covenants 88. In it, the Lord directed the Saints to build a temple in Kirtland, to begin a school of the prophets, to seek "out of the best books words of wisdom", and to seek learning "even by

study and also by faith.”^{vi} The Lord also commanded that the Saints should be instructed

in theory, in principle, in doctrine, in the law of the gospel...of things both in heaven and in the earth, and under the earth; things which have been, things which are, things which must shortly come to pass; things which are at home, things which are abroad; the wars and the perplexities of the nations, and the judgments which are on the land; and a knowledge also of countries and of kingdoms.

In this manner, the Lord explained *what* the Saints should learn – a tall order for any school or church to fill without consistent and applied teaching in the home. But the Lord also revealed *why* the Saints should learn: “That ye may be prepared in all things when I shall send you again to magnify the calling whereunto I have called you, and the mission with which I have commissioned you.”^{vii}

The Prophet Joseph Smith said “Our task is to become bilingual; to be conversant in the language of the academic world and the language of faith; to know when it is appropriate to speak which tongue; and to communicate our findings clearly and honestly.”

May our homes be the first and foremost classrooms of the language of faith and may we never lose sight of Christ as the central pillar in the edifice of moral education!

Sincerely,

--Grant Beckwith

ⁱ H.B. 22, enacted and codified in Utah Code Annotated, § 53A-13-109 (2004).

ⁱⁱ Id. at (3)(a).

ⁱⁱⁱ 2 Timothy 3:5.

^{iv} 2 Timothy 3:7.

^v 2 Timothy 3:15.

^{vi} D&C 88:118.

^{vii} D&C 88:80.

FAMILY LECTURE SERIES

Friday, October 14th
7:30 – 9:00 PM



James MacArthur

“BUILDING A HEALTHY FAMILY”

James MacArthur knows the struggles children can face. Growing up in a dysfunctional, alcoholic family, which also included heroine and cocaine usage, he became the only member of his family to join the LDS Church at the age of 17 and became intrigued with the study of family life, eventually earning a Ph.D in Counseling Psychology and working as a Licensed Psychologist. In 1973 he became a Clinical Professor at BYU eventually being awarded the Karl G. Maeser Professional Faculty Excellence Award. He is also a popular BYU Education Week speaker providing knowledge and skills for the family. Now, with over 30 years of observation and research on the family, James MacArthur has written the book “How Do Regular, Everyday Parents Successfully Build a Healthy Family?” President MacArthur is married with 10 children ranging in ages from 24 to 37, including two sets of twins, and 19 grandchildren. Please join us for an evening that is sure to enlighten and entertain.

THANK YOU TO CHIEKO OKAZAKI



Chieko Okazaki presented “Family Reading: Getting Lost Together In a Good Book” at the Family Lecture Series on September 9th. All who attended were enriched. Mrs. Okazaki’s remarks were taken from material she intends to use for publication; therefore transcripts are not available for distribution. We appreciate the wonderful insights and spirit that she shared with us.

FAMILY LECTURE SERIES CALENDAR

- October 14 James MacArthur
- November 11 Gary & Joy Lundberg
- January 13 Kaye Hanson
- February 10 Paul Keene

The Family Lecture Series is offered the second Friday of each month during the school year at the American Heritage School north auditorium beginning at 7:30 p.m. Please be seated by 7:25 p.m. Admission is free of charge. All are welcome – ages 14 and up.

Positions Available

For the 2006/2007 academic year (beginning August 2006), American Heritage School is seeking full-time faculty members for it’s new Eighth Grade Class and also for one of it’s First Grade Classes. Applications are being accepted at the front office.

Part time Janitorial positions are available at the school! A tuition scholarship as well as an hourly rate are offered as compensation. For those who are interested, please contact Leslie Clark at the front office for an application and to set up an interview.

GARY AND JOY LUNDBERG

Family Lecture Series
November 11, 2005



“THE SECRET TO HAPPY KIDS AND A HAPPY HOME”

Gary Lundberg is a licensed marriage and family therapist and a clinical member of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. He was a fighter pilot for the US Air Force for seven years. Gary enjoys singing and is the soloist on the album heart to heart.

Joy Lundberg is a writer and lyricist and has written nearly 200 songs with composer Janice Kapp Perry, including the popular *I Walk By Faith* album of songs for youth. She recently served seven years as a scriptwriter for the Tabernacle Choir broadcast Music and the Spoken Word.

Gary and Joy are the authors of the nationally published books: *I Don't Have to Make Everything All Better*, and *Married for Better, Not Worse*. They are also the authors of the pocketsize guidebook for youth, parents and leaders called *On Guard! Seven Safeguards to Protect Your Sexual Purity*.

The Lundbergs present numerous firesides and seminars throughout the U.S. and internationally, and also teach at BYU Campus Education Week. They are currently serving a part-time Church Service Mission at the BYU World Family Policy Center. Gary and Joy are the parents of five children and 13 grandchildren.