

# **A FULL REWARD**

**Reformation Through Family-Run  
Christian Schools**



**Rev. Aaron M. Slack**

# **A Full Reward**

**Reformation Through Family-Run Christian  
Schools**

**Rev. Aaron Slack**

Copyright © 2013 by Rev. Aaron M. Slack

Nicene Press, Inc.  
5524 19th Ct. SW  
Naples, FL 34116  
612.436.3954

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the publisher. For information, write Nicene Press, Inc., 5524 19th Ct SW, Naples, Florida 34116

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations in this book are from The King James Version of the Bible (KJV)

Cover photos: iStockphoto

ISBN: 978-1-62652-618-1

# Table of Contents

[Cover Page](#)

[Dedication](#)

[Preface](#)

[Chapter I: Introduction](#)

[A Family](#)

[The Way](#)

[The Most Rewarded Calling](#)

[Who I Am](#)

[The Alternative](#)

[What is “Grace Community Schools”?](#)

[Preparing the Next Generation](#)

[The Literacy Difference](#)

[Revolutionary Bible Time](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[Chapter II: My Testimony](#)

[Son of a Pastor from a Family of Pastors](#)

[Exodus](#)

[Florida and a Better Future](#)

[Moving to Naples and Grace Community](#)

[High School of a Different Sort](#)

[The Choice](#)

[A Vocation... and a Mate](#)

[Chapter III: The Standard Model of Childhood Education](#)

[Government Schools: Training Grounds of Democracy](#)

[False Virtue](#)

[The State as Parent](#)

[The Collective](#)

[The Other “Drug Problem”](#)

[Socialization](#)

[Moloch Worship](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[Chapter IV: The Typical Christian School Model of Christian Education](#)

[Now What?](#)

[Motives](#)

[Government “Assistance”](#)

[Family Size](#)

[Theology: The Most Important Subject](#)

[Antinomianism](#)

[Beware the Classics!](#)

[A Conflict of Interests](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[Chapter V: The Alternative: The Grace Community School Model of Childhood Education](#)

[An Investment](#)

[It’s Homeschooling, But Better](#)

[The Importance of Discipline](#)

[A Trade](#)

[Don’t Fear the Truant Officer](#)

[Socialization](#)

[Making Homeschooling a Truly Christian Ministry](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[Chapter VI: The Folly of Traditional College](#)

[What is “Traditional College”?](#)

[Why College?](#)

[Self-realization](#)

[Is College Worth Your Child’s Soul?](#)

[Traditional College is a Bad Investment](#)

[Conclusion](#)

## [Chapter VII: Apprenticeship: The Better Way](#)

[The Road Less Traveled](#)

[The Importance of a Calling](#)

[Calling and Dominion](#)

[A Fair Trade](#)

[Apprenticeship is Preparation for Real Life](#)

[The Importance of Papers](#)

[The Masters and the Apprentice](#)

[Marriage as an Asset](#)

[The Money-Making Potential of the Grace  
Community Model](#)

[The Grace Community School Manual](#)

[Conclusion](#)

## [Chapter VIII: Carrying on the Reformed Legacy](#)

[The Church Has Abandoned Its Calling](#)

[The Reformation and Literacy](#)

[Luther and “Bible Time”](#)

[School for Real Life](#)

[Real Evangelism](#)

[Spiritual Infanticide](#)

## [Chapter IX: It’s the Test Scores, Stupid!](#)

[What Makes a Good Preschool?](#)

[Phony Quality](#)

[ECE and the Humanist Manifestos](#)

[The State to the Rescue!](#)

[The Doctrine of DAP](#)

[Humanistic Morality](#)

[Environmental Tyranny](#)

[Why Daycares Instead of Schools?](#)

[Play is the New Learning](#)

[Feng Shui and the Classroom Environment](#)

[Phonics vs. Everything Else](#)

[Literate Citizens: The Enemies of Tyranny](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[Chapter X: Getting Paid to Save Souls](#)

[Getting Paid to Save Souls](#)

[Your Worst Enemies](#)

[It's Easy Being Green \(With Envy\)](#)

[Marxism in the Church](#)

[The Biblical Solution to Poverty](#)

[Why Preschool?](#)

[No Fundraising](#)

[Freedom](#)

[Righteousness is Marketable](#)

[The Entrepreneur as Evangelist](#)

[Self-Supporting Missionaries](#)

[The Product](#)

[You Have to Sell Your Product!](#)

[Remember: It's a Business!](#)

[A Godly Inheritance](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[Chapter XI: Onward Christian Soldiers](#)

[The Task](#)

[The Rebuilding](#)

[Onward Christian Soldiers!](#)

[The Extent of Our Reach](#)

[What Reward Awaits the Typical Church School?](#)

[A Different Sort of Christian Education](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[Chapter XII: Grace Community School Testimonials and Conclusion](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Our Mission](#)

[What We Do Every Day](#)

[The Advantages of Apprenticeship](#)

[On the Job Training and Practical Work](#)

[Our Children](#)

[Why Settle?](#)

[Contact Info](#)

# Dedication

This book is dedicated to Dr. Ellsworth McIntyre, without whom none of this would have been possible.

To my wife, Amy, mother of my children and dearest helpmeet. She is truly a Proverbs 31 woman.

And last but not least, to my wonderful children, who provided the inspiration I needed to complete this work.

# Preface

For too many generations, Christian parents have trusted their children to the enemy, in the form of what are commonly called our “public schools.” The results have been devastating to our society and have robbed untold millions of believers of reward, in this life and the next. It has only been relatively recently that anyone even thought to question what has long been taken for granted in America. Compulsory schooling, high school through twelfth grade, an increasingly abstract education with no practical value, and then college, has been the norm for so long that very few Christians even question it. Conservatives cry out against unfair taxation and big government while they simultaneously commit spiritual infanticide by sacrificing their most precious gifts, their children, on the altar of humanist schools.

It is not that the public or “common” schools (as they were once known) are formerly good institutions that have gone bad. They have been bad since the beginning. There is no biblical precedent for parents to turn their children over to the civil government to be educated. As R. J. Rushdoony says in *The Messianic Character of American Education*, “If the schools are agencies of the state, they must inevitably serve the purposes of the state rather than God, man, the family, or any institution.” A state school serves the state. From the beginning, public schools have been laboratories for progressive educational techniques, centers of socialist indoctrination, and nurseries for future state worshipers. The founders of the public schools saw them as absolutely necessary for the maintaining of democratic society. They

are the churches of our civil religion, presided over by priests of humanism called “teachers.”

Public schools were never good, but they *have* gotten worse. At one time a veneer of Christianity was seen as necessary for maintaining public order and civilization. No longer. The destruction of Christian beliefs, particularly Christian *morality*, is a primary function of the public school system. The production of cooperative, guilt-ridden, morally-handicapped citizens with no absolute sense of right or wrong is the goal. State schools are factories for drones that will willingly serve the collective interests as represented in the state.

An increasing number of Christians, seeing the utter incompatibility of both obeying the biblical mandates given to parents and putting their kids in state schools, have withdrawn their children from public school to put them in Christian schools instead. Alas, these “Christian” schools are often little better than the public schools. The watered-down antinomian Christianity taught is but thinly-veiled humanism. Love is taught instead of law. Dubious secular “virtues” replace the Ten Commandments, and church control leads to students whose first allegiance is to the institutional church, not to God. Even worse are the Classical Christian schools, which somehow attempt to bring Jerusalem and Athens together, and expect God’s blessings for doing so. In either case, a deplorable lack of any teaching of business and practical (i.e., real world) skills characterizes the Christian school.

Many other Christians have gone the homeschool route, with varying degrees of success. One parent, generally the mother, is saddled with the whole responsibility of educating all the children. The challenges for the mother, particularly to keep discipline, are not trivial. The family must limit itself to

the father's income, something increasingly difficult to do in today's economy. As someone who was homeschooled growing up, I know the strains that it can put on a family and the sacrifices needed to make it work.

What if you could combine the positives of homeschooling with financial freedom and be able to train your children in a trade as well? What if both parents could share the educational responsibility, with total parental control over what is taught? What if you could get paid to teach your own children as you see fit, free from the influence of those in the church or elsewhere who would stand in your way? You can.

This book is about that possibility: the Grace Community School model of education. You can earn a wonderful living, providing for your family, while also fulfilling God's command to raise up your children in the covenant. Your children can get an academic education while also learning practical business skills. In this system, both mother and father work together teaching the family's children. At the same time, you can be a powerful witness in your community, spreading the gospel to those abandoned by their parents and other ministries, particularly the institutional church. I am talking about doing something just as momentous as when the early Christians rescued abandoned Roman babies, and just as worthy of reward. Let others fill barns with hay and stubble, you can earn a full reward that "neither moth nor rust doth corrupt."

The Christian family does not need the public school or its baggage.

# Chapter I

## Introduction

### A Family

This book is about a family. This family is not a typical family.

This family is blessed. It is tremendously productive. Father and mother both work, but they work together in a common calling. So do their children. They are missionaries, but not in the typical way. They are also educators—in the truest Biblical sense.

Father and mother are not afraid to obey God's commands in Genesis 1:28. They know that the bigger their family gets, the more (not less) productive they will be. Children in this family are taught a valuable trade; they will not be useless as adults, unable to earn a living; far from it. Wealth will multiply at their touch. The Ten Commandments are the law in this family, not just taught but lived. God comes first in everything they do.

The parents are free to teach the children as God leads them. No one dictates what can or cannot be taught, or tells them how many hours a day they must spend on their schoolwork. Responsibility for the children's education is shared between both parents. There are no arbitrarily required subjects imposed by pedantic education "experts." Father and mother are the king and queen, raising their subjects under God's authority.

The family is able to save money. "The labourer is worthy of his reward" is not just a slogan, they are well-paid for doing the Lord's work. The parents are determined to lay up an inheritance for their children and their children's children. The inheritance is both spiritual and material. The family rests in the knowledge that they are doing God's work, and are a blessing to those around them.

The children are happy, as are their mother and father. They labor along with their parents. All are engaged in a serious endeavor, together. They learn practical skills, and seem competent far beyond their ages. The older children help the younger. Everyone learns from each other. Each is educated far more than the average child, but it is not an abstract, foolishly academic education. Visitors who see the family are amazed at the maturity of the young family members, and the respect they show for each other and their elders. Words like "resourceful" and "self-reliant" are used to describe them.

They work at a school, a school unlike any other. While they do spend much of their time at their schoolhouse, it is a far cry from the schools familiar to most Americans. This schoolhouse exists to serve God, not the state or the institutional church or any other human organization.

They are not recluses; their family is not a hermitage. Other children come into this schoolhouse, from other families. The differences between their families and the family at the school are marked. For most of these outside children, this family will be the only example they will ever see of what God intended a family to be. The family teaches these other children how to read, and do math, all about God and His Commandments, and many other things. Their testimony is such a shining example that their services are sought out even by people who have no interest in God. Reprobate

men and women pay the family to evangelize their children and teach them God's Commandments.

Why are we here? It's rightfully considered one of the "big questions." This family already has an answer for this question. They are on a mission from God, taking part in a great adventure. Their bonds grow stronger as they fulfill their calling together.

This family could be your family. Let me tell you how.

## The Way

Our Lord, Jesus Christ, said, "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:19). As Christians, it should be our desire to be great in God's kingdom. Accordingly, God, in His Word, has revealed to us how to achieve this. God has called us to do and teach His law. He has promised that those who do this most faithfully will be greatest. In modern Christianity, however, if the law is mentioned at all, it is brought up merely to declare that it has been done away with, that it is no longer binding. Nothing could be further from the truth!

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. 5:17–18). Jesus, the great law-giver, has spoken. We have our mission statement. What will our legacy be? Did we heed what we were told concerning the commandments, to "do and teach them"? Or did we deny the law, in effect doing

our best to destroy it? What we do here on this earth is of vast importance. A reward is at stake, the prize Paul spoke of (1 Cor. 9:24), for us and our children's children. The question is now, how do we best labor to win the prize?

It has been said that a foolish man lives paycheck to paycheck, planning only as far as needed to survive the day; the wise man prepares for the next hundred years. As Christians, we should strive to be the latter. Planning for the next hundred years requires influencing the people who will come after us, our children's children. We cannot know the future, other than what God has revealed to us in His Word. One thing is certain, however, from Scripture passage after Scripture passage: the blessings or judgments in store for a generation—whether future or present—correlate to that generation's obedience to God's covenant. "Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations" (Deut. 7:9). It then follows that the way to ensure the best possible future for our descendants is to make sure they are covenant-keepers. This means teaching, and setting a good example by keeping the covenant ourselves ("do and teach them"). God assures us He will remember His promises. "He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations" (Psa. 105:8).

As important as future generations are, we are also commanded to provide for our dependents in the here and now. Neglecting our families to obtain a pie in the sky reward in the hereafter, or for the respect of men, is not what God commands us to do. The opposite is the case: "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (1 Tim. 5:8). Too often Christians become

involved in political movements, charities, or church ministries, ostensibly doing “God’s work,” to the detriment of their families. This is not what I am talking about.

The Christian who “succeeds” in a ministry but fails to provide for his family, and/or raise up his own children in the covenant has failed. There is a limit to the sacrifices which should be made in the pursuit of “success.” God has not called you to sacrifice your family (violating God’s command to provide for them) for “His work,” particularly when most Christian ministries primarily advance a particular church, denomination, or organization rather than God’s kingdom. This is idolatry.

In addition, a Christian family should also be storing up capital and property to make possible the expansion of God’s kingdom and their own freedom. God desires liberty (under His law) for His faithful people. We are not called to renounce material possessions or money. Living paycheck to paycheck, struggling to make rent each month is not a sign of holiness. It may be a temporary challenge, but it is not to be the perpetual condition of God’s faithful servants. Owning and controlling private property should be a priority. Freedom requires property; the family which is not in control of its financial situation is in slavery—slavery to the landlord, slavery to the employer, slavery to the civil government. Becoming financially free requires productive, practical work and the blessing of God. “Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it” (Psa. 127:1a). Many people believe that just because they work hard, have to be frugal with their money, and give to charity that God will bless them. Be sure that the work you are doing is what God wants you to be doing, or it is in vain. Doing volunteer charity work or protesting outside the abortion clinic may not be as worthy of reward as you think!

The Grace Community system makes it possible to do the Lord’s work in the form of a rewarding ministry without sacrificing your family. In fact, a decision to learn the Grace Community system could very well turn out to be the greatest thing that has ever “happened” to your family. By providing both monetary and educational benefits to your own children, you will be fulfilling your responsibilities to provide for them materially and spiritually. By reaching out to other families and children, evangelizing and catechizing, you will be taking dominion for Christ as never before. The Grace Community system just might be the tool God uses to bestow blessings on you beyond your wildest dreams.

### **The Most Rewarded Calling**

It is my intent in this book to share with my readers some of what I know about the most rewarded calling I can think of, that of the Christian preschool/daycare owner and operator. For those faithful to follow Christ’s mandate to do and teach the commandments, the rewards possible in this calling are almost beyond belief. It is also the ideal calling for those parents who are determined to bring up their own children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. This calling is one that can and should be shared by the entire family. The rewards are both spiritual and material; God has not called His servants to be paupers. You can earn a fantastic living while at the same time saving up heavenly rewards as well. Even better, you can educate your own children and be able to pass a goodly inheritance on to them and their children. The call to educate the young is a great weapon in our fight against the Evil One—heed the call!

Those who have been entrusted with our society’s youth bear a tremendous responsibility—there exists a vast

potentiality for either great reward or tremendous punishment. Despite claims to the contrary, this is little understood by the Christian community at large. Even those churches who have embraced the idea of Christian schools, balk at the thought of extending their ministries to the preschool age. Truly, they “forbid the little children to come.” Our enemies do not so neglect the very young. Secular humanist early childhood educators, as exemplified by the NAEYC and similar organizations, are ever pushing for access to our children at younger and younger ages. The existing programs, like Head Start, are compromises on their part due to limitations in both resources and political clout. Their true vision is for children to be taken from their parents practically at birth and raised to serve the humanist gods until the grave. Tragically, most parents are voluntary accomplices in this wickedness! The power inherent in childrearing is immense, but this is not understood by most.

In an age where the emphasis is on centralized power, it is too easy to forget that real change in a society comes at the grassroots level. The person responsible for the education of a group of young children is, in a real sense, more important than the president. If an educator is what God has called you to be, you wield a vast capacity for good or evil. The three- and four-year-olds in the classroom today will be tomorrow’s parents, workers, and leaders. We are commanded to teach them God’s precepts. Let me show you how to earn a great reward by doing so, and thereby wield your powers for the good of God’s kingdom and His glory.

## **Who I Am**

I am a pastor living in Fort Myers, Florida. I am the successful manager of two Christian schools for Grace Community Schools of Naples, Florida. I am married to my wonderful wife, Amy, and a parent with her of five wonderful children. My wife and I labor together, in a common calling, along with our children. We have been managing prospering Christian schools together since 2002, and have literally hundreds of students under our influence daily.

In addition to these hundreds of students my wife and I are responsible for, we also homeschool our children with complete freedom. We are able to do this at our schools, where we both work together. It is a tremendous blessing to be able to work with my wife, and be able to keep our children with us as well. Along with running the Fort Myers and North Fort Myers schools, I am also the editor of the Grace Community School newspaper, *The Whale’s Tale*.

## **The Alternative**

If you are reading this, you may already be going against the mainstream godless educational system, or at least are thinking about doing so. You may be convicted by the Holy Spirit, feeling led to do something other than just follow the crowd of people who are unconcerned about the consequences and implications of a state education. The responsibility God has placed on Christian parents may be weighing heavy. This book is for you. If you do decide to forsake “the world, the flesh, and the devil,” at least as far as educating your own children is concerned, your options may seem limited. I will be discussing a (better) alternative to what you might think are the only educational possibilities.

As Christian parents, we are mandated by God to raise our children in the covenant (Eph. 6:4). A truly Christian education is a prerogative for this. Many parents think the financial burden required to provide a Christian education is insurmountable. Even for those with more faith, it is not trivial. The Grace Community School system has the ideal solution to this difficulty: following our system, you will in effect be paid by others to provide a Christian education to your own children, while simultaneously ministering to many other children. You will have nearly total freedom, financially and pedagogically, to instruct your family as God leads you.

### **What is “Grace Community Schools”?**

Grace Community Schools, founded in 1986, is a group of Christian private schools located in Southwest Florida. All together, more than two thousand students attend Grace Community Schools each day, receiving phonics-based reading instruction, general education, and Bible study. Children from infants on up through kindergarten are taught, and before and after school and summer camp for ages up through twelve are also offered.

The individual locations are family-run, mostly by married couples laboring harmoniously together in a common calling with their children. The students who attend are able to see on a daily basis a model of a godly Christian family, including both father and mother, something the majority of our students’ families do not have.

The schools are operated so that, “Whosoever will may come.” We are truly evangelistic. Many of our students are those who would be turned away from so-called Christian schools based upon their parents’ unwillingness to make a

profession of faith. No stipulations are made regarding the parents’ character or faith. Nor do we restrict our schools to elementary or even kindergarten-age students, as so many church schools do. We are open year-round, without all the many and annoying closed days common to public and Christian schools. We are customer service-oriented; that means we operate in such a manner that even those customers not particularly interested in a Christian education find our ministry attractive!

The most revolutionary aspect of the Grace Community School system is a two-pronged emphasis on education to the very young: the teaching of the Ten Commandments (God’s law) with application of these commandments to the children’s lives; and a phonics-based system of reading instruction with a demonstrated ability to teach children as young as three years old to read independently. Reading and the commandments, consistently taught daily to all of our students is what separates Grace Community School from other “daycares,” which teach “reading readiness” and humanistic psychology and values.

We do not rely on church funding or fundraising. Income comes from tuition. Our product is one our customers consider worth purchasing. Heavy advertising and competitive prices (evangelism, remember?) ensure a steady supply of students eager to receive the Gospel message. Real education combined with games, art, and other interactive activities keep our students happy and well-adjusted. Children who come home from our program reading to their parents and talking about how much fun they had provide a high rate of customer satisfaction.

The Grace Community system is something that we are eager to share with others, via our apprenticeship program

and manual (more details about that later). We welcome couples and single individuals to come work with us while being taught our trade. With the Grace Community system, you will be able to get paid (well) to do a calling that is already very spiritually rewarding. Following our system, you can set up and run a school/business that both glorifies God and takes care of your family.

## **Preparing the Next Generation**

Some of the greatest blessings of the GCS system benefit the children who grow up in it. Combining early literacy, practical and business experience, and strong family bonds, our children grow up living lives richer and fuller than most people can imagine. Surrounded by Christian teachers and role models engaged in a serious endeavor, learning God's law and how it applies to society, theirs is radically superior to the average childhood.

Children reared in the Grace Community system are better prepared to deal with the roles God has destined them to in life. Our emphasis is on what is practical and pleasing to God, not the abstract. If our society is to change for the better, we will need to raise up a generation of Christians obedient to God and ready to take dominion for His kingdom. This means Christians who will own and control private property, operate businesses, and above all keep and teach God's law. The antinomian, material-eschewing Christians who dominate the churches today will not be heirs to the future.

To prepare for this future, the children who have grown up in Grace Community Schools are given business experience as soon as possible. Instead of wasting the high school

years on irrelevant pseudo-intellectual academics, the children receive intensive business-training and gain actual on-the-job experience. If you are an immature fifteen year old, why wait until you are an immature twenty-one year old before learning to do something of value to yourself and others? At one time it was considered necessary for every family to give each child a trade, a method of surviving and thriving in the real world. To earn a living, save money, and prepare for eventual marriage while expanding God's kingdom through a practical vocation were once the goals of every godly young person. We at Grace Community School are returning to this model, for the glory of God.

I am honestly baffled by most college attendees. The Scriptures tell us "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might" (Eccles. 9:10a). It seems to me most of the people who go off to college, wasting thousands and thousands of dollars and years of their life, do so because they have delusions of grandeur about what they will do after they get out. "Running down a dream," as it were. Most of the time their plans change, and after college they end up doing nothing even remotely like what they set out to do. It is as if a blind is over their eyes, preventing them from seeing the opportunities at hand. They cannot consider *not* going to college. I almost made the college mistake. Before embarking on such a detour, you should closely examine your circumstances to see if God may have a calling at your right hand requiring less of a dangerous and costly sacrifice on your part, or especially on your children's part. In my case, God intervened; my destiny lay down a different path.

It is now part of the modern paradigm to go to college in preparation even for those vocations which could be easily trained for on the job. We need to escape from this paradigm and return to apprenticeship. The quest for

respectability and the rewards of the world has led to even Christian parents encouraging their children to attend colleges, both secular and religious. Will college make your child a more faithful, godly believer? My experience with college graduates, and the testimony of others, says no. And beware of the “Christian” universities—they are full of church children convinced that they are going to heaven despite whatever sins they may commit!

One thing that strikes me when I compare the education the children growing up in the Grace Community system receive with what they would get attending a typical Christian school or being homeschooled is how *practical* our system is. A child doesn't have to be very old before they can start learning how to do real things. Our children begin helping out around the school at a very young age, not to mention doing chores at home. We are “small businesses” (not small compared to most daycares, but as opposed to large corporations), so extreme specialization is not desirable. We are frequently called upon to be jacks-of-all-trades, doing whatever needs to be done. Managing and maintaining a successful Christian school is a lot of work and requires many different kinds of skills—the more experience using these skills, the better. This keeps costs down and creates very independent and self-reliant personnel. From IT work and accounting to basic construction and landscaping, we possess an extremely wide range of practical skills, many of which do not first come to mind when you think of a Christian school “teacher.” Doing God's work is never boring!

Unless you are an engineer, or have some other technical occupation, when was the last time you used the trigonometry or physics you took in high school? In the real world, for most people, knowing how to fix a toilet or put up

some drywall is a lot more useful (I say this with some disappointment, as I tend to gravitate towards the abstract and academic; unfortunately, the books on particle physics I read growing up haven't helped me out a whole lot). Let me get even more basic: I have dealt with employees who had trouble performing simple tasks like operating a vacuum cleaner or mopping a floor. It wasn't always laziness, sometimes these were things they just had never done before in their lives! Practical skills and common sense (gained through experience) are badly needed in our society and in the workplace.

Frequently by the time a child reared within the Grace Community School system is eighteen years old or so, they are ready to manage one of the school locations. A college-level degree is a desirable thing for those involved in a teaching or management position in a Christian school, due to state laws. The state values papers, despite whatever the free market may say. Our solution for this is to use a small Christian college in Colorado, Patriot Bible University. They offer correspondence courses making it possible for our manager trainees to obtain state-accepted bachelor and masters education degrees. No need for the student to leave home, quit working, or suffer the trials and temptations of traditional college. I believe it is a much more Christ-pleasing method of rendering to Caesar what is Caesar's. It also makes it possible for the trainee to continue job training while getting a degree.

It has been my experience that by the time people are about eighteen, they have largely grown into the people they will be for the rest of their life. This makes it even more important for them to spend the formative teen years maturing, building self-discipline, and learning skills they will use in adult life. The stereotype of the rebellious teenager is

not one gleaned from Scripture. A child reared in a Christian family, taught carefully to honor father and mother, is fully capable of being respectful to parents and responsible towards others and their duties through their teen years. It is not outrageous to expect such a person to be able to more-or-less run a successful business by the time he or she is eighteen, provided they have been trained. Furthermore, a person rebellious during these teen years will remain rebellious in their adult life, unless God intervenes. If you are not responsible and productive at eighteen, you are not likely to be responsible and productive at thirty, assuming God allows you to live that long. Helping young people to realize this godly maturity is part of the Grace Community School system. Beyond our immediate staff families, we also seek to make a difference in the lives of the outside students who come through our doors.

## **The Literacy Difference**

A goal of Grace Community Schools is the creation of literate Christian citizens. From the Reformation onwards, literacy and orthodox Christianity have traditionally been linked. We continue that tradition, despite the falling away of the modern church. By the time they are in their teens, Grace Community children have difficulty remembering not being able to read. “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid” (Matt. 5:24). Grace Community Schools is a beacon of light to the children in our community. We teach so that we may earn a full reward, and so that through us others might be blessed.

I can testify firsthand about the benefits of Grace Community School’s reading instruction. Although the core of our ministry is full-time preschool, we offer before and

after school services for elementary students, most of whom regularly attend local public schools. We take advantage of this opportunity to evangelize these children who otherwise would likely never hear the gospel taught. Many of these spiritually-starved children respond very enthusiastically to our Bible teaching.

I love reading and books. Some of my earliest happy childhood memories are of my father bringing us home Bible story books from church conventions he attended. With my school background in phonics, I don’t remember it taking long to learn how to read well. Today, I can’t imagine what it is like to be illiterate or find reading difficult, nor indeed will my children.

But don’t let my personal experiences cloud your thinking. According to the public school and early childhood education experts, reading is *supposed* to be hard. It’s not something you can just learn willy-nilly from anyone with an *A Beka* textbook and some phonics readers. In fact, it’s best to start the child off with a few years of “reading readiness” first. After that, under the expert tutelage of a government-certified teacher (who is a union member, of course; that’s very important) in a public school classroom, the student may memorize enough sight words to be able to read in the second grade or so. We see the public school kids who attend Grace Community after school (and on the many days public schools are closed), so we get to see the results of state schooling firsthand. The results are not pretty.

My oldest (and homeschooled) son, Caleb, shares his father’s love for books. I was not surprised when he began to use some of the spending money he earned doing chores to buy books. He decided to buy the popular “Diary of a Wimpy Kid” series. At the time, he was what the public

school considers 1st grade age, doing 2nd grade *A Beka* coursework. He enjoyed reading the books immensely, doing so in a matter of a few days. He did not find the books challenging at all, more like light reading for him. Even his younger brother in kindergarten began reading them. One of our after school students, who was attending 4th grade at a local public school, observed him reading one of the books and commented, "That's a 5th grade book."

In case you did not know, most books marketed to school-age children are assigned a reading level by the publisher, supposedly to help parents and teachers match kids to books appropriate to their grade level. These grade levels sometimes even give the grade year and month at which the "average" student is expected to be able to read them (e.g., "5.4" means "5th grade, 4th month"). Many parents and public school "teachers" think these book levels are as incontrovertible as the sum of two and two. Many government education programs, like "Accelerated Reading," make much use of them. (So much for reading a challenging book to better reading skills, eh?)

A quick internet search revealed a review by the publisher of the Wimpy Kid books in which the books were recommended for "5th or 6th graders." I was somewhat stunned; if anything these books were suited for more immature readers than my 6 year old son. Being accustomed to teaching 3 and 4 year olds to read every day, apparently I was behind the times. I suppose the Chronicles of Narnia are now considered high school literature textbooks?

This is a typical example of "raising standards by lowering expectations." How many parents have been duped by this method of camouflaging the substandard reading levels

produced in the public school? Your child has difficulty reading? That's OK, he's right where he should be. There is nothing to worry about. The reading level will magically rise as time goes by, apparently.

As important as reading is, you might think that Christian schools would be eager to correct the public schools' errors on this issue. I wish this were so. Most Christian schools do not even accept preschool-age children, let alone teach them reading. The "whole language" method of reading instruction has poisoned our schools, both secular and Christian. Educational experts would have you believe that teaching reading is a highly complex and technical subject—and they use a lot of big words when talking about the subject to drive that point home. It's certainly nothing anyone without a teaching degree could hope to be able to do, it is implied. The modern consensus seems to be that reading (and writing) is something that can't be helped along. It will come, but not quickly, and not by the preschool teacher or parent. Despite its distinguished history in America up until the twentieth century, true early literacy is controversial today, even amongst Christians. Not so at Grace Community.

We heavily advertise the slogan, "Our Preschoolers Can Read." This is very much truth in advertising. Beginning at the age of two, phonetic instruction is given to our students. By the time children graduate our preschool program, they are reading fluently, multiple grade levels ahead of where they "should" be. Even those parents who do not care about our Bible teaching like our reading program. We also practice what I call "literacy evangelism." Many parents are so busy and inexperienced they do not even realize that their children can now read, or if they do, they assume it is something all preschools teach. We aim to correct those

misconceptions. Through a series of rewards and recognition methods I will detail later, we make it as obvious to our clientele as possible that their children are superior and, by implication, so are they. (After all, did not the parents choose Grace Community School? Of course they did! How clever of them!) Parent relations are extremely important, and sometimes the hardest thing for apprentices to learn.

## **Revolutionary Bible Time**

The Reformers taught reading so that everyone would be able to read the Bible. The goal was for people to be able to read and understand God's Word for themselves. Modern Christians are doing poorly on both the "reading" and "Bible" parts of that. Grace Community School neglects neither.

As vital as our early literacy program is, even more important is our Bible instruction. We call it "Bible Time." It occurs twice a day, fifteen minutes at a time. This doesn't seem very revolutionary at first glance. After all, there are lots of church schools that teach Bible stories and virtues, sing Bible songs, and show pictures of a long-haired smiling Jesus (perhaps wearing jeans) surrounded by a group of multicultural children. How different could Grace Community's Bible Time be from their programs? Pretty different, as it turns out. We are not talking about a Veggie Tales Sunday school here.

Forswearing the methods of our vegetable brothers, during *our* Bible Time, real stories from the Bible are taught along with the Ten Commandments, the 23rd Psalm, the Lord's Prayer, and pledges to the Bible, Christian flag, and American flag. It is especially the commandment teaching

that sets us apart from other ministries. I refer you back to the Bible verses with which I started this chapter. If children are to do (keep) the commandments, they need to be taught them. More than mere memorization is called for, although that is important.

Few Christians can even tell you where the Ten Commandments are in the Bible (it's Exodus 20 in case you were curious). Grace Community's Bible Time teaches these commandments along with illustrations of how those commandments are to be applied to the children's daily lives. God's law must be taught as applicable, practical, and relevant to modern life. Furthermore, children are told to look for evidence that they are obeying these commandments better and better as proof of salvation. Law does not save, but it does tell you how to live. It has been my experience that children, once trained, are better able to make applications of the commandments to new situations than most adults, particularly adults who have been taught that the Ten Commandments (God's law) no longer apply.

Contrast this with the average church daycare or school (I hesitate to call them "Christian"). They are like the garment of diverse threads mentioned in Deuteronomy—their message has been so compromised by humanist psychology and early childhood gobbledygook as to be rendered irrelevant. The commandments are not taught, having been exchanged for pseudo-biblical manmade "virtues" or "morals" like tolerance, integrity, respect, and cooperation. Nothing apart from God is either moral or virtuous. We should not exchange God's law for pagan "family values." The Bible stories taught in these daycares and schools are spun and distorted so as to promote a meaning alien from the original Scripture. Is your church's daycare really a Christian daycare?

To be fair, the Christians in the modern church, those who control the church schools and Sunday school programs, would not tolerate allowing their schools to teach an undiluted Gospel message (the Gospel divorced from the commandments is not the full Gospel). Teachers in these programs would not be able to teach the truth even if they wanted to. Modern church members typically do not see anything wrong with the humanistic psychology taught by education experts. Their pastors teach them the law has been removed, so they are not concerned with teaching the law. They certainly would not want themselves or their children to come under conviction due to something a teacher in the church daycare said! It doesn't increase church attendance or put more money in the offering plate. Those new pews and state-of-the-art gymnasium aren't going to pay for themselves. As Israel rejected the Savior, so modern Israel (the church) has rejected His teachings. God's faithful remnant teachers are then faced with a conundrum—how to remain true to their calling when the institutional church refuses to allow them to proclaim the truth.

Providentially, this is where the Grace Community system shines. There is no school board full of punctilious hypocrites to complain about God's law being taught. There is no need to worry about church members complaining that their children feel guilty about their sins thanks to your teaching. God's interests, and those of the students, can come first rather than the church's. It's a win-win situation for everyone. You are faced with a school full of paying students willing and eager to hear God's Word. You are free to earn a great reward for remaining faithful to what God has called you to do.

In all my years working in Grace Community Schools, I have had only a handful of people object to our Bible Time. The great majority either believe it is a good thing, or consider it of no consequence (still allowing us to teach their kids). Mostly the former. This includes a few professing Atheist and Hebrew parents who have put their children in our schools! They will gladly pay you to evangelize their offspring.

It is an interesting thing that many people who do not keep God's law themselves would like their children to be able to keep it. Even if they will not consciously admit it, they understand at some level that they have failed; they want to spare their children some of the pain they have experienced. They want their children to do better in life. We see this all the time, and do not judge the children for the parents' sins. Most of our students come from homes broken in some way or another—broken because of sin. We are usually the one shining example of godliness in these students' lives.

Sometimes we get to hear from the parents about the changes happening in their child after he or she has been exposed to our teaching. I recently had the single mother of a girl who had been attending our school for a couple of months take my wife and me aside to tell us about some incidents she had witnessed at home. She told us about how her little girl's grandmother had been telling the family parrot to "shut up!" The girl looked very concernedly at her grandmother and said, "Grandma, God is watching you! You shouldn't say 'shut up!'" Her daughter now insists they say grace before eating, which is something we do at school but which was not part of their routines. Furthermore, the girl will not stop singing Bible songs. This mom said she was so very happy that in a society where God has been taken out

of the public schools, there is still a place where God and the commandments are taught. She said she had been trying to instill more religion into the family, but the older siblings, educated in state schools since they were little, were resisting. When asked to say prayers before bedtime, her older brother said, “That’s retarded!” She said she is not surprised by the levels of crime, the depraved music on the radio, and the disrespect for authority children have now since God has been taken out of the children’s lives.

It strikes me again and again how eager our students are to receive the Gospel message and learn about the commandments. While a church pastor must be careful to temper the truth lest his congregation desert him, taking their tithe money with them, I am able to teach hundreds of children each and every day with the confidence that their tuition is paid, and they will be back tomorrow—a captive audience, so to speak. Not only that, but many children tell us that Bible Time is the best part of their day.

Children sometimes display a refreshing honesty. One boy told his mother that he keeps all the commandments pretty well, except one: the Fifth Commandment. He says he doesn’t keep that one all the time. His mother was amazed at his level of understanding. I could give many other examples. Our primary ministry is to the children, for whom there is much more hope, rather than to their parents. That being said, we frequently find that the children convict their parents using their knowledge of the Ten Commandments.

As I have mentioned before and will again, most of the children in our ministry are “off the street.” They come from predominantly unchurched and unchristian homes, rarely with both parents married and living together. Often the parents’ lifestyles are the very opposite of what is set

forward in Scriptures. Sometimes we do have customers who attend local churches. In my experience, these parents involved in the evangelical church are no better than ones outside it. The churches have failed to teach God’s commandments, and as a consequence the divorce rate and common moral denominator of the modern “Christian” is roughly at the level of the world. Sometimes worse, as the Christian feels that all sins—past, present, and future—are forgiven, leaving them “free” to transgress more and more without compunction.

The seventh commandment is taught along with all the other commandments to the children in our care. We are careful to keep applications at a level appropriate for their ages. We discuss the importance of keeping the wedding vow and marrying someone within the covenant. We also talk about how we are to apply the commandments to ourselves primarily, and stress the importance of respecting parents. However, a five-year-old from a divorced family doesn’t have to be a genius to start thinking about whether mom and dad are keeping the seventh commandment. Occasionally we at Grace Community School have to field questions from parents asking what we have told their children! An unfaithful spouse doesn’t want their child going around the house quoting “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” A generation is growing up in Grace Community Schools which is cognizant of God’s law and how it is to be applied.

## **Conclusion**

Starting and operating truly Christian schools is a project for the generations. What we are attempting to do at Grace Community Schools will take a long time. Success—the revitalization of an entire culture—will not come overnight, or

even in our lifetimes. What we do is an act of faith, faith that victory will come. God's kingdom will triumph no matter what we do. What is at stake is our share of the reward. He will not forget what we have done: "Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations (Deut. 7:9).

I have been blessed beyond my wildest dreams to be involved with Grace Community Schools. Becoming involved with this ministry is the greatest thing that God ever led me to do. The Grace Community School system will give you the tools to create both a wonderful ministry and a great life for you and your family. I challenge you to find a system offering more opportunities for those willing to stick with it. "The labourer is worthy of his reward." Are you ready to labor?

## Chapter II

# My Testimony

The story of how I came to be involved with Grace Community Schools is not one I could have predicted. At different times in my youth, I wanted to become many different things when I grew up, but my current occupation was not one of them. Providentially for me and my future family, I was never in charge of my destiny. The blessings I envisioned for myself and the work I thought that I would be doing pale in comparison to the reality God had in store for me. Truly God can “do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think”! As it says in Proverbs, “A man’s heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps” (Prov. 16:9). Looking back now, I can see clearly just how much God directed my steps and those of my family to bring me where I needed to be. I had nothing to do with it, to God be all the glory!

### **Son of a Pastor from a Family of Pastors**

My testimony begins with my family. My father, a godly man, took a stand for God’s law against the public schools both from the pulpit and in his personal life. I was a preacher’s kid. Additionally, my grandfather was also a pastor, and I have reverend uncles on both my mother and father’s sides of the family, not to mention cousins and aunts also involved in ministerial work. In retrospect I suppose it is not surprising that I became a minister as well. You can accurately say that I am a pastor from a family of pastors.

As a pastor’s family, we moved around fairly often. I was born in Ohio, and then we moved to Pennsylvania. I don’t remember those places; my first memories are from Battle Creek, Michigan (Cereal City!). Battle Creek was also the site of my first experience with the public school. My parents had a fairly prolonged exodus from the public schools; I attended public schools in Michigan through the second grade. My earliest memories of school are of my public school kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Hill. Mrs. Hill, I am told, was a pastor’s wife, who brought prayer and phonics into her classroom. This was unconventional, to say the least, and I benefited from it. It was not too long before I was reading.

At the time, my family was rooted firmly in an Arminian church, and I looked forward to the day I would have a “conversion experience” and feel the overwhelming need to “ask Jesus into my heart.” I cannot truthfully say that this event ever came. It was not until many years later that I found out that there was nothing wrong with this, and that for many people growing up in Christian homes, this is the norm. In fact, I had something greatly more desirable—a gradually growing ability to keep the Ten Commandments (sanctification). In my opinion, this is the best supernatural “experience” I could ever ask for (and the one we ask our students at Grace Community School to look for in their lives). I know the ability to keep the law does not come from within me, nor does it have any saving power, but it is evidence of a saved life.

When I was six, my family (which now included my two brothers) moved from Battle Creek, Michigan, to the small farming community of Bad Axe, Michigan. My father took up the pastorate of the First Presbyterian Church there (we were no longer Arminian). I was enrolled in the local public

school system, to the surprise of no one in the church congregation. I was quite interested in my school subjects, and my love for reading and learning continued to grow, especially in scientific subjects. It was around this time that my parents became seriously concerned with my government schooling. The schoolhouse was taking a toll.

The school library and the shelves of books in the back of my classroom became my favorite spots. I frequently brought home books from school, particularly science books. One of my most beloved subjects was dinosaurs and the incorrectly-named “Prehistoric Age” (this is still an interest of mine). My parents took an interest in the books I was bringing home and were uneasy with some of the content of the books. Choose any book about dinosaurs from a public school or county library, and you will see why. Everything is about the Big Bang, about evolution, about how this creature changed into this creature over “millions and millions of years,” and then some of the dinosaurs turned into birds. It’s as if every children’s science book comes with a free Carl Sagan to drill the doctrine of evolution into your head.

My parents began to buy science books for me written from the creationist perspective, to counteract what I was being indoctrinated with at school and reading elsewhere. Their conversations with me and instruction in God’s truth made a deep impression on me. They warned me that there would be teachers in school who would not teach the truth, sometimes well-intentioned people who would tell me lies about what was right and wrong, and about where people, animals, and the universe came from. They told me that there would be people, even my friends, who would make fun of what I believed, of the truth. I listened intently. I could tell that they wished it were not so, that I would not have to

deal with these people. By God’s grace, they were successful in keeping me on the straight and narrow path. But my parents did not feel it was right that a child should have his religious beliefs so assaulted by humanist evolutionists and moral relativists on a daily basis (and I hadn’t even begun sex ed!).

Even as a seven-year-old student, it was clear to me that my family was different from the families of my fellow classmates. Besides differing in our beliefs on certain subjects like evolution, we just *acted* differently. Not that I was ever a perfect child, but I never dreamed of behaving towards adults the way I saw other neighborhood children acting. My family did not use the same words I heard other children (and their parents) saying. In fact, I did not even know the meanings for many words I heard. On the few occasions I was ever at a friend’s house for a meal, the family never said a prayer before eating. None of my friends, as far as I was aware, even had family Bible devotions. While I did not think of it in biblical terms, I was beginning to realize how much we as a family were “in the world, but not of the world.” We were a Christian family, and acted like it. So why did I have to go to school in a place that was clearly *not* Christian?

## Exodus

My parents were asking themselves that very question. They became more and more fed up with the pagan public school system my brother, now in kindergarten, and I were trapped in. They began to consider other options. Bad Axe being the small community that it was, there were only a couple of Christian schools in the area, neither of which jibed with our theology. Finally, after much prayer, and

determined to help us achieve all that God had wanted for us, my parents made the decision to homeschool me and my two brothers. I am eternally thankful for the choice they made. We were finally free.

My mother and father did a lot of research and then ordered a curriculum. We began in earnest. We loved it, at least until the work got hard. It was tremendous fun for my brothers and I to be *together*, and not segregated into different buildings and classrooms. Among the many benefits of homeschooling (and the Grace Community System) is the strengthening of family bonds. The family is a unit—the most basic unit of society. God did not intend for families to be arbitrarily split apart as is done in our modern age. We had chapel together, we did our school work together, we ate together, and we did our chores together. And we still had plenty of time for our own individual extracurricular pursuits.

To a child starting homeschool after having been in a conventional school environment, perhaps the best thing is how many fewer hours it takes to get the day's school work done. It is very much true that most of what is done in schools, especially public schools, is a waste of time. There is no valid reason elementary education should require six or seven hours of a child's life every day for nine months out of the year, but this is an irrelevant point—traditional education is not the goal of state schools, as we shall see.

Homeschooling became another way our Christian family was different, even from the other families in our church (perhaps *especially* from other families in our church). My father also took to criticizing government schools from the pulpit. This did not sit well with many in the congregation, which included public school and other government

employees, not to mention other unsavory characters. I remember the tension at the church and in my parents' conversations together at home.

A person or family moving in terms of God's will is usually considered by the world to be "weird." Unfortunately this phrase—"the world"—too often includes those in the institutional church. Our family was not only *different*, now it was *weird*. People would say things like: "What is wrong with Bad Axe public schools? This isn't Detroit, for goodness' sake! *Our* schools are good! Everyone in the church has their kids in public school. My second grade teacher even volunteered at Vacation Bible School! What is wrong with the Slack family? Does Mrs. Slack have a teaching degree?" (She did not.) And of course, "What about socialization?" We heard it all. We did not care.

It wasn't always easy for us children or our parents (although I think the sacrifices were rather more on their part). But with God's help, we persevered. There was some concern about truant officers and being seen outside during school hours, although our neighbors were generally amiable towards us, if not exactly understanding. After five years at Bad Axe, God let us know it was time to move on. We left Bad Axe with not only a lot of experience in homeschooling, but also another family member, my sister. Jupiter, Florida was our destination.

## **Florida and a Better Future**

My father felt the Holy Spirit leading him to a new place. Our church in Bad Axe was not receptive to the doctrine he believed to be the truth, and so the Lord opened a new door. An ad in the *Chalcedon Report* led us to a church in Jupiter

seeking a Christian Reconstructionist pastor. We moved in the summer of 1994.

When my father accepted the pulpit of Jupiter Presbyterian Church, I was tremendously excited. I had never visited Florida before, except vicariously—through travel brochures, post cards, and my parents’ stories of vacations taken when they were young. Exotic Florida was so far removed from Michigan it almost seemed like we were going to another country. I remember enthusiastically packing up belongings in big cardboard boxes and watching as they were loaded onto the moving truck (graciously paid for by our new church). Geography was my current passion, and this was straight out of my dreams.

I have never understood the popular depictions of kids moving, as seen on TV and in movies, where the family’s children rebel against their parents and try to do anything they can to stay with the current “friends” they have at school. My wife, who did her own share of moving growing up, agrees with me. I had friends to be sure, mostly children in our church (despite rumors to the contrary, we were not “unsocialized”), but I was not nearly as close to them as I was to my family. And my family was moving with me! Moving was simply a big adventure that I hoped would lead to a better future. How much better a future I had no way of knowing at the time.

The move was lots of fun, driving from Michigan to Florida with family. As we drove through the Smoky Mountain area of Tennessee down into Georgia, the excitement grew. I will always remember the thrill of seeing a palm tree outdoors for the first time in my life when we stopped for the night at a motel not much north of the Florida line. The next day, we

arrived. The folks at Jupiter welcomed us to their church and helped us move in to our new home.

We were able to rent a house across the street from the church, making commutes pretty easy. In Jupiter, our family was not seen as “weird.” Homeschooling was not unheard of in our church, and in fact our example led others to attempt it. We made friends. Our father was able to preach the law of God, and it was well-received—at least by part of the church. I was eleven when we first moved to Florida. Particularly compared to cold Michigan, it was fantastic. I took up a fairly intense interest in botany for a while because I was so impressed by the beautiful vegetation. We lived in Jupiter for only three years, but it holds a place in my mind as the last detour before I arrived at my final destination.

I had no inkling yet of what God had planned for me. Basking in the glow of Space Shuttle launches visible from our back yard, and falling asleep listening to the low rumble of rocket engine tests at the local Pratt and Whitney plant, I was set on becoming something in the aerospace field. I remember one time when the daughter of a visiting church family asked me to explain something I had mentioned about some scientific subject or another. I was all the time showing off my knowledge, and I did my best to explain it to her. She said to me, “You would make a good teacher.” I shrugged off the comment, not knowing it to be prophetic. I had no intention of pursuing anything like that. My mind was elsewhere. I had not discovered God’s will for my life yet—nor was I ready to accept it.

## **Moving to Naples and Grace Community**

It was not God's will that we remain in Jupiter for very long. Once again, an advertisement in the *Chalcedon Report* (this time for Grace Community School) pointed the way to our next stop on the road of life. But this next move was different from the ones before it: Instead of pastoring another church, both my parents would be working full-time as Christian school teachers. The ad said that apprentices were wanted in Naples, Florida, to learn how to own and operate Christian schools. At Dr. Ellsworth McIntyre's invitation, we visited a couple of the Grace Community Schools and had lunch with his family. Everything went well.

When my father announced the decision to move to Naples, I was a bit apprehensive. Grace Community School seemed like it would be very different from what I had been accustomed to. I was fourteen, and still determined to attend conventional college and fulfill my dreams. Furthermore, from my parents' perspective, this was a far cry from pastoring a church.

I had only visited the west coast of Florida a couple of times before on trips. Naples was beautiful. The faculty house provided for us was across the street from one of the Grace Community locations, and we had neighbors—the Harrison family. They too worked in the schools. Little did I know they would be my relatives in the future.

My family was now immersed in a community of people engaged in a very serious endeavor. This community was quite set apart from the so-called church "families" of our previous positions—all of which had the inevitable mixture of hypocrites, genuine friends, and casual acquaintances so typical in the institutional church. These people were driven, on a mission from God, and it showed. Personal issues and introverted "soul-searching" took backseat to the job God

had called us to do. They were united by faith. I cannot say that I took to them overnight. God would have to work on me for a few years before I would be ready for that level of maturity.

It was a bit jarring moving from an ecclesiastic environment to a family business. The business world is one rooted mostly in reality, something which cannot be said for most churches. A profit and loss statement is rather clear cut. The church's emphases today are remarkably Marxist, however unaware of this its members may be. Its priorities are characterized by a rejection of the material world in favor of the abstract and unimportant, something not supported by Scripture. When I heard adults at Grace Community discussing issues, they were things of practical importance to the real world. This was in sharp contrast to my previous experiences. I can distinctly remember church members at our old church during Wednesday night Bible study passionately arguing over whether Adam and Eve possessed navels, as if this was a doctrinal issue vital to the faith. This event has stuck in my mind as an exemplification of the modern church's misdirection. The majority of church members today are trapped in a virtual and abstract world, arguing about Adam's belly button.

### **High School of a Different Sort**

My Grace Community high school experience turned out to be rather different than the average. Separate from the negative peer pressure of public and Christian schools (socialization is not always a good thing), I had an opportunity to focus on what is important, with less temptations and distractions. I had the opportunity, I say, but that does not mean I took advantage of it.

I soon found myself with “too much time on my hands,” as the song says. Or rather, I was not putting to godly use all the time which I had been given. Even in the upper grades, the homeschooler finds that you don’t need to spend the entire day on school work. I passed the days away reading science fiction novels and astronomy books. Even though I would wager this was a better use of time than what the average high schooler does, I was not “redeeming the time,” as Ephesians 5:16 urges us to do. It was not long before God decided to change this.

Grace Community Schools presented me with an opportunity I could not refuse. I was offered a part-time job, after my school work was done each day, doing mostly cleaning work around the Golden Gate school. I was fifteen, and the thought of extra spending money sounded good to me. Although I did not see it as anything like this at the time, I now consider this as the time my education *really* began.

There is nothing quite so character-building for a young person as working a job. The earlier it is started, the better. For those who will wind up working in the real world, the current educational system’s bend toward abstract academic topics is counterproductive. If you plan on wandering outside of Abstract Land at some point, experience doing actual work, no matter how menial, is vital. Besides picking up skills and building character traits like diligence and responsibility, there is another extremely good reason for children to work a job: getting practical experience with money.

The concept of the “allowance” is not one I like. It conjures up images of something not earned, money that just appears each week or month without work, just because it is owed to the child. Children get enough of that at Christmas

and birthdays. The “wage” is a far better tool for the Christian parent. My wife and I give our children chores around the house and at school for which they receive a set amount of money each week. Sometimes they do extra work, for which they receive more. Other times they do not do all that is required of them, and do not earn their full amount. You might be surprised at how rarely that needs to be done, once the child has experienced it once or twice. It is a great tool to instill godly character in children, and it mirrors the real adult world nicely.

Deferred gratification is a wonderful thing. My children are learning (as I did) just how long it takes, and how much work is required, to be able to get the things they want. I was able to save up and buy my own computer, as well as a number of other large purchases, all with my own wages. I learned patience and the value of money. Things like practical economics are extremely difficult to teach inside of the classroom. Why waste the high school years when such valuable lessons need to be taught?

In addition to making it possible to work a job, the Grace Community system I used also builds independence as the student is much more responsible for his or her own academic progress. I didn’t have a teacher standing over my shoulder every minute of every day, and let’s face it: by the time you are a teenager, you shouldn’t need this. The person who has enough self discipline to work through a textbook, write a book report, or carry out a cleaning task alone will be much more valuable in the work force than one who requires constant supervision and micromanaging. Self government is invaluable, particularly if you want to be a business owner someday. But it is also what I was denied that made my education superior to competing systems.

As if the curriculum and doctrine of traditional public (and far too many Christian) schools was not sufficiently depraved, there are any number of extracurricular activities which add to their worthlessness. The last thing a godly family should do is to put their children among reprobate peers and expect good things to happen. I am distressed when I see homeschool families and churches attempting to mimic the trappings of these schools. It's as if they feel guilty somehow for denying their children the refuse fed to the world's children. Proms, youth retreats, senior trips, teen mission trips to Canada (or wherever they go these days), and other unnecessary (and dangerously under-supervised) activities are typical examples of things now done in the church's name (or by homeschool organizations). Somehow it's supposed to be OK if it's with church kids. The thought is that teens are missing out on something if they don't have these things. That's true, actually: they *are* missing out, but that's good. Children belong with their family; "socialization" with others should be limited, particularly if these are church kids convinced they are going to heaven no matter what sins they commit just because they prayed the Sinner's Prayer. It seems today any excuse to be apart from family is heralded as a good thing. Soccer, anyone?

In contrast to learning from peers or godless teachers, my primary source of education was my family. This is as it should be. The most basic social unit ordained by God is the family. We have no biblically-approved precedent for the Christian family to turn over the education of its members to another sphere of authority. The more that can be done within this unit—the more self-sufficient the family can be—the better. Strong families do not lead to a fragmented community, as critics charge. A strong God-fearing family *is* community, true community. As we shall see, Grace

Community Schools, with its far-reaching ministry, is far from a hermitage—that is not the goal. But before we can reach out to others, we need a strong family first. Family is the greatest school. Learning a trade, getting the skills to make money, building the character to work productively and please and worship God—what other school can compare with this?

## The Choice

Time passed. As my high school years neared an end, I steadfastly clung to my plans for a career in the aerospace industry. I had stars in my eyes, and it didn't seem like anything could stand in my way. Like Balaam on the road to Moab, I was blindly following a dream. Fortunately for me (and likely NASA), God stood in my path.

It happened rather suddenly. Over a period of a week or two, after I had taken the SAT and was nearing the point where I would need to begin applying to colleges (I was leaning towards the University of Alabama at Huntsville), I began to feel grave doubts about where I was headed. I am not a person who gets "gut feelings," has premonitions, or hears voices. Be that as it may, God had different plans for me, and He did what was necessary to change my course. It is one of the very few times in my life that I can say I felt anything like direct supernatural guidance. I wrestled with conflicting emotions and thoughts for a few days, and then a feeling of peace came over me—I knew what I had to do.

Again I am reminded that "A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps" (Prov. 16:9). I informed my parents and superiors that I was interested in doing more than a part-time job for Grace Community Schools. I was

licensed to preach by our church, and my adventure began. It's a continuing mission, one I am still on. I chose the road with a greater reward, as well as less foot traffic, and never looked back.

## **A Vocation... and a Mate**

I now had a calling, a purpose in life. While teaching was not without its struggles, I found out fairly quickly that I actually possessed some talent in the department of keeping children's attention—especially at Bible Time. The satisfaction I get from teaching Bible to hundreds of children each and every day has only grown over the years I have been doing it. To present the Gospel and God's law twice each day to a willing congregation, unhindered by rebellious church members, a church-controlled school board, or power-hungry elders is something most pastors can only dream about. It is a daily reality with Grace Community Schools. As rewarding as this is temporally, I believe the eternal rewards are incalculable.

I learned many valuable lessons teaching at the Golden Gate Grace Community School. Looking back now I think the kids taught me some important lessons, too—things like the importance of consistent discipline, lesson planning, getting along with people, and being an authority figure. Earning children's and employees' respect is not something done overnight. I made a lot of "new teacher" mistakes, but God continued to lead me. Even yet, I did not know the blessings God had planned for me.

Things got more interesting for me when I was transferred to the Grace Community School at Naples Park. In addition to gaining a lot more experience in management and teaching,

I began to enjoy my work more and more. And there was something else—this was where God willed that I find my companion in life, Amy. "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Gen. 2:18). We were married in 2002. I believe being able to work with one's spouse is a wonderful blessing, too often ill-regarded in our society. The biblical family model includes both parents working together to further God's kingdom, whatever the couple's calling may be. It's hard to grow distant from one's mate emotionally when you are never far apart geographically. The fact that we are a husband and wife team is frequently noted by our patrons. Often some comment is made such as, "I could never do that." I look upon these people with sadness. If a couple can't get along well enough to work together, what hope does such a marriage have? These attitudes are part of what make the husband-wife operator model so important. For many of the children we teach, Rev. Aaron and Mrs. Amy will be the only positive adult relationship they see growing up. It's not uncommon for a child to feel more comfortable in our school than they do at home due to the stability Grace Community School presents. A stable, godly marriage is a big part of that stability, all too often missing from children's homes.

I learned a tremendous amount and grew in maturity during our time in Naples Park. After successfully managing that location for several years, and bringing enrollment up to record levels, Amy and I were given the reigns of the Fort Myers school. It opened in 2004. Since 2009, we have also overseen the North Fort Myers Grace Community. Hundreds of students are under our daily influence. The freedom of the Grace Community system allowed me to obtain a masters degree (which more than satisfies state regulations

for childcare center directors) from Patriot Bible University via correspondence course, instead of wasting years of my time and thousands and thousands of dollars for the same piece of paper at a more traditional college. My responsibilities (and commensurate blessings) have continued to grow.

Being on a mission from God is even better when the family's children are involved, too. Our first child, Caleb, was born in January of 2004. We now have five—Nathaniel, Lydia, Serenity, and Ava followed. My wife and I are privileged each day to be able to work with them, both educating them and training them in our vocation of operating Christian schools. We are able to teach them just as we would like, without interference. My children will never know firsthand the tyranny of government schooling. We have a beautiful home in suburban Fort Myers about ten minutes from work. Each year that passes gets better and better—the blessings have truly overtaken us.

Most people and families are not so blessed. The public school still dominates the land.

**Get the rest of *A Full Reward: Reformation Through Family-Run Christian Schools!***

[Click here for the book.](#)

# Contact Information and Materials



The GCS Apprenticeship Program is seeking out men and women who want to make a difference in their communities and in the lives of others. Apprentices acquire the credentials, tools, skills, and knowledge needed to reform and reconstruct society from the bottom up via uncompromisingly Christian education.

Grace Community School is a missions operation unlike any other. Our apprentices learn to operate sustainable, self-supporting Christian schools ministering to those in our society who need it most: young children, many of whom are spiritual orphans. We are devoted to bringing the Gospel to the underprivileged and needy in our community.

Apprentices learn to operate successful Christian schools via fun and interactive on-the-job training under proven senior school operators. If you want to experience the joys of worthwhile work advancing God's Kingdom and learning practical skills while enriching the lives of children, the

Grace Community School Apprenticeship might be for you!

Get books, articles, podcasts and more at [www.gcsapprenticeship.com](http://www.gcsapprenticeship.com), [follow us on Twitter](#), and [like us on Facebook!](#)

## Contact Us

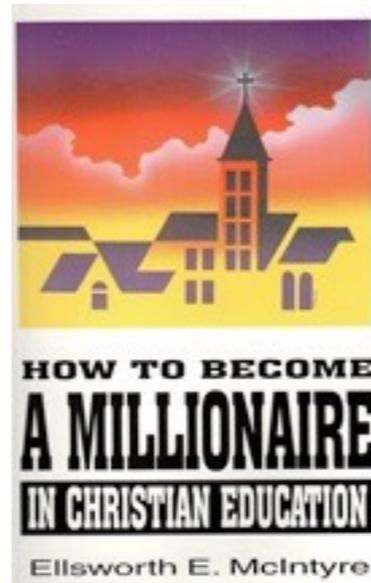
Email: [gcsapprenticeship@gmail.com](mailto:gcsapprenticeship@gmail.com)

Phone: 239-234-2799

Mailing address: 8971 Brighton Lane, Bonita Springs, FL 34135

## More Books and Materials from Nicene Press and the Grace Community School Apprenticeship Program

[Get the book.](#)



### How to Become a Millionaire in Christian Education

In this book, Rev. Ellsworth E. McIntyre breaks down the barrier between evangelism and financial security. He lays out his own personal testimony of hardship and trials, and his ultimate success at reaching financial security for himself and his family.

In this book Rev. McIntyre teaches you what is necessary to build your own school from scratch and become financially independent at the same time. He will also explain how to leave an inheritance to your children's children while gaining an inheritance that fadeth not away in heaven.

Learn how to rebuild society from the bottom up.

### Grace Community School Operations Manual

The first Grace Community School was started by Rev. Ellsworth McIntyre and his family on February 3, 1986. Over 30 years later Rev. McIntyre's preschool business model has proven to be not only profitable, but also sustainable. Grace Community School now has 10 locations in Southwest Florida, serving 1,200+ children and families each day. Rev. McIntyre's business model has influenced and inspired others to start schools all over the United States and throughout the world.

The Grace Community model enables Christians to achieve financial independence for themselves and their families,

while being faithful to the great commission to make disciples of all nations.

[Get the Operations Manual.](#)



### **College Can Begin at 2 Preschool Curriculum**

The College Can Begin At 2 Preschool Curriculum was developed in order to provide a fun, entertaining, and educationally rigorous preschool experience. Children are able to grow developmentally and educationally without becoming bored or unproductive. Our Curriculum combines fun and education with spectacular results!

[Get the Curriculum.](#)