

Why Homeschool?
Reed Benson
BYU Religion Department

“At the Crossroads” author unknown “He stood at the crossroads all alone the sunrise in his face he had no thought for the world unknown, he was set for a manly race. But the road stretched east and the road stretched west and the boy did not know which road was best so he took the wrong road and went down and lost the race and the victors crown he was caught at last in an awful snare because none stood at the crossroads there to show him the better road. Another day at that self same place another boy with high hopes stood he too was set for the manly race he was seeking for things that were good, but one was there who the roads did know and that one showed him which way to go. So he turned away from the road that went down and he won the race and the victors crown. He walks today the highway spare because one stood at the crossroads there to show him the better way.”

“Stick together families” by Edgar Guest. The stick together families are happier by far than the brothers and the sisters who take separate highways are. The gladdest people living are the wholesome folks who make a circle at the fireside that no power but death can break. And the finest of conventions ever held beneath the sun are the little family gatherings when busy days are done. There are some who seem to fancy that for gladness they must roam, but for smiles that are the brightest they must wonder far from home. That a strange friend is a true friend and the wander far astray and they waste their lives in searching for a joy that’s far away. But it’s the stick together families that wins the joy of earth, that sings the sweetest music, that finds the finest myre. It’s the old home roof that shelters all the charm that life can give, and no weary wondering brother if contentment you would win come you back into the fireside and be comrad with your kin.

“I shall not pass this way again” author unknown. The bread that bringest strength I want to give, the water pure that bids the thirsty live. I want to help the fainting day by day I’m sure I shall not pass again this way. I want to give the oil of joy for tears. Faith to conquer cruel doubts and fears. Beauty for ashes may I give away I’m sure I shall not pass again this way. I want to give good measure running ore and into angry hearts I want to pour an answer soft that tumeth wrath away I’m sure I shall not pass again this way. I want to give to all man hope and faith I want to do all that my master sayeth, I want to live a right from day to day I’m sure I shall not pass again this way.

He’s married to May Hinckley. They are the parents of nine children, and the grandparents of 22. Reed was a former Air Force chaplain during the Korean War and the president of the Kentucky, Louisville mission. He wrote for a national news magazine and is election widely with numerous TV shows, interviews, and press conferences. Reed received his doctorate in education and his dissertation the first in the nation to be published on homeschool has been widely distributed. He teaches on the faculty at BYU as professor in the ancient scripture department and Reed has been long time supporter of the home school movement and we’re pleased to hear from him today.

Well it’s nice to be with you. Thanks for coming. You must love your children or grandchildren. A have any of you ever been at a homeschool meeting that I have addressed before? By show of hands. What are you doing here? I don’t know that you’ll hear anything that you haven’t hear

before. But I'll treat you like one of the farm organizations treated my father a number of years ago when he was Eisenhower's secretary of agriculture some of you might recall he got a request from one of the national farm organizations to address their annual convention their national convention and he responded by saying, Well if you'll recall I spoke at your national convention last year and I'm afraid if I came again so soon I might repeat myself and shortly after that he got a letter back from them and they said Dear Mr. Secretary we checked with a number of our members that attended the meeting you spoke at last year and not one of them can remember what you said. Well that's enough to keep you humble isn't it. So I guess the pole was right when he said the Lola thought enough to express it isn't last who say's it best and some things need to be repeated especially the truth because there is so much error out there. So I appreciate you being here today. Now we're going to kind of shoot from the hip I hope you don't mind. In the interest of time this is supposed to come to a close at what five bells? Is that the idea five o'clock? O.K. hold on just a minute. Well all right, did I tell you I'm going to shoot from the hip? Did I tell you about that guy that applied for a job? Oh I've got to tell you that cause I'm not the world's greatest diplomat. I'm not like that champ who applied for a job and he came to the part on the application blank where it said, Are your parents still alive and if not how did they die? And unfortunately this champs father died as a result of a hanging because of a crime he committed. And of course the boy wasn't proud of it, but in thought to tell the truth and yet he was so embarrassed that finally he wrote these words in on the application. He said, My father was attending a public platform when the platform in which he was standing collapsed.

So I guess there are a lot of ways to tell the truth, but I don't come from that school of thought so I'm going to be kind of frank and blunt with you. I probably better give you a little background as to where I'm coming from both my wife and I are graduates of a public high school. My wife's father was the two time chairman at the Utah State Board of Education. We both went to government schools University level and private schools. All of our children are adopted. We have nine adopted children. We don't know why we can't have any naturally, but at least the Lord knows we mean business in case he'd like to send some, right? But anyway, as these children got a little older and we had eight or nine and we knew what we were doing but as they got older we decided Holly was the first of our Mohicans and we put her my wife did some considerable studying and decided to enroll little Holly in the Thomas Enquiness monisory school just near Mt. Veman in Virginia. As she got close to kindergarten age we decided do we keep her in Monisory? Do we send her to public schools? Do we put her in a private school? Now we'd heard of a certain private school called "The Fairfax Christian School." I was quite impressed as I investigated that school to find out what they were about. I went and saw Reverend Thobum who was the founder of the school and among other things I asked him if they were accredited he said, "We haven't stooped that low yet." I found out that they learned to read fanatically through the old McGuffy's readers in fact the half day kindergarten students were reading by the time Christmas came out of that McGuffy's readers. They learned the alphabet by memorizing scripture. A as my people gather around Jerusalem. X accept the Lord build the house they labor in vain that build it. Very good.

Well, I took a hard look at them and decided to enroll Holly in the Fairfax Christian School. Now let me tell you one of the reasons we did. One of the things that changed my life when I was a Chaplain in the Air Force during the Korean War was a statement that came across my desk. Written by a public school teacher of ten years in the Jim Thorpe country of Oklahoma. She had taught English for ten years and summarized her teaching this way. She said, I have taught in High School for ten years and during that time I've given assignments among others to a murderer, an evangelist that

would be a preacher, a pugist that would be a wrestler or boxer, a thief, and an embasol. The murderer sat on the front row and regarded me with pale blue eyes. The evangelist he was the most popular boy in the school had the lead in the junior play. The pugist lounged by the windows and let forth the raquiest laugh that startled even the geraniums. The thief was a gay hearted latherio with a song on his lips. And the embosol a quiet eyed little animal seeking the shadows. The murderer now awaits death in the state penitentiary. The evangalist has laid a year now in the village graveyard. The pugilist lost an eye in a recent ball in Hong Kong. The thief by standing on tip tow can see my window from the county jail. And the gentle eyed little embasol now beats his head against a padded cell in the state asylum. All these students once sat in my room, sat and looked at me gravely across worn, brown desks. I must have been a great help to these students. I taught them the rhyming scheme of the Elizabethan sonata, "The Diagram of a complex sentence." Now friends there is nothing wrong with the rhyming scheme of the Elizabethan sonata, " The Diagram of a complex sentence." what I think she was trying to say the poet said so well when he said men are blind until they see that in the human plan nothing is worth the building if it doesn't build a man. Why build these cities glorious if man unbuild it goes in vain we build this world unless the builder also grows. In other words character is greater than intellect, goodness is better than smartness, if we educate these children without spiritual principles we could just make them clever devils.

So enrolled Holly in the Fairfax Christian School. You'll find in the dissertation at the desk there at the good LDS resources probably where you registered. We carry a copy of that little article that we wrote on the Fairfax Christian School called, "How to Stop Heir Pollution." The private Christian school movement. I had to come back and get a masters degree at BYU. When we came back we enrolled our students at the American Heritage School. Verlan Anderson started that out in Pleasant Grove he called it the seventy quorum as some of you know him his daughter in @Dawn Jacob is a great home schooler. And then I was called as a mission president in Kentucky in 1975. We got there shortly after Judge Gordon issued his famous lets put it infamous bussing order. Requiring forced bussing. When we went to enroll our children in private Christian schools the lines were so long that we couldn't get them in and so for the first time some of them entered the government schools. That was not a good experience. We had social activists teaching some of the schools. There was a teacher strike. There were lyrics in some of the music books that we wouldn't allow our children to sing. Drugs in the schools. When that experience was over and my mission was complete, we went through proscript heights to see the Christian Liberty Academy that had a great correspondence course. Thousands, tens of thousands enrolled in that course and then I came back to BYU. I had to do an intern doctorate I was part of the intern doctorate program and had to do a professional education project to get towards my doctorate degree. In that professional education project I decided O.K. now is the chance. I said to my wife how would you like to for one year put our children into private that is homeschool.

After I took my wife off the ceiling she said to me, Reed don't you think I have anything else to do? But like the pioneers that crossed the plains willingly because they had to right? But anyway, she was one good sport. She said all right Reed I'll do it. Now the founder of modern homeschool movement in Utah said she has never known a woman to go into homeschool with less confidence than my wife did, but she took the plunge. And she got totally wet. That is to say she enjoyed it so much that by the time the year was over and we've got that report that I had to turn into my doctorate committee that first year in homeschooling. When it was over she decided she wanted to do it for the rest of their school careers which she did. And that was the encouragement to me to do my dissertation the first in the nation on the homeschool movement. Now let me tell you something

about homeschool. It's becoming more and more of age all the time. A Sunday Governor Leavitt on at least one occasion has had a homeschool proclamation. BYU the youngest who have ever graduated from BYU all got their degrees at the age of 15 all homeschoolers. Probably BYU is probably the only school or at least the first school in the nation to have a course for credit in homeschooling taught there by Dr. Larry Arnoldson. The homeschoolers that have and BYU is admitting an increasing of homeschoolers now. The one survey that I know about that has been made of the homeschoolers is that they do better academically than the average BYU student. The highest honor that you can get scholastic honor is the Gordon B. Hinckley scholarship. Four year etc... and one of those scholarships was one by a homeschooler this year. So it's coming of age. Now, let me talk to you about some of the things you ought to consider when it comes to homeschooling. One is the legality of it. There is no question about that. Right in the state of Utah the courts usually consider equivalent type of education, and competent teachers, no question that the parents can do that. And we'll talk about that. In the dissertation we talk about and you know most dissertations gather dust. This one is state in print again and again and again and I think probably because in the Virginia constitution there is a phrase that talks about the need for a frequent recurrence to fundamental principles. And there's some fundamental principles in this and one of them is a judge who rendered decision on the person of this case. And that's probably the best reason that legal decision has been made on homeschooling in this generation. And we quote extensively from that case of the progemedies and we'll mention it probably one or two of the quotes pertain to them as we go on. So, legally there's no problem. Now let me consider let me have you consider the 10 advantages of homeschooling. Some of you may have the dissertation some may purchase it, some may just want to get the highlights, so let me give you the highlights we flesh it out the dissertation by the interest of time and maybe money who knows. Let me give you the 10 advantages to homeschooling. This is not all inclusive, but these are some of the heavy's.

1- Leadership and love at home. Leadership and love at home. Well, the supreme court has affirmed over and over again that it's the natural it's the primary role of the parents to be responsible for the child's education. How true. And they educate at home in fact you know in the ratcliff corteley one homeschool mother wrote in and she spoke of her 12 year old in this way. She said I can see the encrusted layers of school rigidity falling away. Several times a lesson with her is dissolved into a conversation about her real worth as a loving, responsible human being versus the graded classified surely stupid person. She sometimes felt herself to be in school. And the Kendricks when they wrote their superintendent anticipating going into homeschool said this, We have not felt right about sending our children out of our home to be influenced in their formative years by people whom we do not know personally. And who's morals, values, and political and religious beliefs may differ from ours. Once a child starts school the home becomes school centered not family centered. The hour before school getting ready, the six hours of school, the hour or two unwinding afterwards, and the hour more of homework later in the evening leave little time for parents and children to communicate and involve themselves jointly in activities not directly related to the school. How true. John Holtz said, "Many people look upon homeschooling as a family saving movement." And one lady said, "There's a lot of joy in teaching children so why shouldn't I have that joy?" Why not?

2- School can wait. Dr. Raymond Moore and his wife were given a quarter of a million government grant to study early childhood education programs like headstart etc.. Their studies were very revealing. Readers Digest carried an article of theirs entitled, "Better late than early." They found out that the earlier you bring your children into formal schooling the worse they do academically. The later you bring them into schooling the better they do. Their study and incidentally BYU published their book called, "School Can Wait." And they came up with two great interesting conclu-

sions. One has to do with the integrated maturity level. They found out that the child's senses and abilities to reason don't come together in a child. To make it ready for formal education until their about the ages of 8. Does that have a significant ring 8 To 10 years of age. The Moores incidentally are not members of the church they are 7th Day of Venice. The feeling of frustration to put a child into formal schooling before that time well all right. Then the other conclusion they came to is the positive and negative sociability theory. In that they said, "If you leave a child home long enough in those earlier years they develop a tie to the family and a peer independence. If there is one thing that strikes terror in a parent it's the peer pressure that they face at school. But those that are left in those earlier years at home develop a peer independence and a closer tie to their families. Very good.

3- You can avoid the pitfalls. Now I'm going to quickly give you ten pitfalls that you get to avoid when you put your children into homeschooling.

A. Secular humanism. Do you remember after that tragic supreme court decision on prayer? President McKay said, "The supreme courts severs the connecting cord between the source of divine intelligence and the public schools." Now friends when you sever that connecting cord nature abhors a vacuum. What moved into that vacuum? Secular humanism. Do you know one of the founders of modern education was John Dwey, who is one of the signers of the Humanist Manifesto. Let's give you another pitfall to avoid.

B. Conflicting values. Have you ever heard of value clarification situation ethics? Behavioral control? That's something you don't have to encounter in homeschool.

C. Immorality and Drugs. Remember the gal pole that surveyed the 10 she problems facing public schools. One of them is the lack of discipline and drug abuse.

D. School violence and vandalism. Boy did that come home to me recently. I'm the oldest of six children. My mother wanted a dozen we had to console her by telling her they were cheaper by the half a dozen. But anyway, I've got four younger sisters, Barbara, Beverly, Bonnie, Beth. My sister Barbara has four sons in this area. We decided their old uncle ought to invite them in, break a little bread have a family get together so we did. We set a night for them to come and break bread with us, have a meal with us. That was the day of the Columbine tragedy. And everyone of those four boys were graduates of Columbine High school. If you don't think that wasn't one sobering night. One of those boys did so well in football that he won a scholarship to BYU. Columbine invited him back to help the football team and as you remember the killers were after athletes among others. And one of the black students was killed. School violence and vandalism that's D. The senate judiciary committee discovered that your child's chances of encountering crime are greatest when they're enroute to, at, or coming home from school.

E. Incarceration. For some it's like a lock up or a jail. How true. The Kendrick's when they wrote, "The idea of grouping large numbers of children all the same age with one adult figure in a room for 6 hours a day 9 months a year is certainty not based on any natural or traditional way of learning or living."

F. Social Life. John Holt was quoted in US News and World Report quite accurately when he said, "With very few exceptions a social life of our schools is mean spirited, competitive, status seeking, snobbish, cruel, often violent and full of talk of who went to who's party and who did not."

G. Emotional Pitfalls. The Pegenerallies told of how their son Richard a free, confident, child, upon entering second grade became in their word shy, unsure, self-conscious, and discouraged over academic achievement by the end of the year. Probably the most highly honored educational journalist is George B. Lennord. In his book, "Education Exctasy" he says, "The world is filled with

wrongs, war, disease, famine.” And then he goes on to say, “But none is deeper or more poignant than the systematic innocent destruction of the human spirit that is all too often is the hidden function of every school.”

H. Stress, Physical Problems. It’s amazing the improved health of children once they are switched over to homeschool.

I. Inferior education. That’s one pitfall you can avoid. US News and World Report one article started out, “As costs escalate results worsen.”

J. Waste of Time. One homeschooler wrote in the New York Times, “I use the word immoral to emphasize how strongly I feel about the time that is wasted by children at school.”

So, the pitfalls to be avoided then in summary. Humanism, wrong values, immorality and drugs, violence, incarcerations, social crippling, emotional stress, degenerating health, inferior academics, and waste of time. That’s a pretty good incentive to put your children in homeschool.

4. You get to teach the truth. Do you remember in News Week magazine conducted a survey of History books issued from 1920 before 1920 and since 1920? Do you know what they discovered? For example, Patrick Henry words give me liberty, or give me death appeared in 12 of the 14 earlier texts, but in only 2 of the 45 recent texts. After another tragic supreme court decision President McKay said, “Evidentially the supreme court misinterprets the true meaning of the first amendment and are now leading a Christian nation down the road to Atheism.” But in homeschool you can put God in the guidelines and Christ in the curriculum. Listen to this scripture and see if this doesn’t back up the homeschooling movement, Deuteronomy 6:6-7, “And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thy heart. And also teach them diligently unto thy children. Thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.”

5. Why not the best? The sky’s the limit in homeschooling. You want to go the grade books route. I remember taking my fathers at St. John’s College a few years ago who’s whole curriculum is based on 100 grade books. Do you want to go that route? Do you want to punish your child to a master? I don’t know if this is for the record, but it’s true. A good number of my fathers that is President Benson’s grandchildren are homeschooled. And one of them who’s son you might recall very good in Violins he was a soloist with the Utah Symphony a year or so ago and danced on the stage with Donald O’Connor. How many of you remember old Donald O’Connor? That was quite a night that night. Well O.K.

6. Individualized instruction. That’s an advantage. That’s like Taylor-Maid teaching. Do you know what a blessing that is to a slow learner? Or how about a gifted student? The first comprehensive measurement of the work that elementary teachers do in the course of a day? Show that the student got an average of about two minutes per child in a class of 25 of individualized instruction. Well, US News and World Report had an article entitled, “For Many Being Gifted Brings Life Long Struggle.” How sad. Individualized instruction offers the opportunity of setting a personal pace for each child and less competitiveness and comparison. The curriculum is more for the chosen. Assignments are more easily followed up. Weakness in the child’s education more quickly detected.

7. To learn, teach another.- Boy how true. How did that teacher ever handle it in the one room

school house. The little red school house that covered several grades. Well among other things she taught, but then she had others teach too. My wife used to have our older children teach the younger children. It gave them the chance to reinforce their learning and sometimes a child can do maybe even better than the teacher can. To learn, teach another.

8. Flexibility Boy how true. You can go any route you want. You want to go the tutor route. You want to go the correspondence route. You want to go with special classes. You want to keep studying without having to worry about a school bill. You want to push it into the summer time. You want to renovate a home. Plant a garden.

9. Parents also learn. Boy how true. Do you know the orientals had a nice saying it used to go, "Help your brothers bull across and low your own has reached the shore." Do you know when the children used to go down at night my wife dug into those books. Did she ever become a learner. It reminded me of one lady that said, "Homeschooling has given me an excuse to continue my education and I am enjoying Math more than anything except music and maybe French. And by the time I am 40 I should be pretty good." Way to go Mom.

10. The Pursuit of Excellence. Harold G. McGurdy, professor of Psychology at the University of North Carolina did quite a study on the childhood pattern of genius. His study covered 500 years of the most eminent geniuses in the world. He came up with an interesting study that "Horizon" magazine carried in an article in May 1960 called, "The Childhood Pattern of Genius." He tells about for instance among the 20 he selected there was John Stewart Mill who from a very early age was given the responsibility of acting as a tutor to his brothers and his sisters. His father kept him apart from other boys. John Quincy Adams boy someday I hope I live a good enough life to meet Abby.

Abigail Adams, what a woman. I asked my wife shortly after we were married to please read the book, "Those Who Love" written by Erving Stone. The story of John and Abigail Adams. The only woman in American history to have a husband as the president and a son as the president. "Those Who Love." The story of John and Abigail Adams. Well how about John Quincy her son who was president. His education began at home under a tutor and a continued in Europe in the company of his father. Well, then "Horizon" magazine poses the question, "What kind of early life fosters exceptional mental growth?" Then they set a study of 20 great minds of 2 prime conditions and leads to a startling conclusion in the last sentence of this article. What were those two conditions? 1) A high degree of attention focused upon the child by parents and other adults. 2) Isolation from other children especially outside the family. Then here comes the startling conclusion. It might be remarked that the mass education of our public schools system is in it's way a vast experiment on the effect of reducing these factors to a minimum. Accordingly it should tempt to surpress the occurrence of genius. There's a book called, "The Cradles of Eminence." It studies the life of over 400 of the eminent 20th century men and women and has a provocative story of their childhood. Three out of the five of the four hundred has serious school problems. Three out of the five of the four hundred dislike schools, yet four out of the five of the four hundred boys and girls showed evidence of being unusually intelligent or exceptionally talented. The authors say, there is no parent tutored boy or girl among the four hundred who is not grateful for the experience. America's greatest inventor never completed formal grade school, Tom Edison. America's first billionaire, Henry Ford never completed high school.

Well, now let's talk about the disadvantages. Are there disadvantages to homeschooling? One of the very first things you here. is the socialization. And one of the best answers I think for that is the Osmonds were homeschooled, and none has ever referred to them as social introverts. When you

break socialization down usually it has to do with life adjustment and friends. Well, most of life is spent in a home. If one wants to adjust to life then one needs to properly adjust to the homefront. After the early years how often does one sit for nine months, five days a week, for six hours a day in a concrete building with people of the same age. Reverend Brinstrome says, 'I see our children's young, tender plants put into a hot house given expert attention and care by a florist until the plant is ready to be exposed to the wind, rain, and hale.' Or I said it this way, "A young Joseph nurtured by an old Jacob can make it in the heat in Egypt." John Holt says, "I don't want to feel I'm sheltering my children or running away from adversity." Someone asked him, "Why Not? It is your right and proper business as parents to shelter your children, protect them from adversity at least as much as you can." Many of the world's children are starved or malnourished. You would not starve your children so that they would know what that was like. Do you know the Marines in World War II that faced the toughest conditions, the worst things of the war discovered that once you stood up under it were the ones that had a fortunate childhood. The ones that broke were the ones who had been up against tough conditions. I like how one homeschooler put it she said, "People tell me that I'm protecting my children from the cold, cruel world. They think children should have to take bad treatment in schools in order to cope with the real world. By that logic we should be putting the child's head in a vice everyday to prepare them for the headaches they will suffer as adults." Well, friends that comes under socialization. Well who should be your closest friends? How about those under your own roof. I like Edgar A. Guest poem, "The stick together families are happier by far, than the one who takes separate highway's are."

Well, household management. How will they ever manage with the children home all day during the week. Well you could manage to manage. One lady said, "Them are those who tell me they can't teach their children and keep house too. I tell them can't is a ridiculous word, and merely signifies a persons honorable ends to make the necessary sacrifice. The whole family messes the place up, the whole family can clean it up."

Emotionality. I'm not sure my nerves can take it with the children around all day. Well, let me tell you what you don't have to worry about. Physical violence, standards being undermined, wondering what your children were taught, who they are associating with, what's happening to their self-esteem and creativity. There are times you might need quiet moments. My wife used to take an afternoon nap everyday. She's continued it ever since. She put's the homeschoolers down. I remember one mother living in a little trailer house with several children. Boy, when her knees hit the linoleum floor in the kitchen and her apron was over her head, peace. Mother's in meditation.

Costs. Joyce Kidmont told about her first year in homeschooling. How she felt a great need to get away often. She said, but now I resent it anything that takes me away from being away from my children during school hours. I'm happiest when at home and never need to feel that old drive to get out. Funny how we grow. That doesn't mean I'm not involved with anything outside my home, I am. But I am no longer dependent upon anyone, or anything, or any place, outside my home and family for my happiness. Costs, little or a lot it doesn't matter all that much.

Sources of information. My goodness there's so many out there. You're exhibit A of that. Being here looking at all these booths set up.

Format. Some homeschoolers starting with a structured format. 8:00 we'll have Math. 9:00 history. Usually they move into a blended mat. Then sometimes some go the route that John Holtz goes of the unstructured route where (end of tape)