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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### The Anvil - God's Word

Last eve I passed beside a blacksmith's door,  
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;  
Then, looking in, I saw upon the floor  
Old hammers, worn with beating years of time.

“How many anvils have you had,” said I,  
“To wear and batter all these hammers so?”  
“Just one,” said he, and then, with twinkling eye,  
“The anvil wears the hammers out, you know.”

And so, thought I, the anvil of God's Word,  
For ages skeptic blows have beat upon;  
Yet, though the noise of falling blows was heard,  
The anvil is unharmed—the hammers gone.

*Author Unknown*

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## P R E F A C E

HOMESCHOOLING WASN'T SOMETHING we had always planned on doing. With Kim's bachelor's degree in elementary education and a few years of teaching under her belt prior to motherhood, we didn't even think about schooling our own at home. We believed that children should be educated by professionals, the supposed authorities on education. The homeschool families we met now and then were nice, but we automatically categorized them as being, well, different. Maybe they had bad experiences in public schools and couldn't afford Christian schools, we reasoned. Perhaps they were fear-driven, overly protective parents who refused to let their children out into real the world. Or, maybe they were rebels who wanted to make some kind of political

statement. Okay, the term religious zealots also came to mind. Whatever the case, we figured homeschoolers were a scattered few, treading off the beaten path into the unknown. Eventually, they would probably come around and see that schools were where children belonged.

Unlike Paul in his rampage against the early Christians, we weren't out to persecute anyone. However, we did experience a similar, unpredictable about-face in our convictions. Part of the revelation came with the unsettling feeling we faced when the time approached to send our firstborn off to first grade, knowing this full-day arrangement would take her from our nest longer than she had ever been before, as a part-time preschooler and kindergartener. Was it already time to delegate to another such a large portion of her training and nurturing? Our apprehension grew stronger as we questioned school board politics, policy changes, and a few ugly scandals. But the biggest factor that drew us to keep our children home wasn't as much the frustration and dissatisfaction with the current school arrangement as it was a sudden awakening and attraction toward the perfect alternative—homeschooling.

The Lord brought Jane, a dear woman of faith and a seasoned homeschool veteran, into Kim's life at just the right time. Through her friendship, words of wisdom, encouragement, and prayers, we began to understand homeschooling in a new way. Meeting her close-knit family and admiring the special relationship they shared sparked a greater desire to investigate this option. A timely visit to our wonderful state homeschool convention preceded lots

of reading and research, and we soon became convinced that this was the right path for our family.

Now, we're among the "different" ones. And we love it. In fact, our family has been so blessed by our experience that we are passionate about sharing the homeschool vision. The years have strengthened our conviction that this is the right choice for families who are seeking the blessings of togetherness, richer learning experiences, and a lasting Godly legacy.

Many times we have been asked about our lifestyle—by skeptics and seekers alike. It's difficult to share the full vision of homeschooling in a casual conversation at the refreshment table after church or in the waiting room at the children's dance lessons. We found ourselves wishing we had just the right resource to share a little research and reason behind family-based learning. And while there are many great books out there with loads of information, extensive studies, and specific how-to by wonderful people in the homeschool community (to whom we are forever grateful for paving the way for newcomers), we struggled to find something complete, yet concise. Unlike some of the heavy, more in-depth titles, we wanted to offer a resource that would be sweet and simple as "PIE:" to Persuade, Inform, and Encourage.

Perhaps you are at a crossroads, and you seek compelling reasons to pursue the path of homeschooling. Maybe you are already homeschooling and wish to pass along facts and figures to curious friends or concerned in-laws. If so, you might find this book to be just what you need for sharing the basics on a sometimes emotionally-heated topic. Or, it could be that you've been traveling on the road of

homeschooling for a while and simply desire a little affirmation from some fellow travelers that you are, indeed, on the right path.

Whatever your situation, we hope you'll sink your teeth into this "PIE" as we share some of the same guidance that we received from other homeschool veterans, along with insight gleaned from our own experience over the years. A companion discussion/Bible study guide is also available for your own personal reflection time, homeschool support groups, or church Bible studies, enabling you to dig deeper into Scripture and facilitate discussions.

Our prayer is that all who read this book would realize that God is truly moving in our world through the homeschool movement. In a time when we have witnessed the fabric of the family becoming unraveled, and the grave results on society, He is turning the hearts and minds of children and parents back toward each other, one family at a time. Many can already testify that there are real blessings to being obedient to His call, blessings that will carry on into eternity.

*And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

COLOSSIANS 3:17

Blessings in Christ!

*David and Kim d'Escoto*



## HISTORY OF HOMESCHOOLING

*And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.*

DEUTERONOMY 6:6-9

HISTORY SHOWS THAT today's home education movement actually springs from a rich heritage of family-based learning. Through the centuries, beginning with the earliest recorded history found in the Holy Bible, the practice of many cultures worldwide reflected the belief that parents and immediate family members should be the primary educators of children.

God-fearing people from the very beginning knew, as Scripture points out, that children are a gift from God and that He delegates to parents the authority to “bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (EPHESIANS 6:4). This responsibility was taken seriously, not as a suggestion, but a command from God. Just as there are consequences to ignoring His commands, there are also rewards for being obedient to them, such as one stated in the book of Proverbs: “Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it” (PROVERBS 22:6).

While this is not a guarantee that our children will follow the Lord, it is filled with wisdom and incentive toward raising children with propriety and purpose. When studying the lives of our forefathers, we can see how seriously this guideline was taken.

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### *American Roots*

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American history shows that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when this country’s founders were firmly rooted in Biblical principles, parents were the primary teachers of their children. Education was not the responsibility of the government. Moral values, reading, writing, computation skills, and eventually some sort of vocational training were the main emphases in the early American homeschools. The Bible was the primary textbook in most homes and served as the motivation for acquiring literacy skills.

Prior to compulsory education, findings show that the literacy rate in America was as high as 90 to 98 percent,<sup>1</sup> a remarkable level that has never been attained since the establishment of our current state-controlled education system. A recent survey revealed the drastic decline in U.S. literacy: 21 to 23 percent, or some 40 to 44 million of the 191 million adults in the United States, demonstrated incompetence in the lowest level of reading, writing, and mathematical skill.<sup>2</sup>

Today, literacy has been redefined to mean a mere squeaking by in the basics of reading, writing, and math skills. Historically, the standards were much higher. Consider the *Appleton School Reader*, compiled of original prose by authors like William Shakespeare, Henry Thoreau, George Washington, Sir Walter Scott, Mark Twain, Benjamin Franklin, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Daniel Webster, Lewis Carroll, Thomas Jefferson, and Ralph Waldo Emerson. In 1882, this was average fifth-grade reading material.<sup>3</sup> Today, one in five high school graduates cannot even read his or her diploma.<sup>4</sup>

Even when the idea of formal schooling started to grow during the nineteenth century, this was still controlled largely by the parents. Most children who attended grammar schools at age eight or nine already had substantial skill in reading and writing, previously developed at home. Formal book learning was only a small piece of the educational puzzle. Life skills, homemaking, and Biblical values were still a priority and took place naturally

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*More than ninety years have gone by since Dewey set American education on its progressive course. The result is an educational system in shambles, a rising national tide of illiteracy and social misery caused in its wake.*

SAMUEL BLUMENFELD