

# The Academy Perspective

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Vada Lee Barkley, Editor

## MY SINGLE MOM AS DISCIPLINARIAN

by Vada Lee Barkley

Mother married her childhood sweetheart at age 18. They bought a farm and started a family. Their second child died in infancy. At age 28 Mother was left a widow with four children, aged 2-8. Struck with the awesome responsibility of rearing the kids alone, she determined that her family circle in heaven would not be broken. To that end, she gave her life.

She started early. When her boys were six and eight, they went with her to a neighbor's house. As the ladies talked, the boys played in the yard. When they started home, Mother noticed one carrying an ear of corn. "Put the corn back where you got it," she said. "O, let him have it," the neighbor said. "No," Mother insisted, "They have to learn not to take anything that doesn't belong to them."

She used to say, "Tell the truth if it chokes you."

Mother was 35 when she married Robert Lee Beard. A widower from a nearby community, Mr. Beard lead singing at the Methodist church. Not only did the marriage mean having a husband and father in the home, but the birth of a new baby sister (Vada Lee) added the final touch to the family.

Before marrying my dad, Mother told him that she would do the whipping. She told the kids that "Mr. Beard" was first boss and she was second boss. I'm sure little whipping was done. Mother gained our respect early and held it for life.

She refused to whip a child in the heat of the moment. She'd see that one of the boys-I doubt that she ever spanked a girl-was getting out of hand. But she'd wait for a punishable offense before wielding a switch. She chose to discipline with love.

My dad died before I was four. Mother was alone again with one more to pray into the kingdom.

I was so lonesome that Mother let me go to school with the older kids a few times. At recess I was watching my brother and a friend pitch horse shoes. A little boy walked up and kissed me on the cheek. I was mortified. I cried till my brother took me home.

One day I went with Mother to Aunt Megs. As they quilted, I played with a tobacco sack my aunt gave me. Since a box of matches sat within reach, I proceeded to fill the sack with matches. "We've got to take these back

to Aunt Meg." To my knowledge, I've never taken anything else that didn't belong to me."

The ultimate test of Mother's discipline happened when I was nine. Both my sisters and one brother were married. My other brother, then 20, was living at home.

Our oldest sister and her husband and child were spending the weekend with us. My brother said he was going to a dance. He got ready, saddled our sleek black mare and came riding toward the house in style.

Mother saw him coming. She walked up to the mare, took hold of the bridle rein, and sat down on a step. Time seemed to stop. My brother sat in the saddle; Mother held the reins. If she said anything, she probably said, "When you daddy died I promised the Lord I'd do everything in my power to help raise you children so we'd be an unbroken family in heaven."

My brother left Mother holding the reins, went to the barn, and soon came back riding our old plodder. We were all laughing because we knew he wouldn't be caught dead on the plow horse. We all spent a pleasant evening at home.

When Mother lay dying in Deaconess hospital, I went every day to be with her. I always kissed her and told her I loved her. Then I told her that all of her children were Christians. If she heard those words, they were the sweetest music this side of heaven to her.

## SUSAN BAKER TO CONDUCT HANDS-ON LEARNING SEMINAR ON INTERNET

Jack Arnold

The main feature of the Research Inter-est Group (RIG) May 12 meeting will be a hands-on computer demonstration of sites on the Internet where researchers can find information on computers quickly and easily. The Internet is having an enormous social and economic impact on seniors; it is showing us new ways to find information, document our sources, and store our information; it is changing how we work, play, and relate to other people.

Assistant Professor Susan A. Baker, Director of Academic Computing at SNU, will demonstrate research tools on the Internet in a hands-on setting as follows:

Monday, May 12, 1997

10:00 to 11:15 a.m.

Room 129, Royce Brown Building

RIG members extend a cordial welcome to all members and guests of the Academy to attend this learning seminar. Please let Shirley Pelley know if you are planning to attend so that she can make the proper seating arrangements for the computer users and observers.

A short business meeting of RIG members will precede the seminar from 9:30 to 9:50 a.m. in the Royce Brown Conference Room. Bea Flinner, Chairperson of the RIG Questionnaire Committee, will report on her initial research findings on questions/topics to be included in the proposed questionnaire.

## A TRIBUTE by Bob Troutman

*Her children rise up and call her blessed-  
Proverbs 31:28, NKJV.*

**MOTHER.** Few words bring forth a greater flood of pleasant memories-pleasant despite disciplinary action that had to be administered occasionally, or perhaps more often. (Of course, memories of anything that happened as long ago as my childhood may have erased what seemed unpleasant at the time.) All of my earliest memories are associated with my mother.

In the crash of '29, Papa lost his job with the Gulf Oil Company and we moved to a farm in northwest Arkansas. It was a different way of living from what we had been used to. Mother was not a complainer, but I realize now that those years must have been very difficult for her. I marvel that she managed to keep her family of four children fed and clothed with so few resources. She raised a large garden, which always had several rows of flowers in it. (She disliked white flowers and pulled them up as soon as they bloomed.) She canned hundreds of quarts of vegetables and wild blackberries. She was an excellent seamstress and made all the dresses she and my three sisters wore, many of them from printed flour and feed sacks. And somehow she found time to take part in the church and school activities of our little rural community. She didn't do it alone, of course. Papa worked hard, and we children were expected to do our share of chores and harvesting.

Mother has been gone for 19 years, but I still miss her. Whenever a white flower blooms in my border, I think of her and smile as I let it grow. Whenever I put a frozen Stillwell blackberry cobbler in the oven, I think about her and the wonderful blackberry cobblers she used to

make. Wilma's life has been much different from mother's; but I hope that when Steven and Philip look back on their childhood, memories of their mother will mean as much to them as my memories of mother mean to me.

**MORE THINGS...BY PRAYER**  
by Wini Howard

There is a familiar quote from English literature that rings through my mind. "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice rise like a fountain...night and day."

I believe these words are familiar to many of us. Although they are not found in the Bible, the meaning is there. What impresses me is that this truth has been proved from Bible times right down to the present. We are quick to accept the fact that many prayers were answered way back then. It's right there in black and white. Both the Old and New Testaments have many remarkable answers to prayer.

But some people are inclined to think that what happened in Bible times is not to be compared in any way to what we can expect from God today.. But hasn't history proved over and over that God has not changed in His love and care for mankind? Even the accounts of God's intervention in the lives of His people today, in answer to prayer, are limitless. There are many sources for this information.

Also we are often led to believe that it is only to the long and arduous prayers that God responds. I am amazed as I read/hear about people in great need (perhaps in terrible danger) who call upon God with no more time that to say "Help me, God", and He rescues them. He answers prayer.

Right now, many Christians feel like there is no hope left for us, and especially for our families. As a senior citizen, I'm saying, "What is going to happen in the future to my children and, even more, my grandchildren?" Have we really considered what Prayer could do for the problems in our country? We talk about it some, but are we ready to really pour out our hearts to God about the needs of our nation?

I think of what has happened in Korea in recent years. The spread of Christianity has been phenomenal. How? It has been through prayer. The Christians spend hours and even days in prayer. Just recently I have read that South Korea has the greatest amount of religious freedom in all the world. (I remember hearing a Christian hymn being played over the radio, on a public bus, while we were in S. Korea. I was amazed.) Prayer is at least a great part of the explanation.

It seems that many of us are willing to admit that the church has failed to meet the needs of our society. If that is the case, what

are we going to do now? I believe the answer is Prayer. We who believe in the power of prayer must get down to business, as the old saying goes.

First of all we need to pray for specifics. "God bless America" is certainly not enough. Our leaders must be prayed for by name and in specific ways. The President needs to be at the top of our list. Even though we may not be very happy with him, we are still commanded to pray for him. Pray that God will some way intervene in his life. Ask God to deal with him in a positive way. There are church leaders meeting with him on a regular basis. Ask God to give them wisdom.

There are many things going on in Washington that we can pray about rather than just finding fault. Our Congressmen need to be prayed for by name, and often. The Supreme Court and Justice Rehnquist certainly need our prayers. We are often told about issues that are being voted upon--like the possibility of doctor assisted suicide. Praying is better than worrying.

Right now the Bombing Trial is getting under way in Denver. Have you thought of praying for the lawyers, defendants, and victims? Here again, it is in order to pray that justice will prevail. We don't know what that is, but we can pray that it will somehow come as a result of the trial.

Another situation that should concern us is that of the suffering Christians around the world. It doesn't take much awareness to realize that there are many people suffering for their faith in many areas of our world. They desperately need our prayers. (It is quite easy to learn about specific needs by reading Christian magazines and newspapers.)

Also as you read Christian papers and magazines, you will be aware that there are students, as well as adults in our country, who are being forced to take an unpopular stand--and often at great personal risk. We can and should pray for each one as we become aware of them.

I wonder what would happen if we really banded together to pray about the crime, the drugs, and the abortion horror that are griping our land. We talk and write about these problems, but it seems that it is about all we do. Is anyone calling us to pray?

I have just been reading about the many people that are being won to the kingdom in South America. The whole accomplishment, they say, is built on prayer. When are we going to get serious about this way of getting the help we need from God?

**A POST MORTEM: MY 1996  
INCOME TAX EXPERIENCE**  
by Bob Emmel

After paying income tax for nearly five decades--an experience that has become more

burdensome by the year--it appears that it is time to express some of my many years of inner pressure on this matter.

At the outset let me say it is my deep feeling that taxes are necessary, but it is the derelict government waste and their gross lack of integrity that make my tax experience very distasteful. And now as I give the results of my income tax *post mortem*, it is certain to provoke many of my conservative flag waving friends. I know so many conservative people, for that is where my loyalties lay most of my life, however my flag waving has waned a bit in recent years. While I still feel warmth for our flag and anthem as symbols of a nation that, with its deep and many flaws, still sets the standard for the rest of the world; nowadays that standard seems abysmally low and headed in the wrong direction.

While I have lost some faith in democracy, I hold some hope in a republic (not in the form practiced here), wherein its leaders can somehow insulate its citizens from their own stupidity. When I consider the farce a jury trial has become in this country, I pray I may never see the inside of a courtroom in search of justice in my lifetime. Consider who sits on those juries!

But what went wrong? While the legacy of my generation has left much in the balances and found wanting, the government of my generation played a decisive role in pulling the nation out of depression, saving the world from fascism and holocaust, rebuilding Europe, building a great nationwide highway infrastructure, and developing institutions of higher learning--second to none in the universe--throughout the country.

In the days of this development the middle class was the backbone of the nation. The government of today's generation is corrupt and obscenely wasteful. Justice is neither sure nor swift, and public morality slides to ever lower depths. Many of today's politicians are too smart to be bothered with the middle class, whoever they might be, and instead curry favor with monied interests on one hand and build a weird coalition of far-out fringe splinter groups on the other.

Was it JFK's assassination or Vietnam? I doubt it--the nation has survived worse calamities. What I see as the cancer at the root of our national demise is television. It is driven by one engine: advertising. Its simple objective is to foster and promote consumerism. In television's forty some years of history, advertisers have refined the science and art of appealing to the masses on the basest levels and in subtly manipulating behavior and values to consistently fuel the industry's voracious appetite for money. What concerns me most is what television does to attract attention (programming), how it shapes demand (commercials), and the stupid and wasteful

products offered to meet that demand (consumerism). In my opinion the by-product of this cynical and all-pervasive process in a great many instances is a generation whose intelligence, moral values, economic values, and social values are much inferior to those of its predecessors.

Two of the worst examples of the effects of this national cancer are inflated sports salaries (not to mention deflated levels of sportsmanship) and, more to the point the many politicians who adapt to media and to the ruinous course they have set for government. When one thinks what a politician must do to get and stay in office, if corruption is not inevitable, that politician might lose all perspective for what the value of a dollar is (especially someone else's dollar). Consider this: to win a U.S. Senate race in California costs about \$50 million. That means that the winner, to finance his re-election campaign must raise about \$160,000 per week, every week for his entire six year term! Say what you will, no matter how saintly the senator, living with this grim reality is completely inconsistent with doing a proper job of lawmaking. It is hardly surprising that monied interests and well heeled lobbyists have so much influence.

Frankly, I see the IRS as merely the middleman in the process whereby we taxpayers fund the economic madness charted by our elected representatives who probably have no idea what a loaf of bread costs or what it's like to earn and save an honest buck. While I have little sympathy for the IRS with its waste and inefficiency, the real problem is its mission: administering a tax code written by Congress with a simple progressive income tax that weighs least heavily on those least able to afford it. At one time a middle class person of average education and intelligence could prepare his tax return in an evening. But the process of adding layer upon layer of complex provisions year by year has produced a tax code which is an incomprehensible and burdensome to the IRS as it is to the taxpayer! And fairness really doesn't get into the equation. If you get to the bottom of almost any provision in those layers of code you will find a self-serving situation that some lobbyist ramrodded through Congress, then to be exploited by his wealthy client. The rest is high-minded social engineering written by staffers who don't have a clue about accounting.

It is a very green pasture for the tax accountant who benefits from this shameful state of affairs, for most citizenry do not have a clue what is going on with the grueling tax return verbiage they see on those miles of tax forms. YET I STILL HAVE HOPE!

This is my *Post Mortem* for my 1996 tax return.

### ART'S CHUCKLES

by Art Barkley

*Summer is the season of the year which bugs us.*

*If, in the last few years you have not discarded a major opinion or acquired a new one, check your pulse. You may already be dead.*

*Some people strengthen society just by being the kind of people they are.*

*You can't always tell what makes a man tick until you meet his wife. She may be the works.*

*A person with money to burn can easily find a match.*