



Growing Families Australia

NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

Reaching our nation one family at a time



NC 12 Special Issue

Looking Forward, Looking Back.....

For the past few decades it has been the "in thing" to do to have a vision statement - churches have Vision and Dedication Sundays, corporations have the Vision Statements in a prominent place in their foyer. The question for us is 'Who really takes any notice of it?' "At the end of the year is there a review to see if this vision statement has really meant anything in the practical, every day functioning of the organization?"

We believe that VISION without PASSION is sentiment and theory and will not be effective in the life of a community. Added to the VISION and PASSION needs to be the PRINCIPLES behind the VISION and PASSION.

In GFA this means that there must be a "Biblical Reason Why" given for the Vision, then the Principle will be made powerful and the ministry (or miracle) of the community will be caught and passed on.

Over the past 16 years since the official inauguration of GFA there has been a very simple vision - Reaching our Nation One Family at a Time. That vision comes directly from the 5 Ministry Goals of Growing Families International laid down by Gary and Anne Marie Ezzo in the 1980's. (Check them out on the website.) They have never changed and if embedded in the hearts of parents and pastors all over this nation they will be the driving force for passing on the baton to the next generation.

In 1989 when we heard Gary Ezzo give a message on "How to Raise a Moral Child" a dream was born, and a vision was planted that has become the passion of our lives. The more God spread the "miracle" through our nation and then to South Africa, Zimbabwe, Singapore, Philippines, PNG etc. the greater our

passion became and the more energy we have had - which is still maintained by the Holy Spirit.

The miracle of these 22 years since we heard that message at Grace Church in Los Angeles amazes us and causes us to give praise to God. The stories of changed lives and families are endless. However now the time has come to hand on the baton to younger families. That means ALL OF YOU!

For the next 12 months Robyn and Andy Hamdorf, Geoff and Alicia Bongers and Peter and Michelle Foote will be shepherding GFA while we all pray about the future and whether a new National Director couple is to be appointed.

The "miracle" will continue to spread through the testimony of the lives of families all over the nation "one family at a time."

We personally will be moving to the role of Roving Ambassadors (joining Ian and Lynn Williams) and will mainly be working with the indigenous people of the Kimberley in Western Australia seeking to develop parenting materials specifically for the indigenous people. The indigenous people themselves have initiated this venture after attending "Will my Child be OK" seminars using the Scotfords Character DVD Series. The Scotford, Wilson and Kim families and ourselves will be involved with the indigenous people. If you would like to receive news of this venture so you can pray for it please be in touch with us - jgrosser@gfi.org.au, bjgrosser@4thefamily.com.au.

So, as we hand over the baton may we say that the greatest reward for 22 years of establishing GFA, and we know the greatest reward for the Ezzos too, is to see you, the next generation, moving forward with power to proclaim the mighty deeds of our God bringing the families of great our nation to Jesus Christ. Will you take the challenge?



Marriage—Foundations for Generations

by Phil & Carol Ladner

Strong Marriage, Strong Family, Strong Church, Strong Community... Family is the primary social unit of society - one God wants us to protect and keep. Two practices threaten marriage, downplaying the significance of the husband / wife relationship and child - centred parenting.

What will our children learn from us (just about everything)?

- *Resolving conflict*
- *Communication*
- *Demonstrating love in action*
- *Appreciating and valuing differences*
- *Values*
- *Commitment*
- *Honouring God*
- *How to love others*

Spiritual togetherness - your relationship with God enhances your marriage relationship. The idea of Biblical oneness involves not only sexual intimacy but also spiritual, intellectual, emotional and social oneness.

A key lesson of marriage is to learn to accept our partner as they are, rather than to make them into the partner we hoped they would be!

Formidable - Man, Husband, Father, Friend & Brother

by John Wieske

Guys - This is a talk you need to listen to again - its one we should not just say - 'great talk John'. Go back, get the MP3 and have another careful listen to the message and make a plan to apply the principles God is calling you to implement.

The term 'formidable' isn't just about fear and dread - but its also about feelings of awe, strength, admiration and grandeur.

Saul was a Formidable man... yet did not fear God... this was and still is a poor foundation for generations.

David - made many mistakes—maybe even more than Saul. He too was Formidable, but unlike Saul he was a Man After Gods Own Heart and certainly built an amazing foundation.

Lets not kid ourselves - we need to be Men of God... you can teach what you believe but you reproduce what you are.

Again gentlemen - listen to this talk again.

Anger: How to tame the volcano!

by Paul & Janine Targett

If you can teach your children early about how to deal with anger - you having given them a great gift.

What are some of the things the bible has to say about anger
Ephesians 4: 26-7, 1 Peter 3:9, Luke 6:27-8.

So who do children express anger?

Choleric

- Temper tantrums - volcano
- Throws things
- Argues
- Blunt and sarcastic
- Strong willed, rebellious, hostile
- Enjoys confrontation

Sanguine

- Dramatic
- Screams for attention
- Impulsive
- Loves to draw attention to self
- Appears heart broken
- Hates confrontation

Phlegmatic

- Stubborn
- Sarcastic
- Represses anger
- Hates confrontation

Melancholic

- Moody, easily depressed
- Critical
- Represses anger
- Revengeful
- Very sensitive
- Hates confrontation

Choleric and Sanguine children:

anger is usually expressed as a public outburst

Phlegmatic and Melancholic children:

anger is usually expressed as a negative complaining attitude.

Remember that forgiveness is a MAJOR key.

Family Devotions by Geoff & Alicia Bongers

PRE-TODDLER - Start the habit early

To start the habit we opened and closed each meal with a prayer
As parents we did our own short devotion at the dinner table

TODDLER - Keep it simple

We did our family devotions at the end of dinner We used short bible stories with simple comprehension questions

YOUNG CHILD - Don't just read... mix it up

Real life stories should be introduced Always ask questions, both comprehension and what would you do and why / why not...

MIDDLE YEARS - Mum & Dad should be involved

Real life stories relating back to day to day activities (when things may have gone off the rails)

PRE TEEN & TEEN- Allow time (and homework...)

The simple stories get challenged, you will not always have the answer...

Discussion, engagement and sharing are critical here and where your faith has to be both real and seen to be real - this is also true for your pre-teen

FAMILY MIX - Cater for all ages

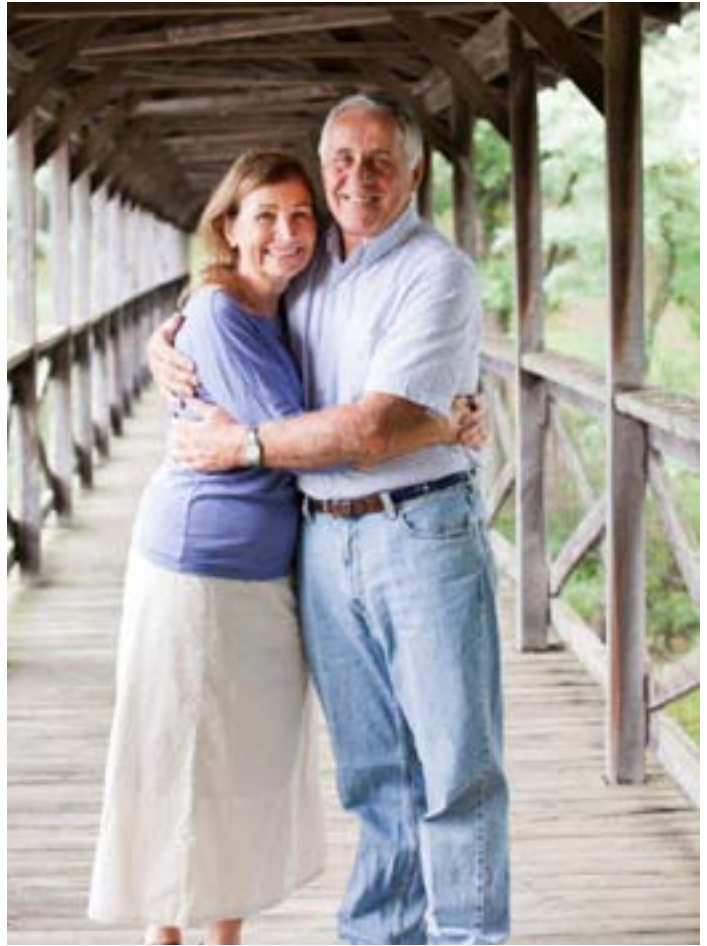
Do and don't cater to the youngest... Use your strengths as a family. Make use of music, drama, reading from a book etc etc.

Heart to Heart

by Anne Marie Ezzo

What a blessing it was for me to have the opportunity to share 'heart to heart', face to face with the precious mum's in attendance at NC12 and also now through the written word. Many years ago the Lord awakened the desire of my heart to bring encouragement to wives and mums', at that time in the early years of their marriage and motherhood. Now, these many years later, to be able to encourage women no matter what season of life they are in. Some time ago, someone sent me a message entitled "The Invisible Mom" by Nicole Johnson, and given the pressures on women today and the emphasis of being 'acknowledged' for what all we do, yet as wives and mothers, we often appear 'invisible' to those whose lives we actually have the opportunity to shape. The ultimate emphasis of the story is that we do all for an audience of One and Gal 6:9 served as a reminder to us all not to grow weary in our well doing, for in due season, at just the right time, we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Also reminded mum's that we are in partnership with God in nurturing the gifts He has given us, our children are not ours to hold tightly to, but to prepare to release them for God's service. As mum's treasuring the moments we have with them in our heart as a gift from the Lord, that we can reflect on as the years pass. Thinking about the 'partnership' we are in with God, that it is He who began the good work in our lives and in the lives of our children, so He is the One Who will complete it.



Our dear GFA Family,

What a joy it was for us to see so many 'old friends' and make new ones at NC12 last month in Victoria. Thank you NC Planning Team for all your work, we believe those who attended left refreshed and challenged, we certainly were. For those who were not in attendance this Conference [there is another one coming up in 2014, start saving] here is a brief summary of the messages Gary brought to the delegates this year.

Opened with "Parenting from the City of God" using scripture from Nehemiah 8:1-10 and challenging us to think about Who and what is the source of our personal, parenting and ministry strength. The key is found in Nehemiah 8:10 "The joy of the Lord is your strength". When we understand what brings God joy and seek to do those things, it is His 'joy' in our obedience that provides the strength for us to keep pressing on in what He has called us to do. The message also pointed out that parents are coming into GFA classes with a vacuum seeking godly role models and affirmed the GFA community that their leadership and example can help fill that vacuum.

From the message "A Case for Civility" we were challenged to not become complacent with just accomplishing "good" but to move toward excellence, not only in our parenting but all that we do. That

we are to reflect the character of God to a world who does not know Him, that where ever we are, we are bringing God with us. He had a special word to the young adults in the audience, encouraging them to stand strong to understand that they are as God planned for all to be, in a relationship with Him. It is the "world" and their peers outside of Christ, that are 'different' and every time they, as God's child take on the characteristics of the world they are marring the beauty God created for them to reflect.

The last General Session covered "There is Still Much Land for You to Take" ... contrasting Joshua, who Moses prepared to replace him, while Joshua did not disciple others for him to pass on the baton with Caleb, who at 80 years remembered God's promise to him through Moses and was ready to 'take the mountain'. We, like Caleb see there is still more land to be taken for God's glory and His Kingdom, so now is not the time to sit back and rest on what has been accomplished. Again becoming complacent with 'good' but continue to press on, discipling others who are coming behind and continue to reach out to Australia and beyond the borders of Australia, so you are reaching not only your Nation, but also the World "one family at a time."

The Electives covered the refrain that most likely all of us 'sang' to our parents at one time or another "But Mum,

Everyone Else is Doing it!" and how do parents respond to that familiar tune in the 21st century? Also covered

"Mood, Music and Images" along with "Sending Right and Wrong Messages" ... the first dealt with how to communicate to the new generation of parents just beginning their journey of parenting and how to effectively reach their hearts in the manner that they have been raised on. The importance of ministering to the 'whole person' utilizing all the senses that God has given mankind. Also a challenge was given to those in attendance to think about what type of images are they giving/leaving their children? With the 'Right and Wrong Messages' ... what are we communicating to our children and also others who are close to us. Are we speaking life or death words and how can we avoid sending the wrong message undermining all we hope to accomplish in the mind and heart of each child the Lord has given us?

Thankfully all the messages have been recorded and will be available through GFA.

For those who attended NC12 thank you for the time and sacrifice you made to be a part of this wonderful "Family Reunion" and for those who for whatever reason were not able to attend this year, please make it a priority to attend NC14, it is an investment we can just about give a 100% guarantee you will not regret.

Blessings, Gary & Anne Marie

GFA NC '12 Phillip Island VIC Teen Camp review.



*Two paths diverged in a narrow woods,
I took the one less travelled by,
I went to the 'Living Dangerously' teen camp.*

It had been two years since I had seen these people and the initial nervousness and apprehension wore off somewhere between marvelling at how tall everybody was and squirting them in the forehead to dissolve an aspirin.

After crazy late night laughter and an extremely early morning wake-up, we were plunged into Mr Jak's relevant and thought provoking morning talk sessions. I had been previously unaware that my parents had raised me in a 'dangerous' Christian home. Thanks guys! We knew now that we could not assume salvation, desensitization was a real issue and although you wouldn't initially steal a handbag, it doesn't take long for you to kill a policeman and . . . yes.

Morning games were inventive and indeed dangerous, shaving each others faces, girls included, inhaling flour and discovering new uses for milk and rice bubbles. The meal times were characterised by either clapping on the table, clapping on cups or clapping with hands on the table. Afternoons were very dangerous. Raft building cannot be done with garbage bags and tape. Swimming in the 'no swimming' lake, can be done. Late night trivia games, movies and socks stuffed in pockets were amazing, and none of us wanted it to end. So, so many photos were taken, and the Wizard of Oz will never be viewed the same way.

It's amazing how after two years, you can reunite and recreate friendships, and the time we spent together caused a tight bond of family that can last until 2014 and beyond.

And there were no sharks in the lake. . . I checked.

Emily Hayde xx



GFA National Leadership Changes

At the 2012 GFA National Conference in Phillip Island VIC, Bill & Joan Grosser announced their decision to step down from active duties as National Directors (see article from them for more details).

As part of their announcement, they formally handed over active duties to the "National Overseeing Team", a group of three couples who have been unanimously endorsed by the GFA leadership community (eg Grossers, State Team Leaders, Ministry Coordinators, etc), and of course the Ezzos. The three couples are: Andy & Robyn Hamdorf (Business Administrators for GFA, State Team Leaders for SA, and team leaders of the National Overseeing Team), Geoff & Alicia Bongers (Ministry Administrators for GFA, Contact Mums Coordinator and State Team Leaders for QLD), and Peter & Michelle Foote (Key Leaders Coordinators and State Team Leaders for NSW). The National Overseeing Team will function for a minimum of 12 months, although it is likely to be longer to ensure stability to GFA. After the conference, the GFA leadership community met to discuss the mechanics of how the National Overseeing Team will run.

There was consensus regarding the details, and despite the sadness of the Grossers stepping aside, everyone left with a sense of anticipation and excitement about what God has next for us. Finally, the GFA leadership community will come together in early 2013 to check that things are going well. If you have any questions regarding the National Overseeing Team, please don't hesitate to contact us directly at overseeing.team@gfi.org.au.

If you and your family has been impacted by Bill and Joan Grosser as they have served Growing Families and would like to honour them for their service, we invite you to contribute to them with a donation. To donate to Bill and Joan over the website please go to Grossers Donations and scroll down the page and put the amount you would like to donate under "Donations to Australian National Directors" You will then be able to process your cart.

We will be accepting donations until the end of March when we will present the funds to Bill and Joan.

Thank you



2014 Parenting with Purpose
Passing the faith along
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