*Their Name is Today, Reclaiming Childhood in a Hostile World*

By Johann Christoph Arnold, Plough Publishing, 2014

Book Review

How long has it been since you’ve read a book that offers practical, user-friendly advice? If it has been awhile and if you are a parent, grandparent, guardian, educator, or anyone concerned about the well-being of our children, then *Their Name is Today* is a must-read!

Christian writer and Bruderhof senior pastor Johann Christoph Arnold poignantly writes that “Never has childhood been such a lonely, joyless voyage for so many,” (p. 109). Yet Arnold offers hope to children and guidance to families and educators by writing about 1) the unique role and responsibilities of each parent, 2) the joys and struggles of parenting from the *perspective of* *families* he has counseled,and 3) the influential role of educators in the lives of children.

Although Pastor Arnold has authored eight books, he freely shares the wisdom of others throughout this book, quoting parents, pastors, psychologists, and educators. His wisdom, however, flows freely and deeply throughout the chapters as he calls upon his experiences as father of eight and counselor of many, including teenagers and families.

For example, in chapter 7, “Guidance to Grow,” Arnold defines discipline not as a punitive process, but as guidance – guiding children how to choose right over wrong. He then offers tangible, practical suggestions for providing guidance and for developing mutual trust. He ends chapter 7 by sharing “words of wisdom” from Richard, a sixty-something elementary school teacher. Richard advises parents and teachers to 1) help children understand the true meaning of “no,” 2) gather children around them (come), 3) listen as you give children your full attention, 4) provide children with times of quiet, 5) teach children to wait in order to develop patience, and 6) care, that is, to develop mutual respect and responsibility in all they do.

And for everyone who is concerned that too much 21st century computer screen time is harmful for children and teens – Arnold agrees. In chapter 4 “Screening Out,” he explains the developmental dangers of too much time spent with electronic gadgetry and then offers creative ideas and ways to curb, but not eliminate, technology.

In closing, *Their Name is Today, Reclaiming Childhood in a Hostile World,* is an easy, enjoyable “read.” Church leaders could use this book as part of adult Christian Education classes or as a book club selection. If time or schedules do not permit these activities, then I would encourage you to make copies available to congregants with a note of explanation about this book in your monthly newsletters or weekly bulletins.

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