

# *to* **Be, or Not to Be** *a<sup>^</sup> Lawyer*

by Barbara Streibl

Traditional homeschoolers are encouraged to aspire to be their best and to use their reason. They study many subjects, among them Latin or Greek, speech making, logic and research. They are taught to be thorough, diligent, creative, fair and trustworthy, and to apply their gifts in all areas of their life. These skills and qualities are important in many jobs but one profession uses all of them – the legal profession. Yet homeschoolers tend to choose what might be termed 'soft' professions. They go into music, social work, secretarial, business, health, teaching or trade careers in great numbers but few have plans to be politicians, lawyers, doctors, university professors, architects or engineers.

The underlying reason for many may be that 'soft' jobs offer a shorter and less expensive post-secondary education as well as time flexibility such as part-time, shifts or own business - all are conditions leading to a good fit for early marriage and starting a family. Still, the fact remains that unless positions in 'hard' professions are filled by more traditional homeschoolers, the public sphere will be directed by individuals whose worldview and standards are different from those of homeschoolers.

Of particular concern is the legal profession as it provides a legal framework for many current issues affecting other areas. Think immigration (laws governing foreign policy), euthanasia and abortion (medicine), young offenders (taxation and family law), homelessness (building regulations and health care) and education content (school legislation), to name just a few. Canada needs lawyers who are able to see the long term ramifications of laws which favour personal choice over moral standards and personal responsibility or which encourage self-centeredness over concern for one's neighbour. Our country needs lawyers who will use their legal knowledge to provide interpretations of laws leading to an environment which upholds and strengthens the family, church and government. We need lawyers who support the proper role of government in our society and who will recover respect of the public for the legal profession.

I wonder how many young people know that since 1867 sixteen out of twenty-three Canadian prime ministers were practicing lawyers or at least obtained a law degree – that is 70% of prime ministers with legal background. Of the last ten prime ministers, only two did not have law degrees, and of those two one has taken first year of law studies before turning to the field of political science. A lesser known fact is that our current Chief Justice considers being very sensitive to society's values as one of the most important qualities of contemporary judiciary. She also acknowledges that today judges play a greater social role by not just interpreting the law but actually engaging in lawmaking instead of the Parliament or the provincial legislatures.

Understanding what judiciary's role should encompass combined with the knowledge of moral standards according to God's transcendent laws would bring reason to our society which now defers to personal choice and emotions as the basis for moral decisions. In view of the influence that laws and their recent interpretation have had on our society, it would be wise to consider how traditional homeschoolers' decision to become a lawyer might affect the future legal environment whether as practicing lawyers, law professors or constitutional law experts.