

PARENTS: THE FORGOTTEN PEOPLE!

A father was heard recently to say, "When I was a boy I did what my father wanted me to, and now that I'm a father I do what my children want me to". This illustrates perfectly the plight of the present-day parent. They are indeed the forgotten people. They have never known what it was to call their lives their own!

A birth used to be called a "Blessed Event". We used to say that God has given to us a son or a daughter. Now it would seem more appropriate to say that God has given us to our sons and daughters.

Oh, for the good old days when parents knew they were right--- and children ~~knew~~ it too! Nowadays you read a dozen books on child rearing--and you still don't know what to do.

The amazing thing is that; according to the experts, everyone who was born before World War I was raised wrong. I wonder how the world survived these thousands and millions of years of parental dictatorship. Surely everybody must have had warped personalities and been full of neureses. There couldn't have been any normal people, the way they were raised. Or maybe it was normal to be abnormal and nobody knew the difference.

I sometimes think the schools have joined this conspiracy to ~~undermine~~ the confidence of the parent. Someone has defined a modern school teacher as, "A person who treats a child like an adult---and a parent like a child". Some of them look on parents as being just the machinery through which children are produced for the schools! And of course, a mere parent knows nothing about what a child should learn in school, or how he should be taught.

Parents are partly to blame for the schools' taking over the functions of the home. In their confusion and bewilderment and frustration over what to do with their children, they are overjoyed when the summer vacation is through. Also when bus time comes on a school morning. Their insoluble problems are in the hands of the schools and they can relax again. The schools are glorified baby sitters.

I call on parents to re-assert their old time authority. I still believe God gives these children into our care and that, until they reach maturity, they are our responsibility; and we have the duty, God helping us, to order their lives. It actually seems that, in recent years, we've had a guilty conscience about bringing children into the world; and haven't felt that God had much to do with the process! That is especially true since we have found out how to limit the number of our children and space them properly. I would remind you, however, that the process hasn't changed since God made man. And I believe that God approves of "planned parenthood" so long as the planning is done prayerfully and unselfishly.

One of the hopeful trends of the last ten or fifteen years is the increase in the size of the family. The most frustrated parent in the world is the parent of one child. When the first one comes you try to read up on everything and you are afraid you'll "warp his personality". By the time the third one comes along you know that it's your own personality that's in danger of being warped. And it

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...ll be if you don't assert yourself!

Children are pretty tough, physically and mentally. They don't warp easy. Twenty years of raising pigs, calves, mule colts and little boys have convinced me that they are born the way they are and there's not much you can do about their basic traits. All these child rearing books were written by people who had studied the neurotic and the mentally sick and they concluded that what happened to these people was bad. They didn't study the brothers, sisters, friends and relatives who had the same upbringing and developed into well adjusted citizens.

George Bernard Shaw has said that youth was such a wonderful thing to be wasted on children. That is another way of saying that wisdom is not possible without experience. We parents may be conscious of our lack of wisdom, but let us realize that to turn children loose to work out their own destinies is criminal folly. In all humility let us pray for guidance, love them, and, if necessary, spank them; but by all means teach them respect for us as parents and for their elders in general.

What the present age needs is fewer frustrated parents and MORE FRUSTRATED CHILDREN!

~~Besides~~, lack of guidance will produce insecurity and neurosis as often as parental tyranny.

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(mid-50's)
at PTA