

Taking Your Child

Part One of Two

1 - THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

This does not sound very pleasant, but you should know about it. This crisis is occurring over and over again to families all over America, as well as in many other Western nations.

The childish words of a kindergarten student are taken out of context; a social worker is called in, and the child is taken away from its parents.

A child misbehaves in a store or parking lot, and a parent spansks it. An “alert” passerby notifies the authorities—and the child is removed from the home for months or years.

Beware! The situation is getting serious! so serious that some parents are moving to isolated locations in the country.

A major U.S. Supreme Court “decision” occurred on April 25, 1994. On that date, the high court let stand a U.S. Court of Appeals ruling that social workers are entitled to “*absolute immunity from liability.*” That means they can do almost anything, without fear of personal court reprisal against them. They cannot be arrested, they cannot be tried in a court of law—even if a child dies because of their actions!

Because of that ruling, social workers can remove children from parents—without evidence or proof of any abuse to the child. They can remove children without an explanation, or court order,—and cannot be sued or prosecuted for any unfavorable result that may occur as a result of their actions!

The ruling, which the Supreme Court let stand, was the Sixth Circuit Court decision in *Hoffman v. Harris*, which was keyed to a similar Sixth Circuit Court decision (*Salyer v. Patrick, case (874 F. 2d 374; 1989)*). That ruling clearly stated that it was made to give social workers all the power and authority possible, and “ensures that they are not deterred from vigorously performing their jobs as they might if they feared personal liability” (*ibid.*).

Ironically, in the *Hoffman v. Harris* case, the father was later exonerated as having been unjustly treated and falsely accused by the welfare worker! Ian Hoffman had been arrested and stripped of his right to see his daughter—solely as a result of a false charge against him, of “child abuse.” Yet the social workers, who brought the allegations, did not question the child nor permit the father an opportunity to reply to the charge.

Do we now live in Russia?

The fact that Hoffman was later cleared by a jury and awarded permanent custody of his child,—did not change the outcome of this case. It was when he sued the social services department and the welfare workers that the Sixth Circuit Court handed down that decision, immunizing the welfare workers and their department, a decision which the Supreme Court let stand.

As a result, social workers will henceforth have even greater discretionary powers to do as they please with families and their children.

And the basis of their actions will rest upon the personal standards of the social workers as to what is right and what is wrong.

They can grab children, divide families, and accuse parents of false charges. In some instances, criminal prosecution of the parents is the outcome.

In this article, we will refer to this agency as the “social services department,” or simply as the “department.” It is city or county extension of a state department, sometimes called “Child Protective Services.” Yet we will find its objectives are to protect the department.

Did you know it is illegal to teach your child Christianity in the privacy of your own home? Read this:

“The Christian fundamentalists who want the freedom to indoctrinate their children with religious education do not understand [that] the law that prevents them from legally teaching their kids prevents someone else from abusing theirs.”

That is legalese for letting you know that instructing your child in the Bible can be construed by the court as a form of “child abuse.”

Who wrote those words? None other than Kathryn Collins, the legal counsel for the Iowa Department of Education.

The university-trained “experts,” now in charge of the welfare and social services departments throughout America, consider Bible and religious instruction to be “too narrow” for a child’s mind. They presume to have the authority to tell you what you are to teach your child, and what you may not teach him. It is called “indoctrinating the child with Christian beliefs,” and is thought to be something to be avoided.

The coming of Clinton to Washington, D.C., only aggravated the problem. His wife, Hillary, wants the state to control the destiny of the child. Bill does what Hillary wants, and Congress generally tries to enact it into law.

The Clinton “Goals 2000” is one such law. It is now on the federal statute books, and is being pushed in school districts throughout the United States. A program called “Parents as Teachers,” which is but one facet of “Goals 2000,” is a “parent training service.” When the time comes that it is implemented in your school district, you will find it requires that the parents be taught what they are to teach their children at home! Only politically correct guidelines are acceptable. When the progress of each child is checked on, and yours is found to have been taught too much religion, or other “myths,” then the social workers can be called in.

The new educational theory is that too much religion places a child “at risk,” and can lead to “child abuse.” The problem is that the child should be able to start school “with an open mind,” rather than one fortified with Biblical principles, standards, and morals.

A computerized tracking system is being developed, to be used with the “Goals 2000” educational projects (including “Parents as Teachers”). In this way, every parent can be kept in line, and the social services departments of America can improve their rate of child confiscations.

Another “improvement” is the on-site health clinics in the larger public grade and high schools. These are staffed by specially-trained health workers, who watch for certain things. Do the children appear undernourished? Perhaps they are not getting enough food at home. If so, the social services department needs to be called. What about the psychosocial status of the child? Does it have the right moral constraints? Perhaps the moral standards of the parents do not seem suitable, and the child needs special counseling. The students need to be equipped with the best in modernized beliefs and values.

By now, you may be wondering how bad it is going to get. Because the citizens let the government do whatever it wants, without a public outcry, the situation will continue to worsen.

Listen to this:

Berit Kjos tells of a friend who was living in Reno, Nevada. At the local elementary school, counselors interviewed the children at random. When they found anything they considered unusual, it was reported. One thing they were looking for was spankings at home. Such a thing must never be, according to the new morality.

An eight-year-old student was asked, “Do your parents ever spank you?” When the boy replied, “Yes,” the counselors examined the child closely for bruises, but found none. Then a school official called the boy’s father and told him that, if he ever spanked the child again at home—and they learned about it,—the boy would be placed in a foster home.

We are discussing government agents who have a lot of power and mixed-up thinking. They target parents, and then take their children.

If you permit your child to be enrolled in a public school, anything and everything about that child may be watched. The teachers, counselors, and school officials are looking for trouble, and, looking so hard, they are likely to find it.

Jio Saephan fled war-torn Laos and came to America. Settling in San Francisco, he made the mistake of sending his oldest child, who was of school age, to the public school.

One day, seven-year-old Vourn was at home and, as his grandmother noted, was “playing recklessly” with a kitchen knife. She was frightened enough that she told his father, Jio, when he came home from work that night. As was a Laotian custom, as punishment, the father slapped the child on the back of the hand with a knife. It made a slight bruise. Next to the bruise was a larger scratch, where the child had recently cut himself while playing with a steel gate.

The next day at school, a teacher noticed the scratch and asked the child about it. A report was quickly made to the authorities. Soon after, social workers came to Jio Saephan’s home—and took every child in the home, all four of them.

Vourn’s five-week-old brother, Seng, who always slept with his mother, died within a week. As a cover, the social workers dismissed it by the excuse that it was “sudden infant death syndrome.” But the mother had visited the child prior to its death, and noted that its clothes stank of cigarette smoke. She found it impossible to obtain help from the social worker, who, she said, “yells at me.”

The entire story was later reported in the *San Francisco Chronicle* (“Grieving Laotian Family Mourns Infant,” February 19, 1994), and in the *San Jose Mercury News* (“Infant’s Death Is Tragedy in East-West Culture Clash,” February 19, 1994).

After the baby died, the mother was not allowed to see it for four days. Apparently, there was a reason for that for, when she did see the tiny body of her infant son, the severe bruise on its head was quite noticeable. The mother believes her child had been dropped.

Unwilling to back down a bit, the social services

department decreed that the father, Jio Saephan, could not see his children unless a caseworker was present. In order to regain his parental rights, he must attend lengthy “contemporary parenting classes.” In those classes, he was told that he must never again discipline his children in any way (*Mercury News* report, referred to above).

The *Coalition of Concerned Parents* in San Jose called little Seng’s death “an indictment on the failure of the whole child protective services system in the state of California” (“*Justices Allow Immunity for Social Workers*,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 19, 1994).

A week after Seng’s death, another baby in a different caseload died. Social workers had refused to give custody of little Jorge Millan to his grandmother, because her “house was too small.”

During supervised visits, Jorge’s family had noticed cuts and bruises on the baby’s head. But, when they reported this to the department, there was no response. Then, shortly afterward, the foster mother they selected put a shower hose into his mouth and then into his rectum—and he died of perforated intestines (“*Tot’s Death Cuts Short a Tragic Life*,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 27, 1994).

The emerging pattern is that social services departments are quick to punish the true (biological) parents, while ignoring what others do to those children.

We have already mentioned the danger of being caught spanking your child in public. Something on that order happened to a mother in Texas. As a result, she almost lost her children entirely.

“The seemingly unlimited power of child welfare agencies and the caseworkers they employ has some parents too demoralized and fearful to discipline unruly kids.” That is what the Texas mother told reporters after undergoing that harrowing experience. “You’re never able to be the same with your kids, after you go through an investigation. I’ve become paranoid . . . and less able to discipline,” she added (*Dana Mack*, “*Child Abuse Bureaucracy, a New Parent Trap*,” *Sacramento Bee*, February 20, 1994).

Dana Mack, the *Washington Post* reporter and author of the syndicated column (reprinted in the *Sacramento Bee*), went on to make this statement:

“While 39 percent of the over 2.6 million reports of child maltreatment each year are substantiated [“substantiated,” that is, testified to by a witness], only 3 percent of these cases involve injury to a child requiring any medical attention. Indeed, substantiated cases of child abuse include incredibly mild

transgressions. A Florida couple was convicted of abuse for restricting a foster child’s television viewing” (*ibid.*).

What have we come to, when the state can take away our children for little or no reason?

Mack also noted the decision of a recent San Diego County grand jury:

“The child protective system has “isolated itself to a degree unprecedented in our system of jurisprudence and ordered liberties. But our lawmakers have, for the most part, failed to respond to such warnings. Aware of the enormous media attention given to the subject of child abuse, they are willing to appear ‘insensitive’ to the sufferings of children. By not acting, our elected officials are helping to maintain a system that has proven unfriendly to family life and ultimately hazardous to the well-being of American children” (*ibid.*).

In other words, there are no checks and balances—when it comes to social services. They can do almost anything they want and get away with it.

We began this article by noting that, on April 25, 1994, the Supreme Court would not interfere with the Sixth Circuit Court’s ruling in the 1989 *Salyer v. Patrick* case, and the related *Hoffman v. Harris* case. At issue was Ian Hoffman’s damage suit, which ended at the Supreme Court. That case clearly shows a shift in the balance of power—from the parent to the state. The government can now do frightening things to you and your family through its case workers,—and you cannot sue the social workers who did it.

Only two of the nine justices wanted to hear the cases. (Those two are the most conservative justices now on the Supreme Court: Clarence Thomas and Antonin Scalia.) The other seven refused. As a result, police and other investigators can be sued, if they violate “clearly established” rights of citizens. But social workers have total immunity! This immunity gives them a brazen daring, which they would not otherwise be able to exercise.

Here is Justice Clarence Thomas’ written dissent to the Supreme Court’s denial of petition for writ of certiorari in the *Hoffman v. Harris* case:

“The District Court held that the social workers were absolutely immune from damage liability for this conduct. Relying on its decision in *Salyer v. Patrick*, 874F. 2d 374 (CA6 1989), the court of Appeals affirmed . . . the decision below and other decisions granting absolute immunity to social workers may be premised more on the notion that absolute immunity serves important policy concerns than on either historical or functional analyses. See, e.g., *Meyers*, 812F. 2d, at 1157. To the extent they are so based, they are misguided: The federal courts ‘do

not have a license to establish immunities from section 1983 actions in the interest of what [they] judge to be sound public policy' . . .

"We should address the important threshold question whether social workers are, under any circumstances, entitled to absolute immunity. Accordingly, I respectfully dissent."—*Justice Clarence Thomas, April 25, 1994.*

2 - IF THE CASEWORKER COMES TO INVESTIGATE

Aggressive policies of so-called "child protection agencies" have resulted in many families being torn apart. Intervention is often based on nothing more than suspicion of potential abuse. A basic problem is that the state believes the children belong to it rather than to the parents or to God.

Another problem is that it is secular, university-trained men and women who are licensed as social workers. They cooperate closely with government agents who are practicing psychiatrists and psychologists. These people believe it is their inalienable right to decide what is "proper parenting." Yet their opinions and decisions are colored by pseudo-psychology concepts learned in the universities.

The inference is that only those approved by the state are able to raise children properly. Foster parents have been approved, but biological parents generally have not. (They are usually not "approved" until after they have had their children taken away, and have gone through an agonizing process trying to get them back.) Because the foster home was officially approved, to admit failure on the part of the foster home would be to admit failure on the part of the social services department.

There are instances in which social workers have perjured themselves or withheld information in court, in order to win a case.

Each decade, the crime and profligacy in the world becomes worse. But, as it does, the social services keep intensifying their efforts to take control of private families. We are coming to a time when it is becoming difficult to avoid these family pirates.

A mere allegation of suspected abuse, mental or physical, can result in a social services invasion of one's home. The children may be removed and, if that happens, it may be weeks or months before you are able to recover them, if at all.

In all of this, keep in mind that parents are assumed guilty and must prove their innocence, and counseling is generally required for all parents who come under suspicion.

The charges may arise from spanking the child or even denying its wishes.

Anyone may allege "abuse," based on suspicion, simply by calling the social services office. The home will then be investigated. If it ends with that, a file

will be kept on that family in the district office. They are now a "potential abuser family." That file will be used against them if another complaint is later called in. If, on a whim, the caseworker decides to do so, he can remove the children from the home for an undetermined period of time. The children will be placed in foster care at an unknown location, sometimes together and sometimes separately. A court date will be set for "fact-finding," usually within 72 hours.

The caseworker will be busy interviewing neighbors and relatives, to determine if there are other suspicious aspects. The whole thing will be blown up, much like an income tax inspection, until everyone in the neighborhood considers this family to be child abusers.

In all this, the family's privacy will be violated, and, in some instances (although illegal), the family's confidential matters will be mentioned by the caseworkers to some of those being interviewed. This prejudices the neighbors to make negative comments and opinions, which will then be used against the parents. Any slight concern is twisted into confirmation that the parents are abusive.

All this sounds like the midnight entrance of the black-shirted Nazis in Hitler's Germany in the 1930s, when they forced their way in and hauled off family members—on a single pretext or none at all.

At the court hearing, the department will present its findings and make recommendations based upon the opinions of the social worker investigating the case. The parents must be represented by an attorney who will attempt, on very short notice, to refute the state's allegations. Keep in mind that the caseworker does not represent the child's interests, but those of the state. What are the interests of the state? They are to maintain a good record of convictions, and no wrongful intrusions.

At times, a *Guardian ad Litem* (GAL) will be appointed by the court to represent the child's interests. Although the GAL is not affiliated with the social services department, but is an independent investigator,—yet, much of the time, he does little other than accept the position of the state—which, in turn, consists of the opinions of a single caseworker.

In some instances, the GAL tries sincerely to help the parents and keep the family together. But court records indicate that, when that happens, the court is less likely to appreciate the counsel of the GAL. We have here a state-operated clique: the caseworker,

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working with the department of social services, working with the judge, and often in cahoots with the GAL too.

Although the department is not really defending the child, yet the court generally assumes that it is,—so the department's request is usually okayed by the juvenile judge. Is not the caseworker a professionally-trained person, who, because of university and psychological training, knows how to come to wise conclusions? At least, that is the conclusion many judges come to.

In most states, the law specifies that an important objective is to reunite the family. But the social services department has a different objective: the winning of as many cases as it can, as if that can prove to everyone the correctness of its decisions. But winning a case means separating a family—and taking away one or more of the children. In addition, state and federal funding to local departments is often contingent on the number of children which are being boarded in foster homes. The agencies receive no funds for the families they reunite. But, in addition to the funds they receive from the state for each foster-care unit,—they frequently charge the parents the cost of that care! In some instances, these expenses can be tens of thousands of dollars for several months of separation.

But that is helpful to the best interests of the social services department also,—because then the parents will be too broke to afford an attorney.

When the parents appear at the hearing, they are generally represented by a state-appointed attorney. What is that attorney like?

He is generally overworked, running from case to case and, in most instances, has only been introduced to the parents a few moments before the hearing begins. He is hardly acquainted with the case, knows next to nothing about the parents,—and yet is now supposed to ably defend them, their positions, and beliefs in court. At the best, that attorney is not likely to do very well, especially with a judge generally prejudiced, in advance, in favor of the department of social services.

But a number of these court-appointed attorneys are often less helpful. They are useless hirelings, who want the family to admit any and all charges, so the

case can be gotten over as quickly as possible. A client that denies the allegations is seen as uncooperative and a nuisance. It is easier for the attorney if the parents just admit they are abusive—and do whatever the department wants them to do.

If you get an attorney like that, you are very unlikely to win your case! Such an attorney is worse than useless.

What about the testimony given in the courtroom? Friends of the parents may support your innocence, but the court tends to look down on it,—since they are not “professionals.” Frankly, the objective of the department and that of the judge tend to be the same: Do what the professionals recommend and, above all, defend the state.

The most favorable aspects in the court case will be the attitude of the caseworker and whether or not the parents have a good attorney, whose fee they are paying themselves.

Under such circumstances, should you plead innocent or guilty?

(1) *If you plead innocent, and refuse to admit being abusive parents,—*you will be considered to be “in denial” (a handy psychological label to help the department avoid the truth; in reality, it is the department which is lying to itself).

When you are found guilty, which is what the court decision generally will be, you are likely to be required by the court to undergo “psychological therapy” to overcome your tendency to abuse your children.

As long as you continue to maintain your innocence, your “therapy” will be considered “unsuccessful,”—and your children will not be returned to you. This is thought important, since the underlying objective is not the welfare of the children, but the defense of the department. You are offered your children back, if you will admit guilt. That is how it works.

(2) *If you plead guilty,* you are probably doing so in the hope of getting your children back sooner. What will happen next?

First, you will be officially designated as abusive, and will probably be assigned to a period of psychotherapy to straighten you out and reorient your thinking.

One parent may be induced to plead guilty, under the threat that, otherwise, the spouse will be

charged and indicted.

However, with admission of guilt by either party, there is the possibility that they may be arrested and charged in a criminal court. The seriousness of the charge is a factor to be kept in mind.

Sometimes the children will be returned to the home, pending the parents' compliance with the department's orders. But most of the time, the children will be kept in a foster home for an undetermined time.

The parents may or may not be permitted to visit their children. The "evaluation" of the caseworker will decide that, supposedly on the basis of whether the parents are cooperating with the efforts of the department to correct their abusive behavior?

Once a file is opened on this family, it can continue for weeks and months. Even if only one of several children in the family are involved, that file will remain open until the last child turns eighteen.

3 - HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF IN ADVANCE

1 - Consider moving to a secluded rural location, not too close to other homes. In view of all that is taking place in our world today, that is excellent advice!

2 - It may be best to home school your children. Many of the charges against parents originate at the local public school, when some childish comment is noted—and then reported by a teacher, counselor, or school official to the authorities.

Private schools may or may not be safe, either. The church schools and academies of the denomination, of which the present writer is a member, has sometimes gone out of its way to be more strictly subservient to the wishes of government than even the public schools! This attitude of servile dependency is shown in an overconcern for vaccinations, when even the public schools will accept waivers based on personal and religious convictions.

In reality, the responsibility for educating the child does not lie with the government; it is the responsibility of the parents. We cannot expect the government to provide the instruction needed to prepare for Christian living, good citizenship, missionary work, and preparation for the life to come. In the public schools are to be found ungodly associates and wrong teachings. The Word of God is forbidden there. Children are interrogated and then reported to health and social services agencies. The dangers keep increasing.

Christian schools may or may not be the answer. You, as parents, must be very carefully and very watchful. The associates in Christian schools are sometimes not the best. There may be problems with the instruction.

The best solution is to educate your children at home. There are a variety of educational materials you can use for this purpose. None can know when home

schooling may be stopped, so make use of it while you have it.

3 - Maintain family worship. Fill the minds of your children with the Word of God. You can never know when they, like Moses and Joseph, may be taken from you. Jochebed knew that Moses was going to be taken, and she did all in her power to train him to be a loyal, obedient servant of God. With the prayerful help of God, how well she succeeded!

4 - If one of your children injures himself, but does not require medical attention,—do not send him to school until the marks or bruises subside. During that time, only let trusted friends see the child.

If a child-care professional (a teacher, a worker at a child-care center, etc.) becomes suspicious, the child will be interrogated without the parents being present. If he is young, he may become frightened and say erroneous things which could greatly damage the safety of the children and the parents.

He may be asked, "How did you get that bruise?" His answer, "I don't know," may evoke a response which causes him to fabricate a different reply when asked again a moment later. And on it goes. Children try to say that which will please pressuring adults. If his answer still does not indict his parents, he may be asked the question again and again until he says something which does.

If, under the pressure of the interrogation and in an attempt to stop it, the child changes his story, the pressure will increase. If the child changes his story again,—that will be considered "proof" that something is up! It is considered a sure sign of "abuse."

Sound dangerous? It is.

Whether true or false, what if the child answers, "My mommy did it!" The mother will not learn of the charge until she appears in court to answer the charge—unless the caseworker happens to tell her ahead of time.

4 - WHAT YOU SHOULD DO WHEN THEY COME

The following information could be worth a lot to you and your friends in coming years. The time may come when the authorities may suddenly come for one or more of your children.

You should keep this two-part information sheet on file and write us for copies to send to your friends.

Here are several factors:

1 - It is crucial that you try to be pleasant, self-possessed, calm, and in command of the situation.

2 - Generally, the holocaust will begin when a caseworker comes to your home and informs you that reports have been received of allegations of abuse. Do not expect to be told who stated the allegations, and there is a good possibility that, prior to the hearing, you may not even be told what the allegations are.

(If the allegations are extreme enough, the caseworker will be accompanied by a sheriff's deputy, and will try to force their way in—in order to seize your

child or children, but this is less likely.)

3 - They may already have picked up your children, but, if your child is at home when the doorbell rings, maintain an atmosphere of pleasantness, but do not allow the caseworker to enter the home, without a warrant and a police officer being present.

4 - Keep all your children home from that point onward. Otherwise, your children may be picked up at school, or in transit, by the authorities.

5 - Immediately call an attorney to represent you. (You may also be able to locate a specializing attorney; more on this below.) It is imperative that you select one who is sympathetic to parents and those who hold Christian beliefs.

6 - Explain to the caseworker that you will not speak to him, except in the presence of your attorney,—and henceforth do not speak to him, except in the presence of your attorney.

The problem here is that, after each conversation (“interview”), the caseworker prepares a written report based on his opinion of your words, your attitude, etc. In the caseworker’s notes, which is placed permanently in your case file, your words, beliefs, and

attitude may be twisted and later used against you.

You should not only have your attorney present at each conversation, but you would do well to purchase a good AC/battery tape recorder, so you can make cassette copies as well.

7 - In each interview with the caseworker, do not let him badger or upset you. Keep prayerfully calm. Do not say anything that will show you are upset with the caseworker or what he is trying to do. (Sounds impossible to do, doesn’t it? This person, standing in front of you, comes with a lying report and is trying to take your children away from you!)

The caseworker is supposedly there to “help you and your children,” and you must appear to be appreciative of his efforts to give you that help. The worse your attitude, the worse it will go against you later. Between interviews, plead with God for enabling strength to keep going, and to protect your children.

8 - When the caseworker first appeared at your door, you found it necessary to obtain a local attorney fast. *But, in addition or instead, try to find an attorney who specializes in child custody cases, who practices before Juvenile Justice Court, and, hopefully, who is a Christian.*

Keep in mind that many attorneys are not trained to deal in child custody cases and appear before a Juvenile Justice Court.

One organization which we would recommend is the *Rutherford Institute*. It is a Christian, non-profit legal-aid organization, and handles religious liberty and child custody cases for Christians. For legal help or seminar information, call 804-978-3888.

9 - In addition to contacting an attorney, there are other people you need to contact as soon as possible:

First, call all those people whom you think the department is likely to interview, in order to obtain hearsay and opinions against you. *Get to them before the caseworker does!* Warn them about what the social services department is trying to do.

Get written statements from them, favoring you and your care for your children.

Second, contact trusted child-care professionals, and get written statements from them; statements which will confirm your integrity and care for your children. This would include family physicians, registered nurses, and any other professionals from which you can obtain written statements.

Third, contact other friends and ask them to prepare written statements and, if possible, come and vouch for your integrity at the hearing.

Written statements will be important. They are tangible and solid; while those who say they will testify, at the hearing, in your behalf may not be able to do so sometimes because the hearing date has been changed.

10 - At the hearing, continue to be pleasant and calm, in spite of these wrongful efforts to split your

GOING THROUGH DIFFERENT COURTS

If you were to retain an attorney who is experienced at working in the federal courts, and who knew how to do it, there is a method which has been used but rarely, yet with success.

A petition would have to be filed in the Federal District Court, stating that you and your children have been deprived of the constitutional right to life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness without due process.

If the district judge were to rule in your favor, the case would immediately be over, and social services would have to return your children.

If the district court ruled against you, your attorney could make an appeal to the Federal Appellate Court. Should that court decide in your favor, it would affect many social service departments, and they would have to change the way they did their work. That would be a very useful precedent which would help many other hapless victims of social services. An appellate court decision sets a precedent, which others could later use to win more freedom from the tyranny of certain government agencies.

To date, such a case has not yet reached an appellate court. A loss for all U.S. social services would be great at that level.

But even a win for them, at that level, would provide an opportunity to carry the matter on up to the U.S. Supreme Court. A loss there, could mean a gain of several important protections for families throughout the nation.

home and take your children. You should expect that the caseworker will, to defend his position, portray you in the worst possible manner. He will try to omit those items which are favorable to you, and emphasize hearsay and opinions negative to you. Strangely enough, it is the rumors and unfounded opinions which become seized upon as a type of "legal evidence" in these child custody hearings.

11 - Arrange, in advance, for your attorney to challenge every allegation against you. He should make the caseworker *prove* every such statement,—and show it is not merely based on suspicion, rumor, or hearsay.

5 - WHAT IF THE COURT RULES AGAINST YOU?

What should you do if the judge rules against you? You will have to prayerfully consider what you will do,—in fact, you do best to have decided that before the date of the hearing!

Here are some thoughts:

If the judge rules in favor of the social services department, he will probably decree that you should receive counseling for a period of time, and that, when it is completed, you can have your child or children back again. In most instances, you do best to accept the judge's decision and take that counseling. Remember that he has issued a court decree which would be difficult to overturn.

But what if the judge should rule that your child/children are to be permanently taken from you; what then? Several factors would govern here:

Who would the children be with? Sometimes it is a nice grandmother, but oftentimes it is some family off the street which had earlier applied to provide foster care for the state.

Will you have visitation rights?

Obviously, all of this is very serious. Only prayer can help you pass through it.

If you have been careful to appear pleasant, courteous, and calm throughout the ordeal, you are more likely to receive your child or children back within a few months.

Of course, the nature of the initial charge will have an important bearing on this. Were you accused of spanking your child in public? or were you falsely accused of threatening to attack him with a knife?

Another aspect will be the principles you have earlier instilled in your child. Some children are unruly and rebellious, and quite willing to turn against their parents. Which brings us to the next section:

6 - PREPARING AHEAD OF TIME

1 - While you have the opportunity, lead your children to Christ and a personal relationship with Him. Teach them the importance of obeying the laws of God by faith in Jesus. Instill in them the importance of integrity.

2 - Have a thoroughgoing prayer life. Maintain regular family worships. Let your home be a little Bethel,

where you regularly worship God together. The times in which we live are too serious for anything less than this.

3 - Do what you can to keep them from becoming worldly. You will be helping them in this life and for the next, and you will be helping yourself. Television, with its movies and other assorted junk is enough to ruin any mind. Why let it remain in your home? Be cautious about music, playmates, schools, the radio, magazines, and other things. Do not let the world corrupt your children. Some parents actually invite the worldly corruption in! They do it by purchasing a television set and bringing it into the home.

4 - Like Waldensian parents of earlier centuries, also teach them to be cautious and, in the presence of those outside the home, to be very careful what they say. Instruct your children never to discuss family matters with anyone else, unless you are present. To any prodding, they should only respond, "I want my Daddy or Mommy."

5 - Never let your children come under the influence of any child-care professional, without yourself being present. Keep in mind that all such professionals, including public school teachers, are required, by law, to report anything unusual to the authorities. They are required to do this, regardless of whether they suspect abuse. They can be penalized with prosecution and fines if they do not do so.

America is becoming a dangerous place in which to live. A place of fear. And many of the problems discussed in this article apply equally well to Canada, Australia, and the nations of Europe.

6 - Plan ahead: Find an attorney now who would be able to represent you in Juvenile Court, if you ever needed his help. This should be an attorney who would be on immediate call. You may wish to save up some money in advance for such a crisis. If not needed—and we surely hope it is not,—you could later use the money to help your children get through college or technical school.

7 - Plan in advance which professionals you would call upon to help you make your defense in court, as previously mentioned. Most anyone with advanced degrees would be a help, but those who work with children, in any capacity, would be the best.

8 - Consider ahead of time who you could entrust your children with, in a time of crisis. The court may allow friends or relatives to care for the children during the ordeal. (You will not be charged for the child's foster care, if the providers do not receive payment from the state.)

You will want to share this important information with friends and loved ones. Additional copies are available from:

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