

CAN THE CATHOLICS AND PROTESTANTS UNITE?

LOOK

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The famous baby doctor becomes a grandfather for the first time

A VISIT WITH

Dr. Spock

BY GERHON ZIMMERMANN

and Mary Spock

On a Sunday afternoon a few months ago, Dr. Benjamin Spock reached over a glass-topping table in his living room in Connecticut. He was making editorial suggestions for a book about the raising of handicapped children, in this the summer of the phantom dance, his wife Mary was reading. Both were almost silent as what they were doing.

At 1:00, the phone rang. Mrs. Spock answered it. "Dr. Mr.," her son Michael said from Springfield, Ohio. "We have an eight-pound two-ounce boy."

These informed sons of the man considered America's the greatest baby doctor had reached him. The doctor and his wife took eight years at the phone to get the details and offer congratulations. They printed with delight.

The doctor's 37th birthday was the date of all great fathers, but this was a special occasion. The family spent several joyful days over a grandfather for the first time.

Perhaps no other person has so influenced so many mothers' ideas about babies. Dr. Spock's *Baby and Child Care* has sold more than 13,000,000 copies since it first appeared in 1946. It is now in print in 30 languages and about 100 other countries. His voice has brought comfort, reassurance, and reassurance. Spock's *Parent and Family* to parents all over the world. "Dr. Spock's way" may begin to be the way of many other fathers, but he is loved like the way of the mother by many mothers.

To report on Dr. Spock's attitudes toward children—his own, grandchildren as well as other people's babies—and recently stated him at his home, white hair, beard and his parents were making them. As the parents on these pages show, Dr. Spock's ideas about children are the same in practice as they are in theory. As it always has been, continued



Dr. Benjamin Spock plays with his grandson David, who is the son of Michael Spock. These exclusive photographs were made by LIFE photographer James Henson when David was six months old. At the right, Dr. Spock works on the manuscript of a book. He is using the same 10,000 words with his wife while he was writing his famous best-selling *Baby and Child Care*, first published in 1946. He donated the book to his wife Mary, who spent on his behalf.



Daniel yawns. He was soon put to bed. He is being raised "Dr. Spock's way," which tempers permissiveness with common sense.

Dr. Spock "grew up in a family where the children were loved and were important"

his message is that love and common sense should go hand in hand with knowledge about the rearing of children. It is a message millions of mothers have found reassuring.

"Reassurance" is still Dr. Spock's biggest word. He says that when he wrote the book that so many mothers clutch like a pacifier, "I wanted to offer parents the combination of psychological and physical care needed in child care. I wanted to write to a mother in a way that would reassure her. I didn't want to scold or lecture her."

His message was that, most times, mother knows best. His plain-spoken cribside manner caught mothers' ears, and it shows no signs of letting go. The most frequent comment he hears now is: "I feel that you are talking to me. You

sound as if you had confidence in me."

Dr. Spock's way with mothers began in childhood. He recalls, "I grew up in a family where the children were loved and were important. My parents devoted a great deal of time and concern to all of us." Born in 1903, the pediatrician-to-be was the oldest of six children in the Spock house on Cold Spring Street in New Haven, Conn.

"I gave a lot of bottles and changed a lot of diapers," he says, "and I can still see Mother chewing every bite of solid food she was feeding to the younger kids."

The family was raised in the fresh-air, rigid-training era of child care he was to change later. During the winter, for example, the Spock children slept on an unheated screened porch.

Dr. Spock burps Daniel, who began eating solid foods when he was six weeks old, again in the "Spock way."



Usually, the chamber pot iced up. This was the kind of rigid toilet training (albeit unplanned) Dr. Spock flatly would not advise today. The revised edition of his book says: "The natural maturing of the bladder plus the idea the child gets in the daytime—urine belongs in the toilet—takes care of most cases."

A strain the doctor calls "teacherish" has dominated the Spock family. Five of the family's two boys and four girls are active in psychiatry or schoolteaching. Their father was a railroad attorney.

"I don't know that anyone knows all the basic reasons for choosing the life he does," Dr. Spock says. He set the course of his life by going to Andover, Yale and Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons. His

continued



Mrs. Spock, the doctor and their sons John, left, and Michael discuss a sailing trip they will make this summer.



Dr. Spock beams at Daniel and daughter-in-law Julia Spock in the living room of the Spock home in Cleveland. He says, "Julia is a natural mother with obvious talent for her role."

"We could make the world over."

training completed, he opened a pediatric practice in New York. "At that time," he says, "I did not believe in children's emotions. I agreed with other physicians who thought it was 'unprofessional' and 'mushy' to show tender, loving care to patients." He concluded, however, that pediatrics was "filled with too many theories," and began studying psychiatry at New York University. He became a Freudian, revised his concept of child rearing and wrote his historic book.

"We have come to realize that Ben is a famous person," Jane Spock says. "But he never acts that way." Jane Davenport Cheney was 17 years old when she met Yale student Ben Spock at her family's summer place at Block Island, R. I. He was a superb dancer (as he is now), and they waltzed in a moonlit gazebo. He proposed to her the next night. Four years later, they married. Their son Michael, 24, is a biologist in southern Ohio, and John, 14, attends prep school in Cleveland. John wants to be an architect.

Since 1955, Dr. Spock has taught at Western Reserve University. He is professor of child development and has become an institution there. As he loopes to his clinic sessions, his long white coat billows behind him like a mainsail in a squall. His angular, 6' 4" body is an elongated expression of energy and enthusiasm. He weighs 180 pounds, only four more than when he rowed in the Olympics.

Dr. Spock's interest in education rivals his medical calling. He is about to see a generation of "Spock babies" take their place in the world. The man who placed his finger on the pulse of American life, and quickened it, has firm ideas about education. He says: "We know enough now to begin making our world over, if we only had the vision. All studies in child development in the first half century point in the same direction. A child is born with a greater capacity to love than to hate, to build than to destroy, to profit from every chance to learn and mature. The greater part is done through the love and care of parents. Only second in importance are schools' and teachers. We know that when schools are good, when they meet a child's emotional and social as well as intellectual needs, they can do wonders. It's sad, and hard to explain, why America, which loves its children and counts on them for the future, spends a smaller proportion of its income on public education than other poorer, 'backward' nations."

END



At Cleveland's Babies and Childrens Hospital, he casts pediatric look at William Craig Wilson.

The Spocks view an art show. She prefers contemporary works; he likes traditional paintings.



The Spock men take a Sunday stroll. John is 14, Michael 24. Most Sundays, the doctor also practices ice skating on a nearby rink.