

THERE'S A STRANGER IN YOUR HOUSE

by Jerry McGuire, School Superintendent

On an average of six times a day, there's a stranger in your house, a stranger who has free access to your children and unlimited influence on their lives. The task of the stranger is simple. Its goal is to limit our ability to distinguish fantasy from reality. After all, that's what the stranger is all about.

The stranger often teaches our children things we would detest. It uses language which is gross and offensive. It shows our children things which are shocking and repulsive. This stranger has no concern for the age, experience or vulnerability of its victims. The stranger comes visiting at all hours without warning and is devious regarding its true intent. Its messages are often deceptive and appealing to young, innocent minds.

This stranger is cunning and has learned through years of practice and billions of dollars in research, how to enter the very soul of its prisoners. It has become an expert at exploiting audiences and trains them to go and seek new participants. Recently the stranger has been "transformed" into a plastic cassette which allows it to enter your home anytime and deliver its message of demand without time constraints.

The stranger has become so accepted in our homes that it has been given a place of honour in most of our rooms. It has even been allowed to join us during meals, as long as the meals do not disturb its message. Ironically, whenever the stranger joins us, it usually becomes the centre of attention, rather than a stranger. At our dining tables we allow it to talk about things which would not be allowed during most family discussions.

Although this stranger can be crude, obscene and vulgar, we have decided that it can explain some things better than parents. We have given it permission to explain life, sex, family values, ethics and love. We depend upon it to define our values and priorities. We've turned over child care and family entertainment to its expertise. We've determined that we cannot live without its stimulation, motivation and sublimation. We have submitted ourselves, the lives of our children, to this stranger.

We spend untold hours telling our children of the dangers of strangers. We teach them not to talk to strangers, walk with strangers, ride with strangers or take things from strangers. However, with this special stranger, anything goes.

Everyday for an average of six hours, we give our children to the "stranger of the tube." Everyday the stranger talks to our children more than most parents do in a month. We allow the stranger to teach them things and use language for which we would have a real stranger arrested. We allow the stranger to cheat, lie, demonstrate how to commit crimes and how to avoid, and beat, our judicial system.

Without hesitation, the stranger mocks parents, belittles people of honour, makes fun of moral values, denies honourable beliefs, and scoffs at family and cultural traditions.

The stranger is powerful. It has thousands of employees who further its causes and develop its sophistication. It is so powerful that if it stops performing, we will use any means to acquire a new one immediately—usually bigger, better, louder, and more detailed and preferably with attachable appendages to assist the stranger in accomplishing its purpose.

Recently some interested groups are advocating that the stranger should become a regular part of the daily curriculum in our schools. It would be allowed to visit our children without censorship or a preview of its presentation or contents. It would also be allowed to advertise its supporters and special interests.

There's a stranger in your house. It's keeping our children from doing their homework. It's preventing parents and children from talking together. The stranger is coming between members of the family.

It has become the centre of our society.
