

FAMILY GROUP CARE

In George Müller's day the Homes developed along institutional lines, and with the care of more than two thousand children and some two hundred members of staff, there seemed to be no other way to meet the need. Indeed very few alterations were thought to be necessary until the end of the Second World War. The introduction of the Welfare State brought about many changes in this country, and among these was the method of caring for children.

As a result of the 1948 Children Act the Trustees decided, after much prayer, to sell the five large Homes at Ashley Down. They bought instead, smaller properties to house family groups of from ten to twelve children. It was felt that this would provide the children with a more natural environment in which to grow. Married couples were taken on as houseparents to care for the children and they were helped by assistants.

It took several years to complete the change-over and eventually the five Ashley Down Homes were all purchased by the local Education Authority in 1958. They are now used as a further education College.

The smaller family group homes were located in various parts of Bristol, Clevedon, and Weston-super-Mare. There was also a home in Backwell and a holiday home at Minehead. Each home had its own staff consisting of houseparents (a married couple), two assistants and some part-time domestic help. The emphasis was no longer on formal education, it was more concerned with healthy, emotional and physical development. Then, all the children attended local state schools. Most of the children came from broken homes, many were emotionally deprived in one way or another and a few were quite seriously disturbed. In many ways this new approach had been vital to meet the needs. However, the basis of the Müller Homes remained the same and it was essential for all staff involved to have the same faith in God and obedience to His will. Although the nature of the Müller Homes changed considerably since George Müller's time, the same basic principle of God meeting every need, through the power of prayer, was still the same.

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