

Stay-At-Home-Moms
Fall 2005 Commentary

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Recently I had the privilege of visiting with a colleague who is a “stay at home mom.” She has an MD and is trained in a specialty. She was a very successful practitioner and could have continued her successful career except she was torn between nurturing her children and her career. She chose to nurture her children. This stimulated me to try to determine why some women who are highly educated would want to stay at home and care for their children when they are capable of successful careers. I, therefore, interviewed a number of women who had been, or are at present, stay at home moms to see what motivated them into their alternative careers. I have to admit that most of these women are Christian so the results are obviously biased, but most of you who read this letter are Christians so you will read it with a similar bias.

Many years ago I was on an airplane going to New York and did not have reading material or work with me so I went to the magazine rack (they had them in those days), and the only magazine left was “Ebony.” A cover headline caught my attention. It read “The Plot to Destroy the Black Race.” This intrigued me so I took the magazine back to my seat and opened it to the article. It was written by a black female child psychiatrist named Frances Welsing who taught at Howard University Medical School in Washington DC. It was her thesis that the feminist movement encouraging women into the workplace would destroy the black race. She strongly asserted that motherless and/or fatherless children would not grow up to be mentally healthy adults and would, therefore, destroy themselves. This article was written in the 60’s so illegitimacy was not as rampant as it is today among blacks (70%), the drug culture had not influenced the black world and the black on black crime wave had not started. How prophetic she was!

At that time, I was developing an interest in how family structure influenced mental illness. So after I read the mildly paranoid discourse directed toward feminists (who are almost all white) I was amazed to see that she clearly stated what I knew were the biblical roles for a husband and wife as ideal roles for all. She said that the ideal role for a husband was the protector of the home, the

breadwinner and disciplinarian of children with love and kindness. The mother was to be the homemaker, the child socializer, and disciplinarian with love and kindness. A woman's career was to be in the home.

Today it is politically correct for women to have careers. Almost half of the students in medical schools are women. They are commonly found in all other professional schools and in the business world. They are also frequently found in the military schools of our nation. A few have invaded the worlds of men's golf and auto racing. Teaching, nursing, office work and food services are still major areas of endeavor for women, but the attitude of feminists is that working in such jobs is demeaning. Interestingly, these jobs are nurturant and ideally suited to women's basic biological make up.

Men and women are unequivocally different. They are endocrinologically, physiologically and anatomically different. Men and women have different hormones. Women have cyclic hormonal secretion and men's hormonal secretion is acyclic. Cyclic hormonal activity is not related to sexual object choice since male homosexuals do not have cyclic hormonal activity whereas female homosexuals do have cyclic secretion of hormones.

One sees behavioral differences in males and females almost immediately after birth. Males are more irritable and active. They demand and get more attention from their mothers. As children grow older, males are less reluctant to leave their mothers and are less fearful. Males are more aggressive both displaying and eliciting competition. Boys are more likely to seek solutions to problems and are more inquisitive.

As early as the third year of life little girls show nurturant tendencies. They will look after younger siblings and play at being mommies. Their love for children draws them to babies and small children no matter where they are. They love to hold them and play with them. When they grow older they are excellent baby sitters because they naturally love their wards. In studies we did years ago on arousal from sleep in children,, we found that even before they reach maturity girls will dramatically wake from a deep sleep to the crying of a baby. Boys and men do not wake to a baby crying unless the men have children of their own. Once they have children they wake almost as readily and quickly as women do. For women this is an inherent capacity. For men, it is a learned one.

Intellectually, girls are more likely to persist in learning whereas boys are more distractable. There is a greater need later in life for boys to have to self actualize, i.e. "to find themselves," before they will diligently pursue academic endeavors.

I tell you these things because they relate to why many women want to stay at home to rear their children. In my inquiries of women who stayed at home to rear their children, their primary reason was that they did not want someone else to raise their children. This was true of the young pediatrician I spoke with. Another

reason why women stay at home is to home school. They may not necessarily teach their children all that they need to know, but they can see to it that they are presented the right subject matter in a way that is compatible with the family's belief system. Mothers who stay at home can take their children to dancing, to gymnastics, swimming, music, T-ball, scouts and other activities. If they work and have no extended family available their children miss out. There is one important thing that stay at home moms provide and that is a sense of security. As soon as they become toddlers children may stray away from their mother's presence, but they "check in" every once in a while to make sure that mother is still there. Even in high school they like to have mom there when they come home. Children never lose this tendency. My 40-50 year old children still check in one or more times a week with their mom by phone or visit, and accept me only if I answer first or she is not available. There is something in mothering that bonds the child to the parent. I would suspect it is the RNA in their cells. I say this with tongue in cheek, but there is no question that children do not inherit RNA from their fathers. They only get DNA. Their mother's RNA has some effect on heredity but it is minimal. Even so it has been said that the female's RNA can be traced back to prehistoric humans in Africa which is the reason that most evolutionists believe that mankind got his/her start there.

Recently I have seen the results of the work that six stay at home moms had on their children. They have all home schooled their children. Twenty years ago I wrote a newsletter in which I described our experiences in a house church in which these women and their families were involved. I was very impressed with the development of religious maturity in the children in that group. I saw that those children were much further along in their moral and religious development than the children who were taught in the Sunday schools of most churches. This was true of their social development too. I was aware of the kind of drivel that mainline denominational publishing houses turn out for children as a result of my time on the curriculum resources committee of the UMC. I not only was aware of the Methodist, but also the Presbyterian and Baptist materials. The latter was much better, but none of it did the job it should have done.

What I have seen in the last year is the maturation of those children who were in the house church. It is interesting that when they were pre-adolescents they learned what their parents wanted them to learn. They also accepted Christ because their parents wanted them to accept him. Even so in time they did find Jesus for themselves. My grandson told his mother, something like, "Before, I had your Jesus, but I had to find him for myself."

On Sunday we went to a shower for one of the children who grew up in our house church who is now getting married. I had never gone to a shower before. I thought it was a girl thing. But I had been invited, and my wife insisted that I go. I acquiesced out of respect for the parents of the groom. The shower was quite informal. We came as we were and when I got there, there were only a few other

men. Absent among the guests was the father of the groom, who like me, did not believe that he was supposed to attend. He was called and finally did come.

I asked my wife before we left what women did at showers. She said “we talk and play games, open gifts and enjoy the company of others.” I asked what kind of games they played, but she would not elaborate since she knew I dislike parlor games. Finally, after the initial socializing I found that the purpose (conceived by my creative daughter-in-law) was to pray for the success of the marriage and to bless the bride and groom. That was what we did and I participated wholeheartedly. It was a very moving time for all and especially the engaged couple. It brought back into my consciousness all kinds of memories of the earlier years of the groom’s life. It also revealed the spiritual state of the bride to be. She is a turned on Spirit filled young lady who came out of a stable pagan background. Since the groom is a Spirit filled Christian, it means that they will be equally yoked. With this one credential they have a 99% chance of having a successful marriage. All of the children in our house church who are now getting married have met their husbands or wives either at the church they attend or at some Christian meeting. The stability of their marriage is also reasonably assured since they have courted for more than a year, have not broken up and have learned to communicate well. In addition, their faith enhances their love for one another and will help them work out whatever differences they may have. Having forgotten themselves and put Jesus first in their lives they will be able to do the same with each other. In marriage we have to be selfless and not selfish. When Jesus said to deny ourselves and be obedient to his leadership, he set a standard for marriage as well.

In a real Christian marriage we put the best interests and welfare of our spouse above our own. We do the same in our faith if we are true disciples. In our courtship we installed our mate in ourselves. They have become one with us, therefore, wherever we go they go too, and vice versa. When I used to spend two months in Africa I always had Elizabeth with me even though she was at home. I was not one of these people who called my wife every night, because it was too expensive, but I thought of her every day and sent postcards at least twice a week. There was no out of sight out of mind relationship. She was always on my mind.

Our relationship with the Lord should be the same. We live our lives for him and he goes with us wherever we go. There is an interesting article in the last issue of the Biblical Archeology Review by Andre Lemaire a famous archeologist who describes how he thought the “local” God of Israel became the God of the world. I am sure that God revealed to Daniel and Ezekiel his omnipresence just as Jesus revealed that there is no one place where we worship God. If you remember he was talking to the Samaritan woman at the well, and said that God was not to be worshiped in a place, but was to be worshiped in Spirit and truth wherever we are (John 4:21-24). In this scripture Jesus revealed God’s omnipresence. So just as we take our wives and husbands with us wherever we

go we also take Jesus (the Holy Spirit) with us wherever we go. It amuses me that in some of our music we will ask the Holy Spirit to come to us when in truth he is always with us. We only have to give his Spirit permission to control us or reveal his presence to us. If I am consciously thinking about God, he is there just as my wife or my children are. It is true that we have to want God to reveal himself to us, but he is available and if we keep on asking he will make himself known.

Getting back to the subject I started to discuss, I would not be the least bit surprised if all the women in these couples will want to be stay at home moms if it is possible. It is always possible if they are frugal and do not let their wants destroy their destiny as a homemaker. None of us should find it necessary to live in big houses, drive the most expensive cars, have the nicest clothes, eat in the best restaurants, and vacation in the most exotic places.

In the world today most of us are besieged with temptation to have things that we do not really need. Since we listen to the siren songs of the advertisements, we feel we have to have the income that will allow us to possess those things. A good example is food advertising. If I pick up Good Housekeeping, I find all kinds of pictures of delicious dishes. I start salivating and my desire is to get one of those dishes. I suggest to my wife that I want to have some of that product so she, wanting to please me, gets it the next time she goes to the store. This product is almost pure carbohydrate so it will not do my diabetes any good, and will kick up my blood sugar. When it is served I cannot resist the temptation to eat it one more time. The next morning my blood sugar is up 10 or 15 mg/dl.

If we have unrestrained wants we are going to have to have a big income to satisfy our desires and wives will have to work. There are many of those who in the modern world live by the maxim that expenditures always rise to meet income, or in some cases to exceed it. If we do not increase our income we will not have more to spend. Somewhere I have read that everyone is rich if he is satisfied with what he has.

Now I do not want to say that we should not strive to make more money, but if it is necessary for our wives to work to get more we should not strive in that manner. I had a patient whose husband insisted that she work so **he** could have all the things **he** wanted. She was most unhappy because she wanted to stay at home with her children, but he threatened to leave her if she did. John Wesley once said that we should make all we can, save all we can and give all we can. This statement essentially appeals to our greed, to our desire for security, and to our altruistic needs.

As I have noted above there are many women in modern medicine. I was recently in the hospital for treatment of my heart disease. I have had angina off and on for years and I had to have angioplasties for partial occlusion of two of the major arteries of my heart. While in the hospital I had a host of physicians who

were responsible for my care. Since I was hospitalized in a teaching hospital, there were many residents and fellows who were helping with my care. On my second admission, my unmarried resident was a young woman who finally came to examine me at 2 AM. Needless to say I did not appreciate the interruption with my sleep. I asked her how old she was and she told me that she was 28 years old. Later one of the cardiology fellows, a female, came in at 6:30 AM. She was dressed beautifully and her grooming was impeccable. Her perfume was subtle but pleasant. She was perfectly made up. She must have had to arise from her bed around 5 AM to come in looking and smelling like she did at that time. She did not represent what I expected a female “fellow” to be. She too was in her late 20’s. I felt so sorry for both of these women, for they had passed up their most fertile years and would be rearing children, if they ever have any, later in life when their vigor is beginning to wane. They would have expended it on their careers.

In a presentation to our Christian medical students a few years ago Dr. John Patrick, a Canadian internist and researcher, strongly urged the women in our group to get their education and then focus on having a family and attending to them until their school years before they went back into practice. I do not know what the reaction of the women in the group was. I suspect it was not favorable since they have been brain washed by the feminists in our society in believing that women should be in competition with men at all levels. There is, however, one major difference between women and men. Men cannot have babies, and men were not created to be the parent who was to primarily socialize children. Women were!!

In the light of my forgoing polemic, let us now examine the reasons why the role of women should be what Frances Welsing mentioned above -- that it should conform to biblical principles, and not what the feminists declare it to be.

- (1)** Women were created to be the primary parent to nurture children. I have noted above that it is inherent in their nature.
- (2)** They are far better equipped emotionally to affirm children. Women are naturally more loving toward children. I observe my wife and my daughters and other women in society and note that they are more physical and verbal in their relationships with children. There are some men who like to hold and fondle children, but they are more likely to do it in an excitingly rough way. Fathers are usually the main source of excitement in a child’s life. This is a source of affirmation for children but not the main source. Children need physical love or they will be stunted emotionally, for it is through affirmation that they learn to love and be loved.
- (3)** Women are created to be more attentive to a child’s needs. I observed in the foregoing that even immature girls respond by awakening from their sleep to a child’s cry. Men only do so after they have children of their own.

(4) God created men and women to have their children in their most vigorous years. The years of highest fertility are from 18 to 25. It is not impossible to have children later in life, for we must remember Sarah and Hannah, but I once read an article that first children are more vigorous and tend to have increased levels of intelligence. I do not know if this is true, but from my casual observations it is true in many cases. If it is generally true it can be one of the arguments against abortion. The writer of the article cited the demise of Carthage as a good example of what he was asserting. The Carthaginians sacrificed their firstborn sons to Molech.

(5) Biblically it is the woman's role to be involved in the commercial world. If you read carefully Proverbs 31 it describes the ideal wife who does work commercially, but it must be remembered that this was written in a primarily agrarian culture where almost all commercial activity women carried out was in the home. They were there to nurture their children. This was true in our early years in this country. It is only in the 20th century that we departed from our agrarian culture. In an industrial society, women are taken out of the home and are not present to attend to the needs of their children.

(6) Putting children in day care and after school care is detrimental to the development of intimate relationships. A study of children raised in a Kibbutz in Israel demonstrated that these children who had been in day care or school all of their lives were able to relate on a friendly basis, but were woefully deficient in establishing intimate relationships. This meant that they did not court well or establish marriages characterized by intimacy. Such a deficiency is a handicap for happiness.

(7) Stay at home moms are able to home school or supplement the education of a child. My mother who had been a teacher, but was a stay at home mom, supplemented my education mightily. She read to me early on, and when I started reading at four and one-half she listened to me read and increased my vocabulary as any good teacher would do. She also saw to it that I had more than enough supplemental reading material. As well, she taught me to do my "numbers" so that I started to school quite early. My mom also worked with my brother who had dyslexia until he finally learned to read. Both of us obtained doctoral degrees primarily because she encouraged us in our education to achieve at the highest level. The same was true for our own children who all have college degrees. Two of them have graduate degrees.

(8) Finally, a working mom is tired when she gets home. Most of the time she has chores to do. The first thing is to cook dinner and afterward clean up the table, then do the dishes. When this is finished she has to see to it that the children's home work is done. If there are little children she has to bathe them and put them to bed. If there is laundry to do it has to be done. When it is finished she has to fold and put clothes away. Then she has to straighten and clean the house especially if there are small children. I could go on but you must remember that

she has already worked for eight hours in her job, but before that she had to get the children up and dressed and ready for day care or school. What a life! When does she have time to nurture her children? These comments especially apply to single moms.

(9) If they have the right philosophy to live by, stay at home moms in an intact family have the time to pass on a set of traditional beliefs to their children that will really have value, i.e. their beliefs will make a favorable difference in their lives. The beliefs of the secular world do not have ultimate value.

Increasing numbers of women entered into the work force during WWII. Feminism accelerated the exodus from the home and having children and nurturing them has been made a second rate career. This was not God's intent. If we want to know why there has been moral decay in our society all one has to do is to realize that the character of our children is dependent on the parenting they receive. Can we change the roles of women in our society? We certainly need to do it if possible. It is the job of the church to make it come about.