

# WHY FEMINISM NO LONGER SELLS

by Beverly LaHaye

There is a conservative woman emerging on the horizon who has yet to be seen in full strength.

Women have borne the brunt of many jokes--a lot of stories--certainly one that would get us off to a good start today. It is the story of Creation. God created the earth and man, and he rested. And then he created woman. And neither God nor man has rested ever since.

There is probably a lot of truth in that because women are very active. They can become activists especially if there is a threat to their home or to their family. We hear of statements such as "the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world." But we begin to see women who want to rule the world without rocking the cradle. They want to do away with the cradle but still be rulers over much of the world. We will get back to that in just a minute.

Let's take a quick look into some of the history of feminism. I do not want to bog you down with history, but let's look at some of the history of where feminism came from. In my book *The Restless Woman*, there are more details.

I think sometimes you can tell where women are coming from, and where people are coming from, by hearing some of the things they have said. And certainly in 1840 it was true of the French feminist writer George Sand, who promoted her brand of socialism in her writings. George Sand was born Amandine Aurore Lucie Dupin, but she took a man's name and she wore it as a slogan. She wrote in her socialist philosophy, "I continue to believe that marriage is one of the most hateful of institutions. I have no doubt whatever that when the human race has adapted further towards rationalities and the love of justice, marriage will be abolished."

**Hating Men.** Even Sand, one of the earliest feminist writers, was talking about abolishing the institution of marriage. And as the century went on, Mary Wollstonecraft, who was considered the founding mother of the 19th century feminist movement, was a woman who hated men and marriage, and not without good reason. Her father was a vulgar drunkard who regularly beat his wife and terrorized the six children. Mary became a touchy woman who scorned a loving home environment. We begin to see that back in the 1800s and early 1900s women who did not have a loving family background, where men made a contribution to the home life and family, began the feminist demonstrations. Maybe according to this definition, Concerned Women for America is the one women's organization in America that really likes men--because there are some women's organizations that do not appreciate or recognize men for who they are.

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Moving to the time when we know personalities, certainly in the 20th century Betty Friedan is called the founding mother of feminism. Betty can be quoted easily because she has written several books on the subject. When I first read her book *The Feminine Mystique*, I had my eyes opened to some of the early principles, ideals, and values of feminism. In *The Feminine Mystique*, Betty Friedan says, "The changes necessary to bring about equality were and still are very revolutionary indeed. They involve a sexual revolution for men and women which will restrict all our institutions--child rearing, education, marriage, the family, the architecture of the home." In her earliest writing, Betty Friedan was critical of the structured institutions that have made America strong.

**A Message of Bitterness.** Gloria Steinem is not called the mother of anything, but she is a feminist leader to be reckoned with, of course. She also came from a very chaotic and very unstable home. She said, "...to think of those who wish to live in equal partnership, we have to abolish and reform the institution of legal marriage."

You can see many of the same trends in the early feminist writings and in those of our era. These feminists do not see the importance of a good marriage, a solid home life, children being reared by a mother and a father. Many who came of high quality families with high quality values for American society believe that has been one of the greatest downfalls. When the feminist movement failed to recognize the importance of marriage, the family, and the home, they missed the greatest asset in building strength in their own organization.

We will move away from quotes--I quote just by way of introduction. But I think you should read some of them to realize that the message coming through loud and clear is the message of bitterness. It is a message that is anti-family and certainly has been strongly identified with the lesbian movement, which we all know to be composed of men-haters. In fact, the lesbian movement sponsored a conference in January 1984 that was called the Lesbian Rights Conference. At the conference, lesbian women were trained about their rights and how they could get involved in politics without exposing everything about themselves. We know that to be true. We sent a representative to that conference, and we have copies in our file of some of the literature that was handed out. That conference surely was an awakening for the women of America.

**Denying the Heart.** I believe that in all this the feminists went too far. Instead of bringing American women along with them, they began leaving them far behind because lesbianism is not in keeping with what American women generally want to represent them and their values.

Marriage and family living are naturally inbred in the majority of women as a part of womanhood. And I believe that we cannot hide that fact. In fact, in the last eight years, the number of women over 30 who have given birth to children has doubled. They could have had abortions, but they had a baby hunger.

Not too long ago, I was invited to be a guest on the Sally Jessy Raphael show on the subject of sperm banks. There was an interesting discussion with the women Sally had on this show. Although none of them currently was married--one had been

previously--all had a baby hunger. They all were over 30. They were professional women, but they had that baby hunger that is a natural part of womanhood. And so when feminists attempted to deny the hearts of these women and to lead society to fall in step with them, they began to lose the interest of women.

Let me inject a little information from our time on Sally's show. These women understood the biological aspects: that the time was rapidly approaching when they no longer would be able to have babies, and they wanted them. So they went to the sperm bank, and they had babies. One woman had a young infant with her on the show. Another woman had a three-year-old and was planning to have a second child very soon. The third had a young child. None had husbands. They did not want to be encumbered with a man, you see. They were still hanging onto that.

And what position did I take? I believe that certainly when God put the family together, He intended that there be a father and a mother. Even in a home where there has been a divorce and the father is no longer present, or in any family with a single parent, at least that little child knows that somewhere back in his past, there has been a father; there has been a mother. But you see, these sperm bank children do not have even that. They go back to their beginning of mother and sperm bank.

**A Child's Question.** We got into a discussion in the limousine going back to the airport with the three-year-old child--you know three-year-olds are very talkative and sometimes they say more than their mothers want them to. This mother had assured us that her child was accepting her beginning very comfortably, was well-adjusted to this new kind of family, and would have no trouble growing up with it all. And then in the car, I shall never forget, the three-year-old looked at her mother and said, "Do I have a daddy?" The mother quickly responded, "Well, no. You don't have a dad. I told you about it." And the little child said, "Oh, yes I do. Remember? You said my daddy was a doctor, but he was in a sperm bank." And it is true. The sperm was from a doctor.

This three-year-old was a very wise child, and the mother, who quickly tried to muffle the sounds coming from this little mouth, was very embarrassed when after a few moments the child looked up and said, "Mother, will I ever see my daddy?" That mother wanted to slap her hand over that child's mouth quickly as if to say, "You said too much." And the mother said, "Well, of course not. You'll never see your dad." And I said, "If that little child is asking such questions at three, what will be her reaction when she is seven or ten or sixteen?"

**Valuing Human Life.** In the natural family, God said that there is to be a father and a mother, and the women of this age have that hunger to be mothers. You cannot deny that.

I first began to see a change in feminist women about seven years ago in 1978 and 1979. Concerned Women for America was founded at that time but was still very small on the West Coast. I was appointed to the Family Legal County Commission on the Status of Women. There were thirteen commissioners. Twelve were all outspoken feminists. I was the lone traditional woman and they really worked against my appointment. I mean I hit every newspaper in the county about

anything traditional I had ever done, and the most traditional thing was that I was the wife of one husband and the mother of four children. That was considered newsworthy.

I will never forget the first meeting. The meetings were held at City Hall in San Diego and the press showed up *en masse*. We were astounded when the press came into our committee room and focused cameras on their objects of interest. My fellow commissions said, "Beverly LaHaye, do you know there is one thing good about having you on our commission. We never had media attention before."

The discussions that came out of that commission basically were how to deal with children during the day while mothers were working. How many day care centers can we see established in our county? How many children can they accommodate--which really meant how many women can we get into the workplace?

I began to see a scenario from the women in this arena. They did not place a very high value on human life. These women would come to the commission, and they would talk about the number of abortions in the county that month. And I began to see the vast difference in the outlook of these women *vis-a-vis* the conservative women.

**Engulfed in Selfishness.** Conservative women put a very high value on human life. They fight for the protection of the unborn baby. They want that baby to be born, and they try to give that little child all the normal home life, love, training, education, and parental guidance possible. In contrast, the feminist women would come to see at how early an age children could be cared for at a day care center.

We did an evaluation of each day care center and found there were day care centers in San Diego County that would accept children at three weeks. That means only three weeks for a mother to be full time with her child. I began to see the great advantage conservative women were going to have because of the kind of character hands-on training would form in their little children, the kind of value system that would be set up, and the kind of future their children would have.

And so I believe that feminist women really lost ground when they focused on themselves rather than the family. I found these women to be totally engulfed with their own selfishness. I heard mainly such terms as "my life," "my choice," "my career," "my, my, my." In contrast, the conservative women focus on other people. Conservatives are givers, not takers. Feminists, basically, are takers. Their outlook is based on "what is best for Me, what will benefit Me, my job, my body," and so on. Putting it into one statement, that is the greatest difference between feminist women and conservative women.

**Reaching Out to Others.** Just recently, our organization has been involved in a project for the Nicaraguan refugees in Costa Rica. It was a project that we launched in response to real need and in keeping with the conservative ideal of trying to help other people. We returned two days ago from making our first delivery to the refugee camps. A million dollars worth of clothing went to these people; medicine to supply them for weeks ahead; toys for the children; underclothing for all the people. They had almost nothing. We put shoes on every

foot. This is a glorious illustration of giving, not taking, but giving to other people. And certainly I did not see any evidence that any feminist movement had been down there trying to help these poor people who are innocent victims of a situation that they cannot control. Conservative women were there, again reaching out to others, trying to meet their needs, and certainly concerned about their children.

This creates quite a contrast when you analyze it. I think conservative women are moving forward today because they are family oriented. If there is any truth in that old adage we quoted earlier, "the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world," those women who are family oriented will have the greatest strength in America--the greatest power, if you please, in influencing politics, values, legislation for their children.

**Not Against Books.** We are reminded of this in the Tennessee textbook case. It was not book censorship, as you are being told by the liberal press over and over again. The organization, People for the American Way, is trying to promote ideals or ideas that people should not be against "Goldilocks" or "Jack and Jill" or the *Diary of Anne Frank*. But the parents in Tennessee are not against any one book. They are concerned about the overall education of their children. Once again, family oriented. And they were so concerned that they felt that their children were not getting the proper education but were being indoctrinated, if you please, by a variety of values that were not in keeping with their own. The parents simply asked for a substitute reader to be given to their children. This is not censorship. There is quite a difference. These parents are concerned about their children. We dare not ever deny parents their right in America to have the final say over their children's well-being, education, and certainly the values of family life.

That makes women very valuable to society today. We are told in several places in the Holy Bible how important the family is and about the important role that the woman plays. It is only because that rule has been questioned by the feminist movement that anything has changed.

**Rocking that Cradle.** I travel from border to border, from ocean to ocean across the United States, and I can see the difficulties of women who have lost their strength and self-worth. Whenever you remove a woman's high value toward family, marriage and children, you begin to weaken her feeling of confidence because that is the way women operate. Their greatest self-worth will come in rocking that cradle; in building the lives of other human beings; in helping babies grow up to become children who read and write, begin to develop values and principles, and to become teenagers who will begin to test their legs and move into adulthood.

Women have a special chance to teach that there is a time to say no, especially in this society with its pressure of drugs and sex. We should never be afraid to teach our children that there are times in life when we have to say no. A mother and father can see children go off into their own life and recreate the world anew. That gives a feeling of confidence. Certainly you cannot separate the woman from her family, or she loses a very strong feeling of self-worth.

There are many illustrations that come to mind about mothering, though certainly all women will not be mothers. There are women today who are professional women--career women--but they do not have to be feminists to be successful. I think it has been quite a shock to the feminist movement that many women have risen to success--Sandra Day O'Connor, Elizabeth Dole, Nancy Kassebaum and a long list of women outside politics, in the business arena, successful heads of corporations--and they are not feminists. I have interviewed some of them. They are traditional, married women who have gone to the top of the ladder. It is quite shocking to feminists that some of them could be successful without endorsing the principles of feminism.

Feminism tears down a women's feeling of self-worth. You cannot have a feeling of self-worth if you harbor and display bitterness and hatred toward the male sex. Feminists may not say they hate men, but their actions speak louder than words. They say that women are superior to men, and yet, that you are handicapped if you are born a woman. Feminism is a message of confusion.

**Tools to Organize.** Certainly the whole idea of being a conservative woman can build a woman's self-worth because she has some absolutes to stand on--values, the family, the home. She endorses the institution of marriage, and she is born to win, not to lose.

Concerned Women for America has chapters across the United States. We have not yet completed our organization. But we are coming along. We have given conservative women the tools to organize. We have sent them out, and they are becoming very successful in their cities and in their states. Give a woman such important tools as how to speak publicly, how to avoid media entrapment, how to express herself on the issues, and she begins to put it all together and have some impact.

I have seen women with the heart to do something and all they need is the help. Every year in September, we have a national convention here in Washington. We give the delegates all the help we can, and then we turn them loose in their communities. And we have seen women become successful who have never been involved in the political arena before. We have seen women who have branched out and are running things in their state and women who have become city council members who a few years ago would never have dreamed of taking this step, but they are not feminist women.

**Born to Win.** You see, a conservative woman's heart is focused on her family. She wants to be able to influence and to test those institutions that are going to affect her family, should it be the schools, or the government. She even can go a step farther to protect the borders of her country, which is why we are involved in supporting the Contras. We are involved because of how it affects our families and the kind of a nation we are going to present to our children and our children's children. It is very important that we show that we are reaching all the bases in an America that still has sanity.

We are born to win. I once heard a story told by an elderly man whom I respect very much. He told of walking one day through the streets of Hong Kong trying to kill some time. As he walked down the street, he came to a tattoo shop and looked at the messages and pictures people could choose. One caught his eye. It said "Born to Lose." Nobody, he thought, would ever select that to be tattooed on their flesh. He went inside and talked to the man who owned the tattoo shop. And he said, "I'm curious about this tattoo that says 'Born to Lose.' Does anybody really come along and have that tattooed on their chest?" And the shopkeeper responded, "Before tattooed on chest, tattooed on mind."

Conservative women tattoo on their minds, "We are born to win." The hand that rocks the cradle is going to help the rulers of the world. Influence, yes. Raising up young people that can be good, absolutely. Giving them strong values, a strong family life, important. These ideals are on the rise, and I am here to tell you that conservative women are going to win.

