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# Judy Melia

teach homemakers / consultant for women  
in management

lack of self-confidence

tremendous feedback from Sept  
conference

instant identity & instant  
confidence

Houston - god & home

Mary & Martha  $\Delta$  story

Martha Movement = adv. in N.Y.

good response

good housekeeping institute



60 million homemakers

((read back to))



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## THE MARTHA MOVEMENT

### RATIONALE

According to the Bible (Luke 10: 38-46), Martha and Mary were sisters who invited Jesus into their home. Mary "sat at the knee" of Jesus, and participated in the discussions, while Martha was kept busy with domestic chores. Finally, Martha complained and asked for Mary's help. Jesus responded that some women choose the role of Mary; others choose to be Marthas. Jesus' answer showed his appreciation of Mary; Martha has been waiting 2000 years for her recognition.

The Martha Movement is concerned about present day Marthas, those women who seek fulfillment and identity through service in the home and with their families. Marthas see themselves as wives, mothers, helpmates, and homemakers, rather than career professionals. According to the Statistical Abstract, 1974 and the U. S. Department of Labor's Women's Bureau, almost 60,000,000 females over 18 in this country are either working in their own homes or holding jobs outside of the home primarily to earn money for their families. Career, to Martha, means family and home.

Much attention has been paid to women during the past ten years, some of it long overdue, but almost the entire focus

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has been on the Marys. The cry for individual identity, for equal opportunity in the working world, for legislative justice, for shared responsibility of childrearing through day care, for psychological and economic assistance during transition out of the home, etc., were real and justified for Mary. The new consciousness and freedom to choose a new lifestyle brought meaning and fullness to their lives. For others, who chose homemaking as the more fulfilling life, an unfortunate image has developed that has created the impression that women who remain in the home are less valuable and do less important work than women who build more visible careers outside the home.

The Martha Movement philosophically concurs with the Marys that women should select freely the life that suits them--but not at the expense of other women. It contends that recognition accorded careerists during the past decade has devalued homemaking to such a degree that many Marthas suffer a paralyzing lack of self-confidence and decreased sense of worth and self.

Present assumptions about homemaking reinforce beliefs that it is homemaking per se, that causes the problems afflicting women in the home. Studies show that women at home suffer more than another other single group from debilitating depression, drug dependency, alcoholism, divorce, child abandonment and abuse, etc. The usual remedy suggested is to get a job--about the equivalent of eliminating black lung disease by telling miners to find another occupation.

The Martha M'vement grew from the seed planted with the Identity and Homemaking Conference, co-sponsored by Georgetown



University and the New TransCentury Foundation in September, 1975, in Washington, D.C. Women from all walks of life participated in seeking new avenues for personal discovery and local involvement in the individual and community growth of homemakers. The two day conference was highlighted with a reception at the White House where Betty Ford was honored as an outstanding homemaker. Representative Yvonne Braithwaite Burke (Democrat from California), and Mrs. Eleanor McGovern were keynote speakers, giving recognition to women in homes all over America. It is this search for personal and group identity, through some channel of individual and community involvement that led to the beginning of the Martha Movement.

The purpose of the Martha Movement is to develop a membership organization for the vast majority of American women who choose to be and consider themselves primarily homemakers; to provide them with a communications forum for the exchange of ideas, skills, and mutual concerns; to create support systems at the national and local level that will help them confront and combat current trends to devalue homemaking and homemakers. Specifically, the Martha Movement will accomplish the following:

- 1) raise awareness among homemakers about the causes of their collective isolation and lack of confidence. For example: isolation from the community and society at large, lack of positive feedback, lack of institutional support systems, anonymity, lack of status, proliferation of governmental and societal structures that nurture dependency, etc. The Martha Movement believes that home-



makers, their communities, and their representatives can and will seek relief from these conditions with increased understanding of their existence and harmful effect. The Martha Movement will take no position on controversial issues affecting homemakers but will encourage individual members to clarify their personal values and defend them. It will not lobby, but will emphasize and support the commonality of such values as mothering, family units, creative expression in the home, pursuit of serenity, harmonious use of nature, etc. It will also research and publish information that enables homemakers to make personal decisions and increase self-discovery and self-esteem. For example: the Movement will provide research on identification of generic skills developed in the home. Such data will be published to increase the awareness of employers and homemakers to the inherent value to businesses of women who received most of their training informally at home.

2) provide homemakers with tools to develop skills to find and create their own personal and community support systems. Such skills would include: decision making, risk taking, articulation of needs, identification of cause and effect of personal actions, sensitization to destructive forces in their lives and methods for combatting them, etc.

3) educate the public about the social and economic worth of Marthas and their irreplaceable value to society. It will encourage formal federal recognition to the value of homemaking



making and raising children similar to the benefits granted veterans. The Martha Movement will not endorse any political party, candidate, or program, but it will endeavor to elevate respect for the worth and needs of Marthas among the leadership in both public and private sectors.

4) expand the options currently open to Marthas to find identity--in or out of the home but stripped of any pressures to become "career-oriented." For example, it will seek new avenues of financial independence, new definitions of the home-making role (as opposed to "housekeeping"), new opportunities for using skills developed in the home. An example is to get legislative support for staffing day care centers with women who have successfully demonstrated their love and concern for children in their homes, not through obtaining formal credentials.

In short, the Martha Movement affirms:

- o the right of self determination free from social pressure that accords one role more status than the other
- o that it's O.K. to be a Martha
- o that Marthas require a safe and secure base or environment from which women can operate a home that is fit for children, men, and beasts, a home free from the ordinary threats that have made the position of homemaker untenable in our time.

BERNARD R. FORD

OBJECTIVES

- 1) Form a national association of dues-paying homemakers and their supporters.
- 2) Publish a national magazine as a major forum for the opinions, interests, and problems of homemakers. Publish regional and local newsletters about specific homemaker concerns, accomplishments, and resources.
- 3) Develop workshops, seminars, and conferences as an expanding communications network to serve membership and provide it with visibility.
- 4) Develop local self-help programs with Movement published guides and cassettes for personal exploration and maximum individual involvement in self-identity.
- 5) Stimulate public and private sector initiatives to benefit homemakers, including support from key leadership.
- 6) Develop and publish research data for the elucidation of members and the general public on the status and needs of homemakers.
- 7) Publically address issues neglected by other forums and media, which are of concern to homemakers.



METHODS

- 1) Membership campaign
- 2) Magazine/newsletters--free to membership; circulation to interested paid subscribers
- 3) Sponsorship of high and low visibility conferences and workshops
- 4) Publishing of printed and recorded materials for individual and small group use
- 5) Recruitment of celebrities and visible Marthas as sponsors and/or advisors to the Movement
- 6) Publishing of statements and papers to answer critics, and to take advantage of inevitable controversy occasioned by Mary attacks and productively use the resulting publicity opportunities
- 7) Development of media programs that address the concerns of homemakers, and which reach them in their homes
- 8) Eventual development of organizational structure to best meet the local and national needs of Marthas



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*Dynamic Maturity*  
*1/76*

# Is this the year for equal rights?

**'Women, more than men, are opposing the ERA, especially homemakers in their middle years.'**



**'The domestic woman is on the defensive. It seems a small point, but she resents having to defend herself.'**

by Rachel Conrad Wahlberg

**'Stay home if you prefer,' say business women, 'but don't restrict our choices, and let us have equal pay for equal work.'**



**"Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."**

Last year North Dakota became the 34th state to ratify the above proposition—the Equal Rights Amendment. But a number of states have rejected it, two states—Nebraska and Tennessee—have voted to rescind their earlier approval, and in many legislatures growing divisiveness has made the ERA a “no-win” issue. With only four more states needed to ratify, 1976 might be the year equality for women will be decided.

What are the fears and emotions this issue arouses? Does the general public really fear homosexual marriages, the drafting of women into military service and unisex bathrooms? Or are these red-flag issues useful for rallying the troops?

Men do not appear to feel deeply threatened by the amendment. According to a Gallup poll, 58% of the public supports the ERA, and men support it in greater numbers (63%) than women (54%). Support is highest among those under 30 (67%) and lowest among women over 50 (46%).

Women on the average earn about 60% of what

The author is a pastor's wife and mother of four children, all grown.

men earn and are concentrated in low-paying jobs. They have a valid claim of discrimination as far as jobs, opportunity and pay are concerned. Where, then, do the emotions come from that generate the arguments? From women who do not work outside the home and are most anxious, worried and frightened about the ERA.

Traditionally, women haven't had to think about what to do with their lives. If they wished they could get an education, choose a vocation and pursue it, but they weren't pressured into it by society. All they had to do was be attractive, get married and raise a family, and they were set for life. Keeping house was the most acceptable option for women. It was women who needed to earn money (or chose to) who had to defend their lifestyles.

Now the pendulum has swung, and the domestic woman is on the defensive. It seems a small point, but she resents having to defend herself. She carries a sign in an anti-ERA march: I LIKE BEING A WOMAN. She is interviewed on TV proudly describing her life devoted to the family.

Such women fear losing their comforts, status and “protection.” Although the ERA will not take away these benefits—which are dependent on a couple's personal preference, the man's income, his health and