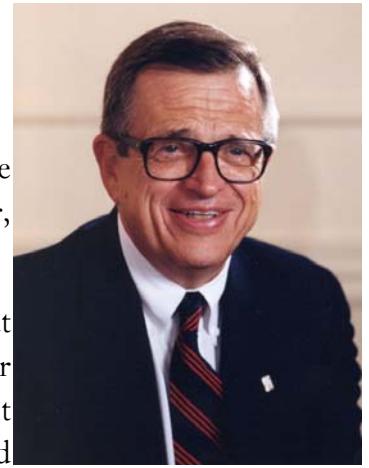


The Legacy of Radical Feminism

Chuck Colson, Friday, June 27, 2008

Alice Walker, best known as the author of the novel *The Color Purple*, is one of the most renowned feminist authors and activists of her generation. She is also a mother, and that fact brought her public and private lives into direct conflict.

That is because Alice Walker's brand of feminism was the kind that taught that "motherhood was about the worst thing that could happen to a woman." So says her daughter, Rebecca, who suffered the consequences of that thinking. In a recent *London Daily Mail* article, Rebecca Walker reflected on the neglect she experienced with her divorced father across the country and her mother too busy for her, frequently leaving her alone for long periods as a teenager. With her mother's knowledge — and even support — Rebecca became sexually active at 13 and had an abortion at 14. She was well aware that her mother thought of her as a burden.



The younger Walker — who lives in England — writes now, "My mother's feminist principles coloured every aspect of my life. As a little girl, I wasn't even allowed to play with dolls or stuffed toys in case they brought out a maternal instinct. It was drummed into me that being a mother, raising children and running a home were a form of slavery. Having a career, travelling the world and being independent were what really mattered according to her."

After years of private and public feuding, their estrangement is so deep that Alice has never yet even seen Rebecca's own son, her grandson. In an early interview, Rebecca suggested that this was the natural result of putting "ideology" before relationships.

As an African-American woman born in 1944, Alice Walker saw her share of injustices. Her instinct to try to put things right was not the problem here. The problem was that she was part of a generation of feminists who believed that the way to correct injustice was to put yourself first and everyone else, including your family, last. Women taught their daughters this by both precept and by example. And as a result, Rebecca says now, "Feminism has betrayed an entire generation of women into childlessness. It is devastating."

Rebecca has met many women who avoided having children because they thought that it was their duty to do so, and now are despondent that it is no longer possible for them to do so.

Rebecca Walker is no one's idea of a cultural conservative — she and her child's father are unmarried by choice, though they are raising their son together; and she still considers herself a feminist. Rebecca wrote in the *Daily Mail*, "Having a child has been the most rewarding experience of my life. Far from 'enslaving' me, three-and-a-half-year-old Tenzin has opened my world. I simply love hearing his little voice calling: 'Mummy, Mummy.'"

In her own way, Rebecca — like many other daughters of the feminist revolution — is trying to put her own set of injustices right, not through selfishness and neglect, but by loving her child.

Such women, even when they are not coming at family life from a Christian perspective, are living out the larger truth: **We find our own fulfillment not by putting ourselves first, but by living for others. And that means accepting our responsibilities, and moving toward — not away from — God's design for families.**