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## Better House, But Not Better Home

BACK in the 1930s the Russians brought forth a series of "five-year plans" intended to demonstrate the productivity and prosperity generated by communism. Americans ridiculed the plans.

One point was that small children would be cared for in state-operated nurseries. This was to "liberate" women so they could be put to work sweeping streets and doing other manual labor. Their time was too valuable to be used as homemakers and mothers.

Later when communists captured the government of China similar systems were put into effect. Americans reacted with less astonishment then, because we had begun to travel the same road.

American women are not required by government to abandon their home to enter the business world but reformers have tried to get laws enacted to encourage them to do so. Millions of women have been persuaded that home life is less important than the business world and they also like what their incomes will buy.

The number of children per family has declined but the proportion of homes with air conditioning, latest appliances and other pleasant amenities of life has gone up.

The babies had to be left somewhere. The government of the United States does not provide child care as the Russians and Chinese do; it merely writes rules for those who do.

An article in Fortune magazine (Nov. 28, 1983) tells about one of the larger firms engaged in child care for profit, serving as day homemaker and parent for 62,000 children in 800 child care center in 40 states and Canada. Others are operated by companies for employees, hospitals, churches and numerous private firms.

The Fortune article asked what kind of adults will children brought up in public child care centers turn out to be?

Defendants of the system maintain that the home situation generally is not what it used to be, with half of today's children having lived in single-parent homes while grow-

ing up.

Critics respond that standardized group care deprives young children of natural bonding with parents and tends to repress lasting affection for anyone. Temporary associations with nursery staff workers may prepare them for temporary family relationships but not necessarily for solid, permanent home lives.

In a recent radio address on the importance of families, President Reagan declared that federal social programs intended to help the poor actually had produced family breakups, dependency on welfare and more unmarried mothers.

"Families stand at the center of society, so building our future must begin by preserving family values," the president said.

If we do that, significant changes will be needed in our attitudes toward governmental services, the essentiality of high living standards, and the values of whole family units.

Two incomes in a family may enable its members to live in a better house but they do not ensure they will live in a better home.