

# Working Together at Home

**Felipe:** One of the major discussions that I, a Chicano, and my Mexican wife have revolves around the beautiful and dangerous topic of the gender roles that define us.

**Maribel:** I always knew that I wanted a traditional Mexican home; one where marriage is a partnership in which we both contribute to the household. I grew up seeing women taking care of the inside of the home while men took care of the outside chores. Now that both Felipe and I work, we are attempting to create a contemporary/traditional Mexican home. The latter is very important to me because it is part of my identity, of who I am. A traditional home is one in which specific Mexican values are adhered to, holidays are celebrated, foods are eaten and *tes* (herbal teas) are drunk. A home in which the Spanish language is spoken and the family gathers to celebrate and dance to Mexican music. A contemporary home is one in which we both contribute to the fulfillment of a traditional home. My husband and I both cook, clean, work and study.

**Felipe:** With all this in mind, my wife and I debate over what our specific gender roles are. Sometimes ... my wife cries to me about her struggle with the *María Complex* (apparently this is the struggle with how to be a professional Mexican woman while still being true to traditional culture). I sometimes wonder if I struggle with the *José Complex* because my wife makes more money than I do, I do most of the cooking, and for some strange reason I am very particular about how one does laundry. I am also very particular about the aroma in the home, how much cereal we have in the house, and how long left over *arroz* (rice) and *frijoles* (beans) have been in the fridge.

My wife and I are part of a larger movement within our Chicano/Mexican community that is redefining gender roles, while maintaining all that is good about our tradition.

EXCERPTED FROM "CHICANO SOUL Y LA MUJER MEXICANA" BY MARIBEL RAMIREZ HINOJOSA AND FELIPE HINOJOSA IN *WOMENS' CONCERNS REPORT*, "MEN'S CHANGING ROLES," MAY-JUNE 2004, PP. 4-6.

*How have gender roles changed in your family over the years?*

*What values and traditions have you kept and what have you adapted?*

## Buckstopping or Collaborating?

I HAVE HEARD MEN declare that having congregational co-pastors does not work because it isn't clear "where the buck stops." After eight years of experience as a co-pastor, I don't know what they are talking about. Certainly co-pastors may have problems working together, but I'm not convinced it has anything to do with where the "buck" does or does not stop.

I, personally, do not enjoy being in a buck-stopping position, but I'd argue that this preference has not hindered my ability to lead: gathering opinions from the congregation, negotiating, making connections, setting direction, and moving forward with confidence, sometimes prophetically.

—Jane Hooper Peifer

FROM "CAN WANTING OTHERS' APPROVAL BE A PROBLEM?"  
*TIMBREL*, JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2002. USED BY PERMISSION.



### Pay attention

Over the next week, notice how you work with others. When do you work as an equal partner with another person and when do you work under or over someone? How are these experiences similar or different?

