

# What's Wrong with Planned Parenthood?

by Helen Alvare

Recently, I've been caught short on reading upbeat, even bubbly articles about the Planned Parenthood Federation of America. They painfully remind me of the vast chasm between what most people know about America's biggest "family planning" organization and what there is to know. Having spent countless hours watching Planned Parenthood leaders during congressional testimony and television debates – not to mention reading the organization's materials – I want to shout, "Somebody please notice!" Planned Parenthood's public image does for "reproductive services" what the movie "Pretty Woman" did for prostitution. It glamorizes a very ugly reality. In its origins, operations and philosophy, in its not-quite-public statements and even in some of its public ones, Planned Parenthood is one stop shopping for (what the Holy father bluntly calls) the "culture of death."

What the world knows of Planned Parenthood – in addition to the usually pleasant ladies who staff its neighborhood clinics – has vaguely to do with caring about women, preventing teen pregnancy and even (the new pitch) "strengthening families" (apparently by erecting "KEEP OUT" signs in front of some members). This is the aura Planned Parenthood has cultivated relentlessly. But consider this: The founder of Planned Parenthood, Margaret Sanger, was intent on empowering elites to limit births from those she considered "unfit." In a letter to a colleague about the "Negro Project," she wrote: "We do not want word to get out...that we want to exterminate the Negro population, and the minister is the man who can straighten out that idea if it ever occurs to any of their more rebellious members." All of course in the name of freedom and free will. The Planned Parenthood of today has not strayed far from its origins, except, of course, that it has learned to couch its designs in appealing language. But now and again, an unguarded comment slips out.

A "fact sheet" of one of its "special affiliates" encourages government funded abortion, because, every \$1 spent on killing the poor saves \$4 of government spending on the living poor. Most recently, Planned Parenthood has revealed itself in an ad that says: "**BABIES ARE LOUD, SMELLY AND EXPENSIVE. UNLESS YOU WANT ONE.**" And it acts on this philosophy too. In its 1995-96 annual report, Planned Parenthood admits to performing about 140,000 abortions and referring for 60,000 more, while referring only 5,800 women for adoption. that's 34-to-1 against parenthood.

Before the Supreme Court and in a public letter, Planned Parenthood defended sex-selection abortions. At a European abortion conference sponsored by its international organization, a Planned Parenthood consultant rejected the idea that "contraception is always preferable to abortion or that abortion is inferior to contraception as a means of birth control." She also acknowledged what has been observed here in the United States: There is no doubt that widespread use of condoms means a higher abortion rate." Not that this has altered Planned Parenthood's public relations "spin" that more condoms means fewer abortions!

So why does Planned Parenthood – with its public relations message on "preventing abortion" – continue to pursue its condom-in-every-pocket campaign when, in the United States, decades of hawking condoms and other contraception to teen-agers and unmarried adults – via our tax dollars – have coincided with increased pre-marital sex, increased out-of-wedlock pregnancies, staggering increases in sexually transmitted diseases and skyrocketing abortion rates? Why does it produce films that look to all the world like ads for unmarried sex? Here's where its ideology, its underlying philosophy comes in. For underneath the infectious smile and easy laugh of its spokesperson, behind the gentle look of an employee holding the hand of a scared, pregnant girl, are beliefs as rock hard as they are ugly: Sex is a physical – and maybe emotional – enterprise, but not one that deeply affects the person. Control of outcomes – pleasure, pregnancy and disease -- is the most important thing about sex.

That sex is the birthplace of every human being, body and soul, and that it has a natural way of exposing our intimate selves and bonding us uniquely to another are irrelevant. There are no moral dimensions to sex, except if its not consensual. Wanting it satisfies this "moral" threshold. "Freedom" is about individual wants. Unmarried minors have the same "rights" to sex as anybody else and to sexual health services without any parental involvement. Children are objects to be managed, manipulated and "killed" (Planned Parenthood's language), whether inside the womb or mostly born. They are not individuals with dignity unless another person decides they are. God, if He exists, is irrelevant to how we dispose of our bodies.

There is no doubt that confronting the Planned Parenthood Federation of America is a classic David and Goliath situation. The organization has a cool \$444,000,000 – and much of it from tax dollars – to our few dollars. It has

rich, elite, famous friends in Washington and Hollywood. But let's never forget, it also has our daughters and sons in its sights. We will fight for their authentic freedom and happiness – against the Planned Parenthood version of these – no matter what the odds.

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