

Religious Consultation Report

News & Views from The Religious Consultation on Population, Reproductive Health, and Ethics

Volume 5 No. 2

Penis Monologue

By Daniel C. Maguire

Pleasure is what sex is about. Stoic philosophy invaded Western culture with the idea that sexual pleasure is presumed guilty until proven innocent. Only procreative intent could bring acquittal.

Such mischievous nonsense. Sex rarely has anything to do with procreation.

The old axiom, “listen to your body,” was misapplied here: we listened too much to the penis when we should have sought an audience with the clitoris. The penis has divided loyalties and multiple missions — it’s concerned with procreation and waste removal. The clitoris is single-minded — its one goal, as ethicist Susan Ross says, is “exquisite female sexual pleasure.”

A Historical Perspective

The penis has long dominated the sexual imagination of the Western world. In Scotland in 1811, Miss Marianne Woods and Miss Jane Pirie, two schoolteachers, were making love and got caught in *actu flagrante*. The case went

...this talk of sex covers all the bases of a healthy spirituality. Respect for self and others, joyful affirmation of our hopes for justice and for life. It’s all there.

to court, arriving eventually in the House of Lords. In 1819, that noble body decided that the two women could not have had sex since they lacked an instrument of penetration. As Bernadette Brooten writes, “Across centuries, men share a fundamental assumption about female sexuality, namely that female pleasure requires a penis.” Without penile penetration of the vagina, sex has not happened.



Bill Clinton concurred with the 1819 House of Lords.

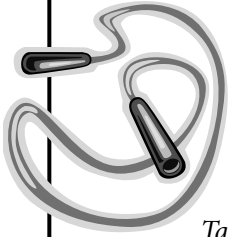
The hatred of women’s sexual pleasure, going all the way to enforced clitoridectomy, actually evinces a perverted sense of clitoral importance. No wonder weak men feared it. The clitoris contains a liberating message. Part of homophobia comes from the fact that gay and lesbian sex is simply about pleasure, and that’s threatening to those who are pleasure-phobic.

The inability to face our sexuality in Western culture is to a great extent

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How AIDS Discriminates Against the Poor

Taken from *Our Planet*, *The United Nations Environmental Programme magazine for environmentally sustainable development*, Vol. 12, No. 2, p. 12.

Thirteen-year-old Claris Akinyi does not skip on the playground with her classmates any more. They will not play with her since her father died of AIDS. Of course, she has no time to play anyway, between caring for her mother, who is dying of AIDS, and supporting her four younger siblings with the dollar a day she earns selling corn.

Claris' story is heartbreaking, but it is not rare. Her mother will become one of 22 million who have died from AIDS, and the five children mourning her will join more than 13 million orphaned by AIDS — most of them desperately poor.

AIDS can strike anyone, no matter what their station in life. But in a powerful sense, AIDS discriminates against the poor — those without the information, the resources, or the social leverage they need to protect themselves. Women are infected more than men, the poorest women most of all, and millions of mothers have tragically passed their AIDS virus to their children. Some 75 percent of those living with AIDS — and 75 percent of those who have died of AIDS — are African. And 95 percent of all new infections occur in developing nations.

Promising Research on Male Contraceptives

Scientists at the Population Council's Center for Biomedical Research have uncovered the role that a gene and its protein play in male fertility. This is an avenue that holds promise. If drugs could be developed to target this gene or protein, the scientific community would be on its way to developing a reversible male infertility.

Moreover, it is a strategy that would not affect libido or any other factor modulated by testosterone. Indeed, the identification of the gene and its protein may hold clues to previously unexplained causes of male infertility. The discovery may open the door to long-awaited methods for male contraception.



Population Briefs, Vol. 7, No 3, a publication of The Population Council.

RELIGIOUS CONSULTATION MISSION STATEMENT

The Religious Consultation on Population, Reproductive Health and Ethics is an international network of progressive feminist religious scholars and leaders who seek out the positive, renewable moral energies of their faith traditions to direct them to the interrelated issues of population, reproductive health, consumption/ ecology and the empowerment of women. The Consultation accomplishes this by participating in international and governmental forums, by convening small symposia of theologians and religious ethicists, and by publishing both scholarly and popular materials.

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Tearing Up and Paving Over the Planet

According to a new report by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), unless we take urgent action, more than 70% of the earth's land surface could be affected by roads, mining, cities, and other infrastructure developments in the next 30 years.



Virginity Exams: A Violation of Women's Human Rights

This article was written especially for the Religious Consultation Report by Ela Anil, Program Officer, Women for Women's Human Rights – NEW WAYS, one of the women's rights organizations that fought against virginity testing in Turkey.

Controlling women's sexuality constitutes a major tool of patriarchy in many societies throughout the world. In Turkey, the social emphasis placed on women's virginity and chastity is one manifestation of repressing women's sexuality. Virginity exams (the examination of the hymen to see whether or not it is intact) have been practiced under a variety of circumstances. Exams are tools that control and humiliate. They have often targeted girl students, female detainees, prospective brides, female criminal suspects, and girls/ women perceived to have broken traditional norms of female sexuality.

Exams Supported By Law

In fact, traditional values that associate girls' and women's virginity with family honor and social order found support in national laws and regulations prior to feminist activism around the issue.

One example of the legal basis for the violation of women's bodily rights can be found in the Turkish Penal Code. The Code discriminates against women by placing all sexual offenses (the victims of which are primarily women and children) under its section entitled, *Crimes Against*

in the High School Educational Institutions of the Ministry of Education. The statute came into effect on January 31, 1995, and stated that *proof of unchastity* was a valid reason to expel a girl from the formal educational system. Although the statute did not define *unchaste behavior* or clarify how evidence should be gathered, the usual practice was to send girl students to have their hymens examined. This Statute was revised in March 2002 as a result of the protests of women's rights activists and advocacy groups.

A Victory of Women's Human Rights Activism (1999)

The practice of virginity testing became hotly contested terrain as feminist activism against this traditional practice gained momentum and as international human rights groups¹ conducted research on the practice. Moreover, media coverage increased when some female high school students committed suicide after being forced to undergo the humiliating exam.

Following protests by women's human rights groups in and outside of Turkey, the Ministry of Justice issued a statute to eliminate forced virginity exams. The statute passed on January 13, 1999 states that women cannot be examined against their consent for reasons of disciplinary punishment, or in a way which will hurt or torment them. Exceptions to this statute can be made under these circumstances:

- gathering proof for alleged rape
- sexual conduct with minors
- encouraging or acting as intermediary for prostitution

In addition, only a judge may order a vaginal or anal examination without the consent of the woman — and only if there is no other way of gathering evidence about the crime. For the examination to be legal, the judicial decree must be accompanied by written approval from the public prosecutor.

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Exams are tools that control and humiliate.

Public Decency and Family Order, rather than *Crimes Against Individuals*. The Code also more severely penalizes sexual offenses committed against virgins. The implications perfectly reflect traditional values. First of all, the law directly identifies women's bodies as belonging, not to themselves as free individuals and equal citizens, but to the family and the public. Secondly, by more severely penalizing sexual offenses against virgins, the Penal Code explicitly identifies virginity as enhancing the value of a girl or woman for families and society. These constructions render the consent of the girl or woman to such testing unimportant.

An example of legislation that has led to the practice of forced virginity testing is the *Statute for Awards and Discipline*

¹ See *A Matter of Power — State Control of Women's Virginity in Turkey*, June 1994, Human Rights Watch.

BOOK NEWS

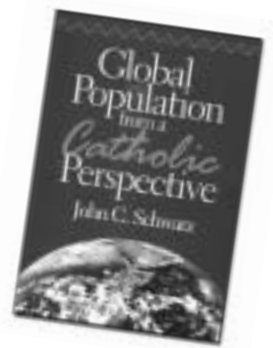
More Catholic Theologians For Choice

A quietly revolutionary book has received too little notice: **Global Population From A Catholic Perspective** by John C. Schwarz, Twenty-Third Publications. The book is a gentle and effective demurral on current hierarchical teaching on contraception and on abortion. His argument is that just as Catholic thought argues against war but allows exceptions through the “just war theory,” this same openness to exceptions should apply to abortions, a kind of “just abortion theory.” He quotes approvingly Benedictine Sister Joan Chittister: “*What is a woman to think: that when life is in the hands of a woman, then to destroy it is always morally wrong, never to be condoned, always a grave and universal evil? But when it lies in the hands of men, millions of lives at one time, all life at one time, then destruction can be theologized, and some people’s needs and lives can be made more important than other people’s needs and lives.*”

What is noteworthy and indicative of how lonely the members of the Catholic hierarchy are becoming on these issues is the positive response to his book from priest theologians like the Jesuit Georgetown University Professor

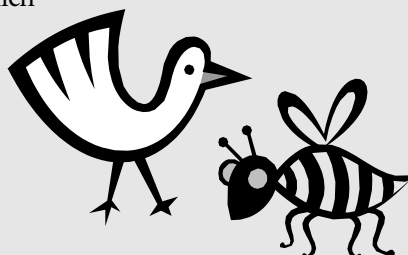
Robert Drinan. Drinan, the former congressman, calls the book “*indispensable reading for everyone concerned with the exploding population of the global village.*” Priest theologians like Charles E. Curran, Francis X. Murphy, CSSR, and Anthony J. Gittins, CSSp praise his “*clear and convincing*” arguments. Schwarz writes very much from within the Catholic Church, quoting archbishops and Catholic men and women theologians to support his case.

This book shows the fallacy of speaking of “the” Catholic position on contraception and abortion. Pro-choice positions on contraception and abortion are very much at home in the Catholic tradition. This book is a good companion to **A Brief, Liberal, Catholic Defense Of Abortion**, by the Catholic scholars Daniel Dombrowski and Robert Deltete of the Jesuit Seattle University (University of Illinois Press, 2000). See also **Sacred Choices: The Right To Contraception And Abortion In Ten World Religions** by Daniel C. Maguire (Fortress Press, 2001).



About Responsible Sex Education for Teens...

An **Open Letter to Religious Leaders About Sex Education** was developed at a colloquium of theologians sponsored by the **Religious Institute on Sexual Morality, Justice and Healing**. More than 2,100 clergy, theologians, and other religious leaders have endorsed the *Religious Declaration on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing*, which calls, in part, for lifelong age-appropriate sexuality education in schools, seminaries, and community settings. To read the declaration or endorse it, go to www.religiousinstitute.org.



The Institute was founded by Reverend Larry Greenfield and Debra Haffner. Deb is one of the Consultation’s Participating Scholars, an expert on adolescent sexuality and author of **Beyond the Big Talk: Every Parent’s Guide to Raising Sexually Healthy Teens** (New Market Press, New York, 2001).



Alarmed by Global Progress on Reproductive Rights, The Religious Right Storms the United Nations

By Jennifer Butler, Presbyterian UN Office

In March 2000, women's rights activists from all over the world attended a United Nations meeting to review the progress that governments had made towards implementing the Platform for Action of the 1995 UN Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing. To their surprise, they found this five-year review session, known as "Beijing+5," inundated by hundreds of United States-based Religious Right activists. The meeting felt like a circus at times, as men wearing religious robes and calling themselves the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal surrounded women's rights activists to "pray" for them — and prevent them from getting to their meetings.

The enormous presence of these groups at this UN meeting heralded a new escalation in the Religious Right's efforts to undermine women's reproductive rights. Clearly, the Right had fully realized the impact of the global women's movement on the UN, particularly at the 1994 UN World Conference on Population and Development (Cairo), and at the 1995 UN Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing).



A Trojan Horse Strategy

Recognizing the enormous gains women were making by pressuring governments to set new standards and policies, Religious Right leaders realized they had to mobilize greater resources to influence the United Nations, an organization they mistrust and normally seek to undermine from the outside. Employing a "Trojan Horse" strategy, Religious Right and conservative organizations began to register in large numbers with the United Nations as non-governmental organizations with consultative status, which entitles them to attend UN meetings and lobby governments.

Unusual Alliances

United by their opposition to women's rights, conservative Catholic organizations such as the Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute (C-Fam) dropped their religious sectarianism to work with the World Family Policy Center, a Mormon group working at Brigham Young University. These organizations, in turn, were willing to work alongside conservative evangelical groups like the Family Research Council and Concerned Women for America.

Now, however, the US has joined this alliance against women's rights, working even with countries in President Bush's so-called "axis of evil," such as Iran and Iraq.

This unholy alliance, as many call it, managed to bog down government negotiations at Beijing+5 by working with a coalition of conservative Muslim and Catholic nations and the Holy See. The US under the Clinton Administration and other governments around the world had held them at bay. Now, however, the US has joined this alliance against women's rights, working even with countries in President Bush's so-called "axis of evil," such as Iran and Iraq.

The Bush Administration Joins In

During the UN Special Session on Children (May 2002) and the preparatory meetings for the Session, the Bush administration put members of this Religious Right coalition, such as Bill Saunders of Family Research Council, on its UN government delegation. In the final outcome of the Special Session on Children, the US government bowed to pressure from the Religious Right, blocking progress on measures that would prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS and lower the number of unwanted and early pregnancies among adolescent children.

Religious Right organizing gave the Bush administration the smokescreen it needed to undermine the human rights-based approach to children's issues that gives children legal protections and rights, as opposed to treating them as property owned by parents. The US successfully opposed all references to children's rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (ratified by every UN member country except the US)

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Just Say No is Not the Solution

As the Bush administration urges the UN to adopt its abstinence-only approach to family planning, organizations like the International Women's Health Coalition and the United Nations Children's Fund assert that the problem among the world's young women is not a flawed sense of right and wrong. Rather, it is a problem of young women falling victim to the powerlessness of their position within world societies. This powerlessness leads to fatal consequences. Some cases in point:

- 82 million girls between the ages of 10 and 17 in developing countries will be married before they turn 18.
- Many married pre-teen mothers have no right to refuse their husbands. According to the United Nations Children's Fund, pregnancy is the leading cause of death for young women ages 15 to 19 in poor countries.
- The custom in parts of Africa and Asia is to marry young girls to much older men who have often had multiple heterosexual or homosexual experiences, raising the risk of sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS.
- Young women ages 15 to 19 are twice as likely to die in childbirth as women in their 20s. Girls under 15 are 5 times more likely to die during pregnancy.
- More than 4.4 million girls 15 to 19 undergo abortions each year, according to the United Nations Population Fund. The agency estimates that 40% of these procedures are unsafe and crude.
- Young women in the developing world are also easy prey for sexual assault, sexual coercion, and sexual trafficking.
- The number of AIDS victims has risen rapidly among girls and women in Africa and Asia, outstripping the spread of the disease among men.

Just say no is not the solution. Girls in these societies don't even have the power to offer an opinion, much less exert their will. The really moral thing to do is to give these young women family planning options and education. Their lives are in jeopardy.

Meet Our Webmaster — Ed Mitchell

If you've been to our website in the last few months, you've noticed a big change. We've gone from Plain-But-Informative to Complex-and-Supremely-Well-Organized. We owe it all to Ed Mitchell, the brains behind all those aesthetically arranged bits and bytes.

According to Ed, "*I'm delighted that our site attracts so many visitors – 100,000 in the last year – and that people are finding the rich resources they are looking for.*"



We now offer 120 pages of content, including audio and video formats, besides links to numerous newspapers and sister agencies. Our web site acts as the meeting place for people of every country and religion seeking answers to life's central questions."

Says Dan Maguire, "*Ed's great genius is not only posting the information, but putting it where you can find it. As the site has grown in complexity, Ed has kept us organized. He has a flair for making it easy for visitors to use the site.*"

Because of the nature of our work, keeping up with it is an ongoing job, constructing mazes of new links to enlarge the site as more news and information become available. Because Ed brings real artistry to our site, we wanted to give him the accolades he deserves. He may be a behind-the-scenes fellow, but he's critically important to our message.

And if you're looking for a webmaster, we highly recommend Ed. Contact him at ejmitch@attbi.com.

Justice Scalia is Pro-Choice — on Capital Punishment

[This excerpt is taken from *Scalia: Catholic Contradiction Common*, by Gregory Tejada, UPI, 2002]

While the Roman Catholic Church teaches both capital punishment and abortion are wrong because they violate a view that all life is sacred, many Catholics have no problem siding with life on one issue while opposing it on the other.

Take Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia.

Scalia, a member of the high court since 1986 who is considered a solid member of the court's conservative faction, is an abortion opponent, which puts him in good standing with the Catholic Church.

But on capital punishment, Scalia thinks his religion is misguided. "I do not agree with the very new, latest version of the Catechism," Scalia said. "I read it, I considered it, and I decided that I disagree with it, so I am disregarding it."

[On abortion] He said he believes the termination of a pregnancy is wrong, but says he thinks the issue is one that should be left up to individual state legislatures, and that he could support it if a state were to decide abortion rights should not be restricted for its citizens.

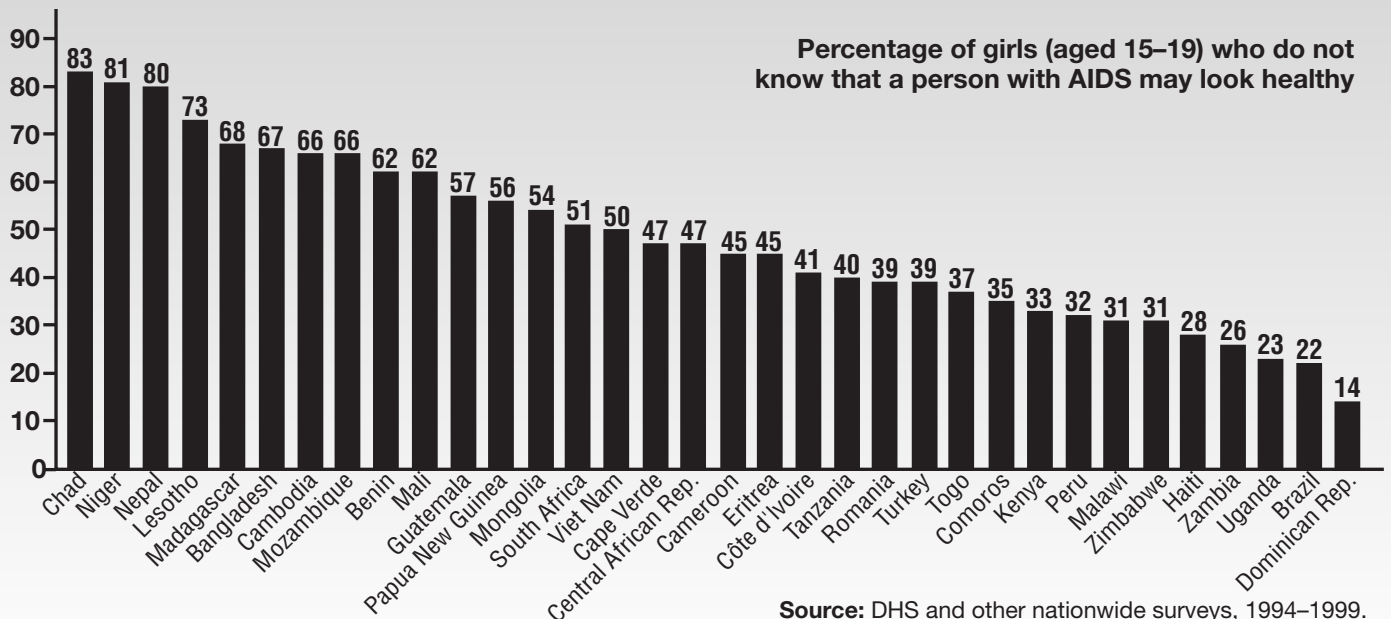


When Looks Can Kill

Young girls are more vulnerable to AIDS than young boys of the same age. Physical, social, and cultural factors put girls at risk, and this risk is worsened by girls' lack of knowledge about the disease and its transmission.

Stronger educational campaigns are needed to eliminate the misconceptions about the disease and give girls a means of protection. Education must begin early — long before girls enter this high-risk age group — building the message year after year so that girls understand the risks to them and the steps they can take to protect themselves.

The chart below comes from *The Progress of Nations 2000*, a publication by the United Nations Children's Fund. The preface to a series of articles on young people and AIDS pointed out, "The overwhelming message from these surveys is that information about AIDS and its deadly danger is not getting out or is not being absorbed." The number of girls aged 15–19 who know little about HIV/AIDS is frightening. In 15 of 34 countries recently surveyed, **50% or more do not know that a person who looks healthy can be infected with AIDS and transmit it to others.**



Source: DHS and other nationwide surveys, 1994–1999.

The Miracle in Macedonia

By Participating Scholar, Paul Knitter

I didn't know what to expect. It was to be another meeting of "*The Jewish-Christian-Muslim Trialogue*" — a group of scholars brought together by Len Swidler (Temple University) and Paul Mojzes (Rosemont College) who have been meeting annually for most of the past 15 or so years. For most of our long dialogical life together, we scholars had been sticking to rather scholarly topics — sharing and comparing our views on God, afterlife, the person, engagement in the world. Recently, however, we've been meeting in politically



Participating Scholars), David Little of Harvard, Reuven Firestone of Hebrew Union College, Los Angeles, Mehmet Aydin of the University of Izmir, Turkey.

Unprecedented Exchanges

On the second day, the decibel levels of the conversations rose and feelings flared as members of the group spoke of

President Trajkovski lauded this decision as one of the most significant differences that our meeting had made for Macedonia. The representative of the United States Institute of Peace, which had provided a major part of the meeting's financing, was beaming.

charged situations to see if we might, as it were, set a good example — religious people talking, rather than fighting, with each other. Two years ago, we met in Jakarta, Indonesia, with some modest success — until President Aburrahman Wahid, who had invited us, was deposed.

This past May 10-14, we met in Skopje, Macedonia, at the invitation of President Boris Trajkovski. Our topic was "*Nurturing a Culture of Dialogue: Building Confidence by Way of Dialogue among Religions.*" Our assignment, as explained in the letter of invitation was "*to make a positive impact on the religious tensions experienced in this newly-founded Balkan nation.*"

A Tense Opening Session

As our Trialogue conference assembled for its opening session, 40 international members and 40 locals took their seats. Dignitaries from the Orthodox and Muslim communities gathered at the head table around President Trajkovski. One could feel the tensions behind the brittle politeness. Yet there they were. As a Macedonian friend whispered to me, "*This is history.*" Since the Balkan conflicts broke out, never in Macedonia had leaders of the religious communities sat down together to talk.

And talk they did. The first day of the conference offered sessions in which Jewish, Muslim, and Christian members of the Trialogue group addressed both the necessity and the demands of interreligious dialogue. Speaking eloquently, and often passionately, were Miroslav Volf of Yale, Riffat Hassan of the University of Louisville (another of the Consultation's

As a Macedonian friend whispered to me,
"This is history."

needs, demands, and past wrongs. On the third day, the conversations took on depth — and even warmth — when all the participants, including the Muslims, visited the main Orthodox theological seminary. Afterwards, we all, including the Orthodox, boarded a bus and visited the Muslim theological university. This had never happened before. Ever. In these visits, in which each side welcomed guests they had never seen within their walls, genuine hospitality was warming into friendship.

A Council is Created

A momentous decision was made in behind-the-scenes meetings at the residence of the Orthodox Archbishop and the Islamic Community headquarters. A **Council of Interreligious Cooperation** was mutually created. It would gather spokespersons from all the religious communities of Macedonia four times a year — and more often in situations of crisis and conflict. At the concluding session of the Trialogue, President Trajkovski lauded this decision as one of the most significant differences that our meeting had made for Macedonia. The representative of the United States Institute of Peace, which had provided a major part of the meeting's financing, was beaming.

Introducing Two New Board Members

Sa'diyya Shaikh

Sa'diyya, a native of South Africa, earned her undergraduate degrees in Religious Studies and Psychology at the University of Cape Town and the University of Natal–Durban respectively. She also earned her master's degree at the University of Cape Town. She came to the US to complete her doctoral studies at Temple University. She has been a Fulbright Scholar and received an Andrew Mellon Foundation Scholarship.

She has currently returned to the University of Cape Town where she is a member of the Religious Studies Department and the Program Director of Seminarians Interacting, an interreligious dialogue program for Jewish, Christian, and Muslim seminarians and graduate students of theology.

While in South Africa in the 1990s, Sa'diyya was an active member of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians and has often acted as a guest speaker on interfaith panels. Here in the US, Sa'diyya has prolifically presented papers on topics related to Islam and feminism, speaking at Colgate University, Syracuse University, Illinois Wesleyan University, The United Nations Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders, Villanova University, and the American Academy of Religion. Her publications include:

- *Exegetical Violence: Nushuz In Quranic Gender Ideology*, *Journal for Islamic Studies*.
- *The Veil: A Feminist Theological Analysis*, in M. Kanyoro (ed.) *Groaning in Faith: African Women in the Household of God*, Nairobi Acton Publishers.
- *Narratives on Narration: A Feminist Hermeneutics on Hadith*, in D. Ackermann, E. Getmann, H. Kotze, and J. Tobler (eds.) *Claiming our Footprints: South African Women Reflect on Context, Identity, and Spirituality*.

Last winter, Sa'diyya spoke at the Consultation's New York meeting on the *Dignity of Women in Islam*. A high-energy person, a powerful writer and speaker with a gifted analytical mind, Sa'diyya brings her great enthusiasm to our Board.

John Raines

A Professor of Religion and Chair of the Department of Religion at Temple University, John is a familiar face in the Movers & Shakers section of this newsletter. He is currently the Fulbright Senior Scholar in Jakarta, Indonesia. Interestingly enough, early in his career, John was a Fulbright Fellow at the University of Strasbourg in France.

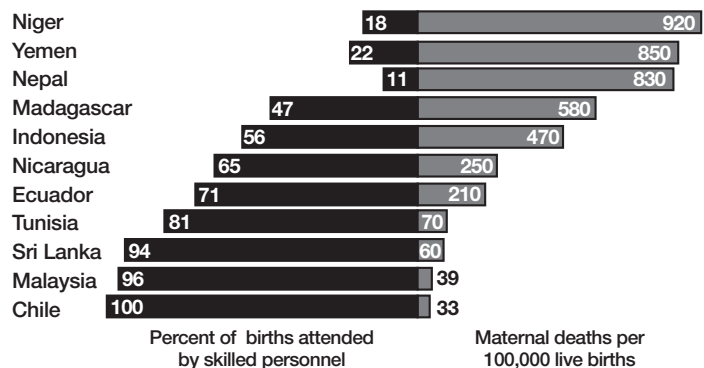
John's work in Indonesia is particularly noteworthy because he has established the first graduate program in Comparative Religious Studies in Indonesia, the fourth-largest country in the world, with a population that is 90% Muslim. Indonesia is home to more Muslims than all the Middle East nations combined. This year, John is organizing a National Conference on Religion and Science funded by the Templeton Foundation. Gadjah Mada University will host the event.

Back home in the US, John is an active Participating Scholar. He co-edited *What Men Owe to Women: Men's Voices from World Religions* with Consultation President Dan Maguire. John has also published an anthology of the writings of **Karl Marx on Religion**.

He is President of The Center for Ethics and Social Policy in Philadelphia. From 1986-1994 he hosted an award-winning television show, *Dialogue*, in Philadelphia. He was awarded a Silver Medal at the New York Film and Television Festival for an hour-long documentary that aired nationally on PBS in November 1983, *When a Factory Closes*.

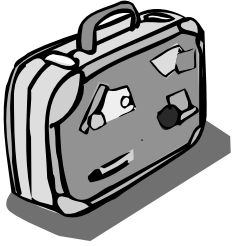
A member of the American Academy of Religion, the Society of Christian Ethics, and a Co-chair Emeritus of Philadelphia's Interfaith Council on the Holocaust, John brings to the Board a half-century of experience and wisdom in the areas of social justice and religion.

Skilled Care at Delivery and Maternal Death Ratios, Selected Countries



Sources: UNICEF, End-of-Decade Database; and Demographic and Health Surveys, 1995–2000.

Women's deaths due to complications of pregnancy and childbirth are strongly associated with inadequate medical care at the time of delivery.



Tracking the Activities of Our Participating Scholars

Movers and Shakers



Farid Esack is working on a 12-part documentary on *Ethics for Muslim Teenagers* for **Dutch TV**. Having just completed a semester teaching at the **College of William & Mary**, he is on to similar teaching posts in **Columbus, Ohio** this summer and **Xavier University** in Cincinnati this fall. There, he will be working on a project, *In Search of Progressive Islam*, examining Muslim responses to issues of HIV/Aids, gender, sexual identity, environmental justice, globalization, and class.

Christine Gudorf worked as a **Fulbright Senior Scholar at Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, Indonesia**, from February to June 2002, teaching *Gender and Religion and Social Science Research Methods in Religion* to graduate students in the Comparative Religion program.



While in Indonesia, she lectured at a number of universities—**Mohammadiyah, Gadjah Mada, Satya Wacana, Sastra (UGM)**—and to the **Central Committee of Aishayah**, the women's organization of the Muhammadiyah movement. Lectures focused on *Gender in Islam and Christianity; Interreligious Dialogue and Environmentalism in Indonesia; and Feminist Strategies in Islam and Christianity*. Chris has also been busy publishing:

- *Resymbolizing Life: Religion on Population and Development*, **Horizons: The Journal of the College Theology Society**, Fall 2001.
- *Not Only Poverty: The Richness of Religious Healing in Latin America*, **Second Opinion**, July 2001: 5-32.
- "The Erosion of Sexual Dimorphism: Challenge to Religions and Religious Ethics," **Journal of the American Academy of Religion**, 69.4 (Fall 2001) 863-889.

She has written essays reviewing these books:

- **Goddesses Who Rule**, Elisabeth Benard and Beverly Moon, Eds.
- **Ancient Goddesses**, Lucy Goodison and Christine Morris, Eds.
- **The Cult of Asherah in Ancient Israel and Judah**, Judith Hadley, Lynn E. Roller.

- **In Search of God the Mother: The Cult of Anatolian Cybele**, in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 70:1 (Spring 2002): 198-203.

In January, Chris delivered the Belk Lecture at **Wesleyan College** in Macon, Georgia, on "*Sexuality As Diversity, Not Duality: Challenge for the Churches.*"

Ben Hubbard was interviewed about the religious implications of 9/11 for a September 16, 2001 segment of **Dateline NBC**. He has published an article, "*The United Nations Initiative in Engaging Religion in Peace Building*" in the **Hsi Lai Journal of Humanistic Buddhism**, Vol. 3 (spring), 2002, 78-85.



Ben also published three op-ed pieces for the Orange County edition of the **Los Angeles Times**: "*Holy Day is Help for All*" (Sept. 16, 2001) • "*Hope for Jews, Muslims*" (Dec. 30, 2001) • "*A Mideast Miracle Requires Our Will*" (April 7, 2002).



Patti Jung gave a plenary address, "*Sexual Diversity: A Typology*," and a workshop, *Heterosexism: What Is It?* at the **Building Bridges: Becoming a Welcoming Congregation Conference**, LaCrosse, Wisconsin on February 23, 2002.

She delivered a second plenary address last spring. This one was on "*The Joint Declaration on Justification: Ethical Implications.*" Patti also participated in the Ethical Implications Group at the **Lutheran World Federation Conference, Justification Today: Its Meaning and Implications**, April 14-17 2002.

The following week, Patti took part in an interreligious panel discussion of *New Jewish and Christian Approaches to Homosexuality* at the **University of San Francisco**.

Movers and Shakers

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Paul Knitter's latest book has just been published. **Introducing Theologies of Religions**, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2002. The book offers an overview of the various ways in which Christians approach other religions and the need for more authentic dialogue among all religions.

Paul also attended a meeting of the Jewish-Christian-Muslim Dialogue in **Skopje, Macedonia**. See the article, page 8, *Miracle in Macedonia*, in this issue.

David Loy published a new book in February, **A Buddhist History of the West: Studies in Lack**, SUNY Press. In March, he delivered the Phipps Lecture, *The Non-duality of Good and Evil? Buddhist Reflections on the New Holy War*, at **Davis and Elkins College**. He reprised his presentation for the Martin Lecture at **Wheaton College in Massachusetts**. David also presented a mini-course to the Psychology Department at **Duquesne University**. The course was based on his book, **Lack and Transcendence**.

Tavivat Puntarigivat was appointed **Director of the Institute of Research and Development** at the **World Buddhist University** in June 2001.

Following the model of the United Nations University in Tokyo, the World Buddhist University in Bangkok, Thailand, is an organization that networks with universities and institutions with Buddhist researchers and Buddhist studies throughout the world. The university has no staff, no students, and no campus. Instead, the Institute collects and stores the research of Buddhist scholars and others exploring new areas for Buddhist research, providing relevant information regarding Buddhism and other major religions.

Tavivat was also named **Editor of WFB Review**, an international journal of **The World Fellowship of Buddhists** located in Bangkok. The *Review* publishes academic papers as well as articles concerning Buddhism. Written in English, it is distributed to more than 20 countries worldwide. Anyone interested in submitting an academic paper or interesting article relating to Buddhism may send it to shpt@mahidol.ac.th



The Religious Right

continued from page 5

as the predominant framework with which to improve children's lives. The US also opposed efforts to abolish the death penalty for juvenile offenders.

US Withholds Funding

Meanwhile, this new Religious Right coalition at the UN continues to attack UN agencies for "encouraging abortion." Having attacked UNICEF all through the preparations for the Special Session, the Religious Right, led this time by Population Research Institute (PRI) and joined by anti-choice Congressman Chris Smith (NJ), has successfully pressured the Bush administration to withhold \$34 million in funding from the UN Population Fund (UNFPA).

Ironically, by crippling UNFPA's work around the world, the Right will actually increase the number of abortions and infant and maternal deaths in childbirth.

Although allegations made by PRI repeatedly have been proven false, the Bush Administration has continued to cater to groups like PRI, well-known for spreading misinformation

and for extremist behavior. Showing the growing strength of their networks globally, the Religious Right has launched attacks on UNFPA in five other countries including the UK and Ireland. Ironically, by crippling UNFPA's work around the world, the Right will actually increase the number of abortions and infant and maternal deaths in childbirth.

The Danger of Losing More Ground

If the US government continues to support the Religious Right, it may be able to stall — even reverse — significant gains made by the global women's movement. Religious leadership is crucial in counteracting the Religious Right that claims to speak for religion. Every day in the UN arena, the voices of progressive religious leaders are in high demand as others use religion as a reason to violate women's rights.

For more information:

- Jennifer Butler, "For Faith and Family: Christian Right Advocacy at the United Nations," (Summer/Fall 2000) and "A New Sheriff in Town: The Christian Right Shapes US Agenda at the UN" (Summer 2002) published by Political Research Associates *Public Eye Magazine*. www.publiceye.org. Telephone: 617-666-5300.
- Ecumenical Women 2000+, a coalition of Protestant groups with interfaith partnerships advocating for women's rights at the UN. www.ew2000plus.org.

Update: Microbicides as AIDS Prevention

Facing a lack of funding and the many obstacles that stand in the way of developing a vaccine to prevent AIDS, scientists have set their sights on creating a variety of vaginal gels, creams, and tablets they hope might someday protect women against HIV, other sexually transmitted diseases, common gynecological infections, and unwanted pregnancies.

More than 600 scientists, economists, and public policy experts gathered in Antwerp, Belgium in May for the Microbicides 2002 conference. The need for microbicides, a part of the United Nations' five-point plan to fight AIDS, intensifies with each passing day — 15,000 people are infected daily, according to officials from UNAIDS. Researchers say that a microbicide could be available as early as 2007.

Some Background

The effort to find an effective microbicide marks a widening of the effort to prevent HIV. Until recently, research had focused on promoting the use of condoms, hoping to keep the disease at bay until a vaccine could be developed. However, researchers say that an effective vaccine is at least a

replicating, or they might obstruct the virus, preventing it from fusing with mucosal cells of the vagina.

Some microbicides could use several of these strategies. Others might be used with condoms or diaphragms. Still others may do double duty serving as contraceptives as well as preventive solutions for the transmission of AIDS.

The Funding Problem

Scientists' zeal for microbicides has failed to interest the pharmaceutical companies that typically fund the development of new drugs — even though a report commissioned by the Rockefeller Foundation estimated that microbicides would produce \$1.8 billion in worldwide revenues and prevent 2.5 million infections over three years. The stumbling block is money: sales of the first generation of microbicides wouldn't offset the companies' cost of development. Funding, therefore, has defaulted to foundations and governments but doesn't come close to the amount needed.

Democratic Senator Jon Corzine of New Jersey, whose state registered the highest incidence of HIV infections among women in the US, believes the government needs to spend more on microbicide research. He has proposed a bill that would increase the National Institutes of Health research dollars with the goal of getting a product to market in five years.

How the Bush administration with its stubborn advocacy of abstinence-only sex education might react to the bill is unclear at the moment.



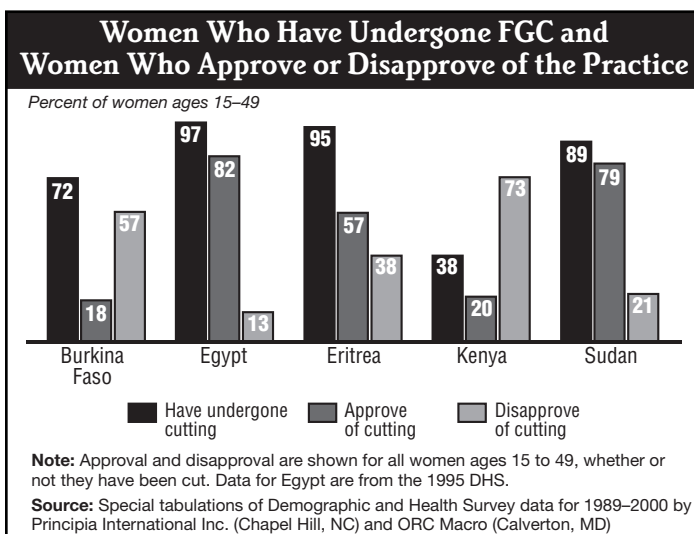
Scientists' zeal for microbicides has failed to interest the pharmaceutical companies... sales of the first generation of microbicides wouldn't offset the companies' cost of development.

decade away. And scientists frankly admit that a vaccine probably will not be 100% effective or combat all of the many strains of the virus, given the virus's ability to mutate.

Scientists now advocate more options — the more weapons in the arsenal, the better the chances of retarding the spread of the disease. Consequently, discussions at the Antwerp conference centered on developing new methods for women to protect themselves. Scientists reaffirm that condoms are still a viable method of prevention. They are inexpensive, easy to use, widely available, and effective. However, the fact that not everyone will use condoms creates the need for more options.

How They Might Work

Microbicides could work in several ways. They might coat either the virus particles or the cells of the vagina, blocking HIV infiltration. They might marshal the body's immune system, constructing a hostile environment to thwart the virus. They might prevent HIV cells from



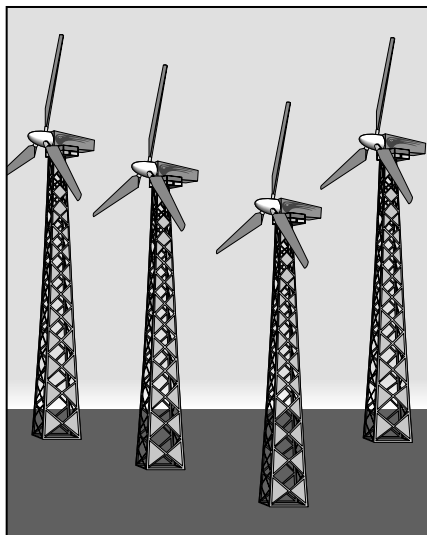
An Expert Speaks Out On the Need for Sustainable Energy Policies

A North American symposium hosted by the **Commission for Environmental Cooperation** heard the best minds in the energy field discuss the challenges and opportunities facing policymakers. Here is an excerpt from one expert at the symposium, William Moomaw of Tufts University. Mr. Moomaw's comments appeared in *Voices of Energy, Population Press*, April/May 2002, Mary Hempel editor.

William Moomaw commented on the long-term effects on the planet in relying on fossil fuels to produce energy. He explained that while the world's scientific community is convinced that climate change poses a serious problem, one dimension of the problem that policymakers do not yet grasp is the irreversible nature of every ton of gas put into the atmosphere. *"When we point out that the lifetime of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is about 100 years, people assume that it's gone by then. Instead, it means between 30-50% of it is still in the atmosphere after 100 years."*

According to the Tufts University expert, California, a leader in wind power in the 1980s, accounted for 90% of the world's wind capacity and a half-dozen major US turbine producers. Today, there are no turbine producers in California. Instead, Denmark — population 4 million — boasts two-thirds of the world's turbines. Denmark obtains 15% of its electricity from wind power. In some states in Germany, 20% of electricity is wind-generated. Why has the US fallen from the dominant wind power producer to a non-player in wind-generated power? The answer, according to William Moomaw, is *"policy," an inconsistent policy.*

What makes the policy inconsistent? The presence of coal. In countries like the US and Canada, where coal is so cheap and the coal constituencies are powerful, Moomaw explains, *"you're going to get coal."* He concludes, *"There are some things we can see in the future. While I cannot predict the future price of natural gas, I can predict the future price of wind. It's going to be zero. Just as it is today. For all time."*



US House of Representatives Passes Welfare "Reform" Act, Hobbling Poor Families

Last May, the US House of Representatives voted to reauthorize the 1996 welfare "reform" act, (HR 4737) which requires a 40-hour work week (proposed by President Bush) yet without any provision for before- or after-school care programs that would help poor mothers cope with full-time work schedules. Furthermore, the House seconded Bush's proposal that time spent in education and skills-training programs would not count toward the 40 hours. Instead, the House allocated hundreds of millions of dollars for abstinence and marriage promotion programs.

An outraged National Organization for Women President, Kim Gandy, wrote in a news release that she issued shortly after the vote:

"Their [the House's] steadfast refusal to provide a mechanism for accountability, or even measure the productivity, of these programs appalls those of us who have spent years working in communities helping women battle the ills of poverty, violence, illiteracy, and failing health. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds should go directly for food and housing and basic needs that can boost a family out of poverty, not to non-custodial parents or government-funded chastity and dating services."

Source: A news release entitled, *Welfare Vote Deals A 'Bad Hand' to Poor Women*, May 16, 2002.

Penis Monologue

continued from front page

religiously grounded, with historical Christianity bearing enormous blame. Augustine saw sexual passion as the conduit of original sin, an act so heinous and infectious that the passion of parents leading to conception befouled the souls of newborns. Sexual pleasure, even in marriage, was long thought to be sinful. And the rule was, the more pleasure, the more sin. William of Auxerre, in the thirteenth century, said that a holy man who has sex with his wife and finds it hateful and disgusting commits no sin. He added with regret, *“This, however, seldom happens.”*

Twelfth-century Petrus Cantor opined that sex with a beautiful woman was a greater sin since it caused greater delight. His contemporary, Alain de Lille, disagreed, saying sex with a beautiful woman was less sinful *“because he was*



Pellauer says *“flesh has the capacity to burst me open to existence”* so that our *“connections to the rest of the universe are felt...as pleasurable.”* Patricia Beattie Jung says, *“Our sexuality draws us into one another’s arms — and consequently into an awareness of and concern about the needs of that other.”* Audre Lorde, states that the experience of sexual pleasure can stir up in women a sense of their self-worth. Once women taste such delights, they can begin to demand *“what is in accord with joy in other areas”* of their lives. Women will *“begin to give up...being satisfied with suffering, and self-negation, and with the numbness”* that the macho culture demands of them.

Mary Pellauer agrees, saying that *“to touch and be touched in ways that produce sweet delight affirms, magnifies, intensifies and redoubles the deep value of our existence.”* Sa’diyya Shaikh writes that in Islam it is recognized that *“sexual union has the possibilities for unparalleled mystical unveilings and experiences of the Divine.”* To call sex “dirty” is a calumny.

...in Islam... *“sexual union has the possibilities for unparalleled mystical unveilings and experiences of the Divine.”* To call sex “dirty” is a calumny.

compelled by the sight of her beauty,” and *“where the compulsion is greater, the sin is slighter.”* (Taken to its logical extreme, this would justify the rape of overwhelmingly beautiful women.)

Catholicism sexphobically decided that only celibate hands can administer the sacraments. The message is clear: sexuality is incompatible with spirituality. Sex is dirty — spirituality sublime. That is the legacy of much of Western culture.

Today’s View

The ubiquity of pornography in sex-soaked cultures in the West, certainly including the US, does not signal a mature comfort with sex, but is rather the discomfort turned morbidly inside-out.

Errors about sexuality do not remain on the written page. Cultures more at home with sexuality prepare for it with sexual education and contraceptive availability. Statistics tell the tale. *“Each year, one million American teenage girls become pregnant, a per-thousand rate twice that of Canada, England, and Sweden, and ten times that of the Netherlands.”* The research indicates that there are much higher rates of sexual activity in these other countries, but far fewer pregnancies. Contraceptive availability is key, along with honesty about when a relationship is about to go sexual.

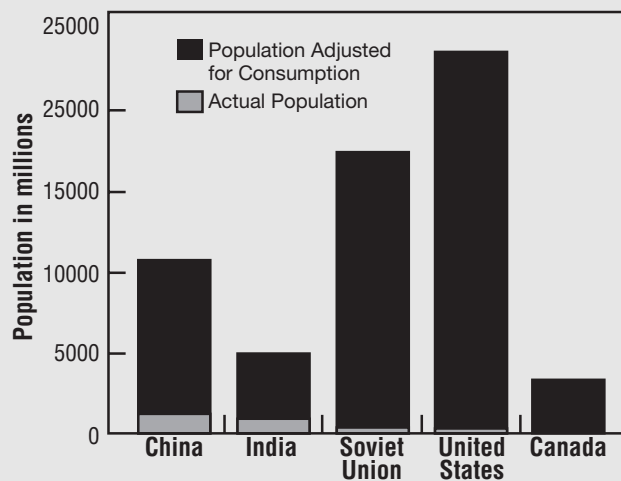
Sexual pleasure, rather than being suspect, is bounteously filled with good human news. Christian ethicist Mary

Sex and Spirituality

Notice that this talk of sex covers all the bases of a healthy spirituality. Respect for self and others, joyful affirmation of our hopes for justice and for life. It’s all there. That’s good sex, and that’s good spirituality.

Our sense of what is *normal sex* is socially constructed, and much of that social construction is poisonous — and sits on our sexuality like a poisonous miasma. Healthier winds are blowing this noxious gas out to sea, and we are beginning to see that in moments of truthful sexual joy, a marvelous beauty is born.

The World’s Appetite



Source: The Earth Council, 1994

Source: Planet Awakening, Patricia Waak, Audubon, 2000, page 25

Virginity Exams

continued from page 3

Health Minister attempts to reinstate virginity exams (2001)

On July 13, 2001, Health Minister Osman Durmus issued a new *Statute of Awards and Discipline* to be applied in Turkish high schools training health professionals. Article 41/d of the new statute authorized school administrators to expel medical high school students from attending all institutions of formal education if they had been *proven to have engaged in sexual activity or prostitution*.

The statute was first publicized by the national press on August 17. Even though the statute did not explicitly call for virginity exams, human rights groups and health professionals around the country were well aware that the

The new statute clearly violated the Turkish Constitution which grants all citizens the right to bodily integrity...

statute constituted an attempt to re-instate the practice — one that would be used in a discriminatory manner against female students. The new statute clearly violated the Turkish Constitution which grants all citizens the right to bodily integrity, as well as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

The following day, Women for Women's Human Rights — NEW WAYS, one of the women's human rights organizations that had previously fought to ban virginity

testing, initiated an international campaign. The campaign called on Durmus to cancel the new statute and urged the Turkish government to enforce the ban in compliance with a number of international treaties Turkey has signed. The campaign received widespread support from NGOs and individuals throughout the world, ranging from well-known international human rights groups to religious leaders in predominantly Muslim societies. Following the protests aimed mainly at Prime Minister Ecevit, Health Minister Durmus, and Minister of Education Bostancioglu, Durmus instructed doctors to observe the 1999 ban on virginity exams. Durmus also was asked by his own political party to declare publicly that he is against virginity testing.

The Turkish Government and the rights of young women

Even though the Health Minister has stepped back from his decision, the Statute for medical high schools remains on the books. On September 6, 2001, the Istanbul Bar opened a court case against the Ministry of Health, asking for the cancellation of the Statute. The final decision of the court is yet to be reached.

Since then, protests focused on the 1995 Statute of the Ministry of Education authorizing administrators to expel students on the basis of *unchastity*. Pressure on The Ministry of Education forced it to reform its *Statute of Awards and Discipline for High School Educational Institutions*. The General Directorate on Women's Status was consulted in writing the revisions.

As a result of the intensive campaign of women's human rights groups, the reference to *unchastity* was removed in March 2002. The revised statute now allows for the expulsion of students whose behavior *contradicts commonly accepted social values and influences the educational atmosphere in a negative way*. While it's difficult to foresee how the words, *commonly accepted social values*, will be used, the wording is a great improvement — the statute does not include any statements that directly aim at controlling the sexuality of young women, which might lead to virginity exams.

Making the Case for Reproductive Choice

- Almost half of the 6 million American women who become pregnant each year don't plan to.
- 900,000 US teens get pregnant annually, and 3 million contract a sexually transmitted disease.
- 15 million new sexually transmitted infections occur in the US annually and 400 million occur worldwide
- Every year, 585,000 women — 99% of them in poor countries — die from pregnancy-related causes, including 76,000 from unsafe abortions.

Source: The Alan Guttmacher Institute, New York, New York.



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