SEXUALITY EDUCATION BELIEFS: AN EMERGING GROUNDED THEORY
BEGINNING WITH PLANNED PARENTHOOD AND
THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

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To the Faculty of Washington State University:

The members of the Committee appointed to examine the dissertation of MARK HAROLD SELLE find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

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This qualitative study employs grounded theory methodology to investigate the sexuality education beliefs of orthodox Catholic and Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) sources. Based upon substantive grounded theories presented for these two groups, the study also provides a preliminary formal theory of sexuality education beliefs. This research includes analysis of thousands of pages of documents contained in 119 works related to the sexuality education beliefs of PPFA and orthodox Catholic sources, field notes from two observations, and transcripts from 53 interviews conducted for this study. Analysis of the substantive theories, employing the use of matrices, served to develop the emerging formal theory.

PPFA sources base their beliefs on the “individual” while orthodox Catholics root their beliefs in “family,” both spiritually and biologically. Both hold differing beliefs about “truth,” PPFA sources believing that empirical discovery forms the basis of truth and orthodox Catholics believing that God reveals truth. PPFA sources emphasize individual, women’s, and reproductive rights while orthodox Catholics emphasize parental, children’s,
and family rights. PPFA sources believe in a relativistic morality based on respect for individual and collective well-being, mutuality, and individual freedom of choice, and orthodox Catholics believe in an absolute morality rooted in God’s revelation of Natural Law.

In the emerging formal theory, differing beliefs about truth explain all variability in sexuality education beliefs. Two main properties of truth emerged, one metaphysical and the other epistemological. Metaphysical dimensions ranged from materialism to dualism and epistemological dimensions from empiricism to rationalism. The research presents theoretical frameworks for beliefs about truth, the human person, morality, law, and social control. It explains beliefs about family and human rights in terms of these categories.

The conclusion suggests that further study of additional groups or individuals would help refine and develop the emerging formal theory. Future research could also productively examine additional curricular areas and the politics of curriculum in general. Points regarding the role of sexuality education in the public schools, freedom of choice regarding sexuality education, and implications concerning public school funding, all within the context of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, conclude the study.
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For my mother
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This work might be entitled *The Sex Education Controversy: A Study of Politics, Education, and Morality* except that James Huttois and Neal Miller used that title in 1975. Their work is a must-read for anyone interested in this topic. I find myself identifying with them repeatedly. While they were initially attracted to the topic because they wanted a hot issue useful in revising political theories of community conflict, I found the topic interesting from the point of view of those they studied—public school superintendents. They found their initial political interest replaced by an interest in educational leaders and the methods they successfully used to advance the cause of comprehensive sexuality education. As an educational leader, I too found these methods interesting. They found themselves drawn into the topic personally because they had children and found it interesting from the parental point of view. So did I. “We found ourselves confronting our own value position in more indirect and, for us at least, more surprising and important ways” (p. xviii), they said. Again, I related as I did to another statement: “We found ourselves raising questions about our values regarding tolerance, education, and community participation” (p. xviii). They continued:

We found ourselves asking: “Who should have the authority to develop sexual values and how tolerant should such authorities be of opposing values?” One usually assumes that this is the kind of question that gets asked of opponents of sex education, who are typically accused of attempting to impose their values unilaterally on a socially pluralist society. But in fairness, the question should apply to both sides. To what degree can or should those advocating or offering school sex
education consider the views of those who are less willing to accept this pluralism?

Putting it more badly, how tolerant should promoters of school sex education programs be of people whom they find basically intolerant? (p. xix).

In fairness, I sought to understand deeply both sides by identifying two groups representing extremes, groups I could easily define and talk to, and groups I could read about. The work before you represents deep listening, the beginnings of a theory of sexuality education beliefs grounded in that listening, and conclusions based upon it. Like Hottois and Milner, my study has changed me. “We are most anxious to show the readers that they too, upon reflection, may find the lines of battle less clear and their values less certain” (Hottois & Milner, 1975, p. xviii).

Sex education represents one area of school curriculum rife with political controversy (cf. Hottois & Milner, 1975; Irvine, 2002). In order to paint a picture of two extremes in this politically charged area, this study examines sexuality education beliefs advanced by both the Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) and the Roman Catholic Church. Politically, PPFA may be considered “Religiously Liberal/Secularist” (Layman, 2001; Layman & Carmines, 1997) and promotes sex education based on beliefs that embrace a wide variety of sexual thoughts, feelings, and expressions (PPFA, 1998). The Catholic Church may be considered “Religiously Traditional” (Layman, 2001; Layman & Carmines, 1997). It promotes sex education based on the belief that every sex act must take place between only husband and wife duly united by the sacrament of matrimony and must be completely open to both the creation of new life as well as the deepening and strengthening of the bonds of matrimony (Catechism of the Catholic Church [CCC], 1994). Layman’s (2001) typology helps to establish how widely orthodox Catholic and PPFA
views vary on the spectrum of sexuality education beliefs. It also provides a fascinating theoretical framework within which to analyze the politics of curriculum. However, that study must wait for another day. The study at hand seeks to generate substantive grounded theories of orthodox Catholic and PPFA sexuality education beliefs as well as the beginnings of a formal grounded theory of sexuality education beliefs (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; see also Appendix A), and touches only tangentially on the fascinating yet disturbing topic of the politics of curriculum.

PPFA and the Catholic Church specifically appear in this study because they represent two conflicting extremes on the continuum of sexuality education beliefs. By analyzing categories common to both organizations as they emerge in the study, the much-needed outline of a formal grounded theory of sexuality education beliefs unfolds. Appendix A provides details of the methodology used in establishing this grounded theory.

Open Warfare

This section provides strong evidence for the perhaps common notion that Planned Parenthood and the Catholic Church do indeed hold widely disparate sexuality education beliefs. Both sides have long singled out each other as opponents for political and social combat. Interestingly, many subtle intersections of conflict exist between these two organizations. For example, while this section focuses on the open warfare between PPFA and the Catholic Church over the past century, the battle has ancient roots. This study of PPFA sexuality education beliefs revealed at least a tangential if not more substantial link to Humanism (see Appendix B). In turn, researching Humanism reveals its growth out of Unitarian Universalism, a religion rooted in heresies defined by the Catholic Church in the very early centuries of Christianity (cf. Catholic Encyclopedia, 1907, “Arianism”; see also
Denzinger, 1957, “Council of Nicea I 325,” ¶ 54-56; Harris, 2002). Upon reflection, such ancient roots in this conflict should not be surprising considering the focus on Trinitarian theology that emerged in the study of Catholic sexuality education beliefs; Unitarians claim their roots in the beliefs of those early Christians who denied the Trinitarian dogma defined by the Catholic Church. Likewise, the Catholic focus on sin and virtue, along with the consequent punishment of damnation and reward of salvation, conflicts with the original beliefs of Universalists who denied that any sin existed that could damn a person to Hell. In contrast, they affirmed that a loving God saves all people (see also Catholic Encyclopedia, 1907, "Gnosticism," "Pelagius and Pelagianism"; Denzinger, 1957, "St. Pius V 1566-1572," ¶ 1011-12; Harris, 2002).

The war over sexuality education in particular began in 1904, exactly a century ago, with the “invention of the sexual adolescent” by G. Stanley Hall, the father of modern psychology (cf. Moran, 2000, ch. 1). Since that time, the battle over curriculum has ranged from an absence of any curriculum whatsoever, to a moralistic curriculum championed by Dr. Prince Albert Morrow and his followers in the social hygiene movement (cf. Imber, 1982; Moran, 1996, 2000; Trudell, 1985), to a “comprehensive sexuality” education presented as morally neutral (cf. Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States [SIECUS], 1970a), and more recently to an “abstinence-only” sexuality education curriculum that opponents see as a return to moralizing (cf. Feldt, 2003a). However, while the Catholic Church takes a “moralistic” stance, “abstinence-only” fails to describe completely its “chastity approach,” which situates all sexuality within a moral framework of which “abstinence” is just a part. This moral framework, seen by PPFA sources as “narrow,” establishes orthodox Catholicism as the most extreme form of opposition to the new PPFA
worldview initiated by Margaret Sanger just one decade after G. Stanley Hall defined the battlefield. Since Sanger began publishing *The Woman Rebel* (1914), PPFA and the Catholic Church have continually fought over many issues involving sexuality including sexuality education.

The sections that follow, *Target Catholicism* and *Target Planned Parenthood*, illustrate the longstanding enmity between these two organizations. Since the fledgling PPFA, not yet known by the familiar name “Planned Parenthood” in the beginning (see Appendix A), came on the scene, the Catholic Church did not even notice any challenge until its founder, Margaret Sanger, fired the first salvos. Consequently, we turn first to her story.

**Target Catholicism**

The animosity begins with the childhood formation of PPFA’s founder, Margaret Sanger. Introducing her father, Michael Higgins, Sanger writes:

He made a living by chiseling angels and saints out of huge blocks of marble or granite for tombstones in cemeteries. The Catholics were his best patrons, but he did not agree with Catholicism. He resented its clutch upon the human mind, its intolerance of reason, its abject subservience to Rome. He argued and debated on the side of reason, and influenced other men to resent the interference of the Church with progress of the mind . . . and his anti-Catholic attitude did not make for his popularity in a community mainly Irish (Sanger, 1931, pp. 6-7).

Sanger’s mother was a Catholic who “before her marriage had gone regularly to church, but association with Father, a freethinker, carried her away, and she never attended the Roman Catholic Church again” (Sanger, 1931, pp. 7-8). The term “freethinker” arose in the 18th
century and described the principle proponents of a new religious point of view called deism, a belief that God created the universe along with all of its laws, including morality, and then stepped back from creation never to interfere with its evolution conforming to those laws (Catholic Encyclopedia, 1907, “Deism”; Edwards, 1967). Deists are Unitarian in their beliefs and, consequently, freethinkers are more commonly called humanists today (American Humanist Association [AHA], 2002a, 2002b; see also Appendix B).

Michael Higgins’ anti-Catholic influence also extended to young Margaret. She recounts her father’s influence in liberating her thinking from mindless religious custom:

. . . my sister and I were dutifully saying our prayers, we knelt together on the floor and repeated the Lord’s Prayer. When we had finished we climbed on Father’s chair to kiss him “goodnight,” and he said fondly: “What was that I heard you saying about bread?”

“Why, Father, that was in the Lord’s Prayer: ‘Give us this day our daily bread.’”

“Who were you talking to?” he parried.

“To God,” I replied.

“Is God a baker?” he asked. . . .

The effect of that brief dialogue was devastating. I could not pray in the same old way. I began to question every sentence which I had previously taken for granted. I began to reason for myself and it was disturbing. But my father had taught me to think. (Sanger, 1931, p. 8).

Margaret’s budding “anti-Catholic” views became more apparent as she grew and “rabid” in later life (Chesler, 2003b, ¶ last).
Polar opposite thoughts regarding the suffering Christ poignantly illustrate the rift that formed between growing Margaret and Catholicism. Some time after her mental liberation recounted above Margaret noted, “I never liked to look at the picture of Jesus on the Cross. I could not see what good it did to keep looking at him. We could not help him, as he had been crucified long ago” (Sanger, 1931, p. 9). Margaret’s thought, “I cannot help him” when contemplating the crucified Jesus, contrasts markedly with the orthodox Catholic thought, “He suffers to help me” (cf. CCC, 1994, § 601). Where Sanger sees the primacy of human power to save a suffering man, the Church sees the primacy of divine power to save humanity suffering the consequences of sin. The former is the view of Humanism while the latter is the view of Christianity (AHA, 2003a; Bragg, 1933; CCC, 1994; Kurtz & Wilson, 1973). The Humanist Manifesto II specifically states, “No deity will save us; we must save ourselves” (Kurtz & Wilson, 1973, § 1 ¶ 4). Sanger did identify with Humanism (AHA, 2003b; see also Appendix B).

Many passing comments in Sanger’s writings reveal her antipathy for the Catholic Church. For example, during her 1913 trip to Paris she noted: “In France, the word ‘proletariat’ was interpreted as meaning ‘producers of children.’ The right to knowledge of contraceptive technique was almost a national right. Even the Catholic Church could not deter its practice” (Sanger, 1931, p. 72). Later, she refers to a “recent convert from Catholicism” as receiving “liberation” (p. 78) and implicates the “Roman Catholic Church in Spain” in the death of “Francisco Ferrer, the Spanish libertarian [who] had been executed and thrown in a ditch at Montjuich” for “teaching science and evolution in his modern schools” (pp. 77, 97). Sanger recalled her reflections prompted by the story of a Roman Catholic mother:
When I was married . . . the priest told us to have lots of children, and we listened to him. I had fifteen. Six are living. Nine baby funerals in our house. I am thirty-six years old now. Look at me! I look sixty.

As I walked home that night, I made a mental calculation of fifteen baptismal fees, nine funeral expenses, masses and candles for the repose of nine little souls, the physical suffering of the mother, and the emotional suffering of both parents; and I asked myself, ‘Was it fair? Is this the price of Christianity?’ (p. 157).

Clearly, Sanger believed this priest’s advice “to have lots of children” served the Church at the expense of the parents’ well-being. Retelling the account of a legislator who opposed her lobbying efforts after the fight for birth control was well underway, Sanger says simply, “He was a Roman Catholic” (p. 166). After documenting her encounters with Catholic influences while in prison in February of 1917, Sanger concluded, “The only reading material available were two Catholic weekly papers and the Christian Science Monitor. It was a relief to read the latter” (p. 181).

Indeed, Sanger had not only rejected the faith of her mother, but also all of organized Christianity. As a self-proclaimed “Woman Rebel” (Sanger, 1914; cf. Katz, 2003, Chapter 2) Sanger saw herself as part of a “new religion . . . made up of scoffers, rebels, revolutionists, anarchists, socialists” (Sanger, 1931, p. 76), and she proclaimed her new-found truths throughout her life. She wrote and spoke with zeal, often drawing allusions from organized religion. Believing her knowledge could save women, Sanger asserted that a “woman’s right to control her own body” allowed her to “work out her own salvation” (Sanger, 1920, pp. 193-94; cf. Philippians 2:12; Kurtz, 1973). Again, armed with her truth about salvation, Sanger proclaimed, “I knew that women were dying, suffering in agony, in
my own country. I felt that I had the knowledge they needed. I wanted to get back and shout
it from the housetops” (Sanger, 1931, pp. 74-75). “Shout it from the housetops” recalls
Jesus’ command to the apostles regarding the Gospel (cf. Matthew 10:27; Luke 12:3).
Alone, one may pass over this allusion without inferring Sanger’s conscious reference to
religious phrases. However, these are just two of many such allusions Sanger uses
consistently. For example, she describes the “torture” she felt on the night she decided to
flee prosecution after being indicted for violation of the Comstock Law as “a spiritual
crucifixion,” alluding again to Christ when describing her fight for birth control (p. 93).
Later, she calls her battle a “crusade” (p. 158). Sanger refers to her sister, Ethyl Byrne, who
underwent a debilitating hunger strike after being jailed for working in the first birth control
clinic, as a “martyr” (p. 167). With John 8:32 Sanger makes the spiritual proclamation “The
truth makes free” (Sanger, 1920, pp. 183). However, she goes on to imbue that popular
scripture verse with her radically new interpretation: “We will then instinctively idealize and
keep holy that physical-spiritual expression which is the foundation of all human life, and in
that conception of sex will the race be exalted” (p. 184). For Sanger, it is the good news of
liberated sexuality, not of Jesus Christ, that sets one free.

A current Planned Parenthood sexuality educator (see Appendix A regarding
qualitative research methodology and confidentiality of sources) expressed common
negative feelings about the Catholic Church today:

I may have told you that I was raised Catholic—and I married a Catholic. Our son
who is eight identifies as a Catholic though he hasn’t done any of the sacraments
except baptism and attends a private non-Catholic school. Anyway, I am not
Catholic on purpose. Prior to age 12, I figured out the church was pretty anti-women
and so it has never felt good to me. I get annoyed at the “cafeteria-style” way many Catholics select that part of the religion that “works” for them and disregard the rest that doesn’t seem to “fit,” never dealing with the fact that Vatican dogma actively hurts people on a daily basis—those who are gay, lesbian, bi, divorced, those who use contraceptives, or enjoy masturbation—pretty much all of us. I believe if you are not part of the solution you are part of the problem.

Interestingly, orthodox Catholics also strongly object to “cafeteria-style” Catholics, but for opposite reasons. They wonder why people who dissent from infallible Catholic doctrine (see Appendix C) like that on contraception and abortion remain Catholic. For them, to be Catholic is to accept, not reject, the basic teachings of the Church. Another interesting point is that the person who provided the perspective on “cafeteria-style” Catholics above went on to express her admiration for a well-known Catholic she calls “a faithful Catholic who has been a mentor to me.” This “faithful Catholic” dissents from Catholic doctrine regarding contraception and abortion. Her perspective further illustrates the animosity between those who hold the Planned Parenthood point of view and those who embrace Catholic doctrine. This Planned Parenthood sexuality educator sees cafeteria-style Catholics who do not openly reject official doctrine regarding contraception and abortion as annoying while she sees another cafeteria-style Catholic who does openly dissent as admirable. “Cafeteria Catholicism” does not seem to annoy her as much as does Catholic doctrine.

Another Planned Parenthood sexuality educator experienced conflict with a Catholic university. She recalled, “I went to do a presentation and a student caught wind that I was going to be on that college campus. I was kicked off the campus. I was not allowed to come.” The university president enforced the decision not to allow her to speak on campus.
Such a story hearkens back to Sanger’s girlhood memories of a Catholic priest shutting down the local hall to prevent religious antagonist Bob Ingersoll (cf. 1890) from speaking at her father’s request (Sanger, 1931, p. 7).

Yet another sexuality educator shared this negative experience associated with a Catholic hospital:

I remember once being pulled into a meeting at a Catholic Hospital because of my expertise in human sexuality and teen pregnancy prevention. It was a large meeting with mucky-mucks in the room. A hospital administrator pulled me in; there was no reason not to feel I belonged there. I’d worked with most of the people in the room on many occasions on various community committees—after all, the topic was teen pregnancy! When it came for my time to speak and the “big cheese administrator” found out who I worked for, heads rolled and I was promptly asked to leave.

PPFA problems with Catholic doctrine surface repeatedly. While the Catholic Magisterium speaks volumes on the topic, as demonstrated throughout this study, PPFA provides its only Catholic link to “Catholics for a Free Choice” a dissident group that rejects Catholic magisterial doctrine in favor of views that square with PPFA on issues of contraception, masturbation, homosexuality, abortion, and sexuality education (PPFA, 2003). Current PPFA president, Gloria Feldt, blasts Catholic hospitals for following their Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services, which forbid all reproductive health services that contradict official Catholic teaching, including tubal ligation, vasectomy, abortion, in vitro fertilization, contraceptives, counseling on the use of condoms to prevent HIV/AIDS, and emergency contraception even for rape victims. (Feldt & Jennings, 2002, p. 147).
This is just one of 16 references Feldt makes to problems that arise from limiting reproductive freedom as Catholic hospitals do when they follow Catholic orthodoxy (Feldt & Jennings, 2002, ch. 10). Perhaps the following passage best summarizes her point:

More than 85 million Americans receive care at hospitals affiliated with the Catholic health care system and most of these patients aren’t Catholic and don’t share the beliefs of that system. When the sectarian hospital is one of several in town, its ideology is not so great a problem. But when the sectarian provider becomes the majority or only provider, questions must be raised about their ethical responsibility to provide access to the full range of medically and legally acceptable services. Because these hospitals, by and large, all receive our tax dollars, they have a moral obligation to respect the wishes and beliefs of all citizens who receive their services.

(p. 147).

This section demonstrates PPFA’s longstanding animosity with the Catholic Church, which has existed since Margaret Sanger founded the organization. The rancor is definitely a two-way street. The discussion now turns to Catholic issues with Planned Parenthood.

**Target Planned Parenthood**

The Catholic Church wasted little time taking on Sanger and Planned Parenthood directly. The phrase “Catholic Church” inherently contains the idea of “orthodox Catholicism” (see Appendix C). The Church does not recognize “unorthodox” Catholics, although, practically speaking, many who call themselves “Catholic” dissent against the orthodoxy of Catholic doctrine. Orthodox Catholics at all levels, including laity, priests, and popes, voice the animosity with Planned Parenthood from the Catholic side of the battle. This section presents their point of view.
Although she saw success in her campaign to overturn the Comstock laws, Margaret Sanger faced early failures due, in part, to Catholic opposition. For example, due to a powerful Catholic lobby, “Twenty non-Catholic lay or religious organizations joined the NCWC [National Catholic Welfare Conference] in opposition to amending the Comstock Act” (Marshall & Donovan, 1991, p. 10). Esther Katz (2003) comments, “The NCWC successfully marshaled Catholic and fraternal non-Catholic groups to oppose the ABCL’s [American Birth Control League— the former name of PPFA; see Appendix B] legislative lobbying” (p. 439).

While Pope Pius XI (see Appendix C) addressed “the modern subverters of society” (1930, § 79) in general, in his encyclical Casti connubii, there can be no doubt that he included the likes of Margaret Sanger and the ABCL. To such purveyors of “false principles of a new and utterly perverse Morality” (§ 3) he addressed the following condemnation of contraception:

First consideration is due to the offspring, which many have the boldness to call the disagreeable burden of matrimony and which they say is to be carefully avoided by married people not through virtuous continence (which Christian law permits in matrimony when both parties consent) but by frustrating the marriage act (§ 53). This condemnation addressed Sanger and the ABCL, where she served as president from 1921 to 1928 (Margaret Sanger Papers, 2002). Sanger’s statements regarding “the burden of matrimony” (e.g. 1928, p. xi) and her condemnation of “continence” as “absurd,” “injurious to the nervous system,” and forced upon “those who are not fitted or do not desire to practice it” (1920, pp. 101-103) provides ample evidence. One can see that she took the Pope’s encyclical as a direct shot at the beliefs she represented in the salvo she shot back in
an article entitled “Birth Control Advances: A Reply to the Pope” (quoted in Marshall & Donovan, 1991, p. 136) and “My answer to the Pope on birth control” (Sanger, 1932).

Rancor continued throughout the decades and continues today. Commenting on how the philosophy of “positivism” leads to agnosticism in theory and “utilitarianism” in practice (cf. Mill, Bentham, & Ryan, 1987), so that the human person is viewed as a “thing to be used,” Pope John Paul II takes aim at Planned Parenthood and others with the following:

. . . one need only look at certain sexual education programs introduced into the schools, often notwithstanding the disagreement and even the protests of many parents; or pro-abortion tendencies which vainly try to hide behind the so-called “right to choose” (“pro-choice”) on the part of both spouses, and in particular on the part of the woman. (Pope John Paul II, 1994, § 13).

An official teaching arm of the Pope, the Pontifical Council for the Family (PCF), also took direct aim at Planned Parenthood and others with similar beliefs. Speaking of “large organizations and international associations that promote abortion, sterilization and contraception” (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995, § 136), the PCF says:

These organizations want to impose a false lifestyle against the truth of human sexuality. Working at national or state levels, these organizations try to arouse the fear of the “threat of overpopulation” among children and young people to promote the contraceptive mentality, that is, the “anti-life” mentality. They spread false ideas about the “reproductive health” and “sexual reproductive rights” of young people . . . Some antinatalist organizations maintain those clinics which, violating the rights of parents, provide abortion and contraception for young people, thus promoting
promiscuity and consequently an increase in teenage pregnancies.” (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995, § 136).

According to orthodox Catholics, Planned Parenthood fits every description given of the offending organizations described. While not mentioned by name, there is no doubt that these kinds of remarks made by the Catholic Magisterium take aim at PPFA specifically, in addition to organizations holding similar views.

Some Catholic university presidents fuel the controversy as well.

The Rev. Dennis Dease, president of the University of St. Thomas, is opposed to letting students of St. Thomas do internships with Planned Parenthood: The issue came to a head when a senior sociology student’s graduation was jeopardized because she chose to do a faculty-approved internship with Planned Parenthood.

(Webber, 1999, p. 10A).

By chance, I interviewed one PPFA sexuality educator who also collided with a Catholic university president; he barred her from speaking on campus.

The laity also join the fray. Elaine Biggerstaff of Sumner, Washington wrote a letter to the editor reacting to the cancellation of Celina Ling’s wedding by Fr. John Maes in Medicine Hat, Alberta because she worked at a Planned Parenthood clinic (see Byfield, 2002). Ms. Biggerstaff fits the definition of an “orthodox Catholic” by her emphasis on the importance of “the teachings of the church.” She remarked:

I have to congratulate the priest who refused to marry Celina Ling in the Catholic Church. If only all of our priests were as holy as this one and followed the teachings of the church there would have been no sexual abuse scandals. (Biggerstaff, 2002, ¶ 1).
Continuing with even stronger remarks, Biggerstaff said, “I hope the bishop considers excommunicating Ling since she publicly admits she doesn’t follow church teachings” (¶ 2).

“The Ave Maria List, an organization of lay Catholics that works for the election of antiabortion candidates to Congress” cosponsored “ads run in Maine and Rhode Island newspapers . . . [that] show a sign hanging from closed doors under the words ‘Judicial Chambers.’ The sign reads: ‘Catholics need not apply’” (Dewar, 2003). Feeling the sting of this shot fired at them and their political network, PPFA fired back by giving these ads a “thumbs down” in its regular feature “Rants and Raves” (About recent ad campaign . . . 2003).

Yet another notable example of orthodox lay Catholic opinion is worth quoting at length:

As is the case with most of the media these days, New York Newsday’s coverage of American Catholics is flawed. An article reporting that Pamela Maraldo had been elected president of Planned Parenthood [“New Head of Parenthood,” Nov. 21] referred to Maraldo as a Roman Catholic. But any Catholic who performs or promotes abortion faces excommunication. Regardless of how Maraldo refers to herself, she cannot be considered a participating member of the church. True Catholics remain faithful to the teaching of the church which states that all life is sacred from the moment of conception and must be protected. Your article is further evidence of the media’s wish to portray the Catholic Church as divided. This can never be the case, because true Catholics are united in their loyalty to the teachings of the church. (Clark, 1992, p. 39).
Another orthodox lay Catholic interviewed for this study senses an insidious ideology to which Planned Parenthood and related organizations subscribe:

I heard a quote once, I believe it was by Karl Marx, but don’t quote ME on this:

“The hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world” (Author’s note: The quote is the title of a poem written around 1865 by William Ross Wallace). I want THAT hand to be God’s hand guiding my hand, not Alfred Kinsey’s, not Helen Gurley Brown’s, not Gloria Steinem’s, not Planned Parenthood’s, not NARAL’s, not the U.N. Population Control groups, not the Gay Rights groups, and not the myriad of other special interest groups who have their hands in the public school system because THEY understand the truth of that quote. (See Appendix A regarding anonymity of this and other interview sources without citations).

The following remarks made during another interview express the common feeling among orthodox Catholics that Planned Parenthood powerfully advances an agenda detrimental to youth:

If one looks around at the broken families brought about by making sex into just another science experiment, they will find all the justification they need to “just say NO” to the sex education that has been forced upon us by Planned Parenthood and other social engineers. Our children have far too much worth to be treated as little more than barnyard animals in heat.

Another woman interviewed echoed the sentiment: “Planned Parenthood and the like want to turn humans into mating machines, but to them, procreation is an abhorition. Therein lies the twisted and disordered purpose of sex-ed in schools.”
Many orthodox Catholics seek to discredit PPFA by linking the organization to Margaret Sanger’s now politically incorrect views on eugenics (cf. Marshall & Donovan, 1991; PPFA, 2003h, “About us: Our founder, Margaret Sanger”; Sanger, 1920, 1931) as seen in the following interview remarks:

The proponents of sex education in the schools base their reasoning on the notion that white people are superior to colored peoples and the received opinions of the founder of Planned Parenthood, Margaret Sanger, and her convictions concerning the “necessity” of cleansing the population of “inferior” specimens. In other words, eugenics. Many, and perhaps most, of these proponents and “facilitators” are unaware of the theoretical basis of the agenda of Planned Parenthood and its supporters and defenders.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (UCCB) attacks PPFA directly. The weight of this source makes quoting their entire fact sheet (UCCB: Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, 2003) on Planned Parenthood worthwhile:


- Despite Planned Parenthood’s “choice” rhetoric, it provided adoption referrals to only 4,892 women and prenatal care to 16,065. Planned Parenthood provides 34 times more abortions than adoption referrals. It provides ten times more abortions than prenatal services. (Planned Parenthood 1998-1999 Annual Report, page 9).
• Planned Parenthood’s activity generates enormous revenue each year. During its 1999 fiscal year, the group reported a $125.8 million excess of revenue over expenses. (Planned Parenthood 1998-1999 Annual Report, pages 18-19).

• Planned Parenthood remains a significant beneficiary of federal money. In 1998, Congress gave Planned Parenthood and its affiliated organizations, the International Planned Parenthood Federation and the Alan Guttmacher Institute, $142,976,618 to support its domestic and international “family planning” agenda. (Government Accounting Office, July 18, 2000 memo to members of Congress). [Author's note: previous UCCB citation incorrectly uses the word "Government" instead of "General" cf. Heinrich, 2000, July 18].

• Planned Parenthood opposes the right of conscience—the right of Catholics and Catholic hospitals to abide by church teaching on health care issues. In an October 1999 speech Gloria Feldt, Planned Parenthood’s current president outlined the group’s four-part agenda for the millennium, the fourth plank of which is “bringing justice to ‘conscience’ provisions for health care providers and facilities.” She called conscience clauses a “sugarcoated name” for “interference” in medical decisions and lamented, “your daughter might not be able to receive family planning, abortion, or infertility treatments at a Catholic hospital.” (Gloria Feldt in a speech delivered at the Commonwealth Club of California, San Francisco, October 19, 1999).

• Planned Parenthood operates “Teenwire,” a provocative website aimed at adolescents, which through the use of coarse and vulgar language, educates on, among other things, masturbation, oral sex, sex, contraception and abortion.
In September of 2000, Planned Parenthood introduced a “Joe Sperm” costume-character to children parade-goers who were attending a Eugene, Oregon city parade. Planned Parenthood admitted that the target of its campaign featuring “Joe Sperm,” is lower income people. (Randi Bjornstad, “Birth Control Gets a Lighthearted Boost,” The Register-Guard, September 19, 2000).

Another organization, called “Priests for Life” and spearheaded by Father Frank Pavone, goes after Planned Parenthood directly by promoting a campaign to block their access to schools and, therefore, by his reasoning, a large portion of their funding. The organizers of this campaign claim that Planned Parenthood has a pattern of illegally “failing to fulfill their duty as mandated reporters when they know or suspect that a minor is having sexual activity” (Priests for Life & Life Dynamics, 2003, ¶ 1). They seek to have school districts enact policies to prohibit Planned Parenthood’s access to their schools and staff referrals to Planned Parenthood because permitting such things creates unreasonable liability for the district. The Catholic organizers say, “Our goal is to persuade them that associating with Planned Parenthood is more trouble than it is worth” (Priests for Life & Life Dynamics, 2003, ¶ 3). A Life Dynamics spokesperson continued:

Abortion providers are “doing exactly the same things for which huge awards are being levied against Catholic dioceses,” [related to the sexual abuse scandal] according to Life Dynamics.

“Our duty is to see that the legal standard now being rigorously and quite justifiably enforced against the Catholic Church is also enforced against Planned Parenthood.” (Clarkson, 2002, ¶¶ 19-20).
The section *Open Warfare* has established the ongoing animosity and rancor between PPFA and the Catholic Church originating nearly a century ago. The bitterness has continued unabated over that entire period. The animosity between these two organizations establishes that they do not come from the same worldview. One could, based on the forgoing, conclude that PPFA and the Catholic Church are polar opposites in many areas including contraception, abortion, masturbation, homosexuality, and sexuality education. While such a conclusion may be accurate on many issues, all that needs to be established for purposes of this study is that PPFA and the Catholic Church represent two very different systems of belief about sexuality education.

**The Problem and Purpose**

Clearly, PPFA and orthodox Catholic sources hold vastly different beliefs about sexuality. These two organizations serve as examples of the reality that people, regardless of any institutional alignment or affiliation, hold widely differing beliefs about sexuality education. Many sources refer to this reality, but none study it. Sources refer to the wide gap in beliefs readily, but rather than seeking to understand the differing beliefs that create the gap, they turn instead to efforts to understand:

1. The full picture of a particular controversy (Breasted, 1970; Hale & Philliber, 1978; Lerner, 2001; National Education Association, 1975),
2. How one side successfully controls the other using social control techniques (Hottois & Milner, 1975),
3. The harms caused by those with opposing beliefs and/or the benefits of a particular approach to sexuality education (Billings, 2003; Guttmacher, 1970; K. Hahn, 2001; S. Hahn, 2002; Harper, Harper, Kirkendall, & Laidlaw, 1957; Hoyt
& Broom, 2002; Irvine, 2002; Mather, 2001; Morris, 1994; Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995; PPFA, 2003m; West, 2000),

(4) How one side in the controversy might better advance sexuality education consistent with its beliefs given the opposition of those with contrary beliefs (Balliet, 1927; Chethik, 1981; Eggert, 1954; W. Johnson & Schutt, 1966; National Education Association, 1969; Reis & Seidl, 1989; Rubinson & Baille, 1981; Scales, 1980; “Sex education has place. . .” 1960; Sivulich, 1973; Zady & Duckworth, 1991),

(5) The results of particular approaches [e.g. comprehensive, abstinence-only, or chastity sexuality education] (Bearman & Brückner, 2001; Besharov & Gardiner, 1997; DeCarlo, Coates, & Makadon, 1995; Kirby, Ph.D., 2002),

(6) Historical periods in the development of approaches to sexuality education (Burnham, 1973; Imber, 1982; Moran, 1996, 2000; Trudell, 1985),

(7) How differing beliefs affect the context of sexuality education (Brantlinger, 1991; Buston & Wight, 2001; Clawar, 1977; Evans, Avery, & Pederson, 1999; Huerta, 1996; Keaster, Evans, Melville, & Cass, 1995; McIntire, 1969; Selle, 2002).

(8) What sexuality education programs actually teach in the public schools (Kann, Brener, & Allensworth, 2001; Kenkel, 1957; Sex [later Sexuality] Information and Education Council of the United States [SIECUS], 2003a; Sonfield & Gold, 2001).

This study seeks to address the problem of vastly differing beliefs about sexuality education directly. One can visualize sexuality education beliefs as a spectrum with many
different points representing the important categories present in any individual or organizational system of belief about sexuality education. Just as two points define a line, Planned Parenthood and the Catholic Church simply serve as two points far enough apart on the spectrum to provide definition of many important categories of sexuality education belief. This study seeks to provide a deep, rich, and thorough explanation of these two particular systems of belief in order to provide a theoretical framework within which to better understand and explain them, as well as to provide a basis for predictions regarding how sexuality education beliefs affect local and state-level policy decisions.

Anyone concerned with the education of children and youth understands the importance of individual belief systems on teaching and learning. Every parent who has questioned the alignment of a particular lesson with family values, every teacher who has had to make plans for the student whose beliefs prohibit participation in a class party, every public school administrator who has handled a controversy over some religious reference in a school assembly, every school board member who has helped formulate policy regarding controversial curricula, and every legislator who has done the same in creating law has faced often incomprehensible conflicts in individual and organizational belief systems. This study addresses all such people concerned with education. It provides the beginnings of a theoretical framework within which to better understand sexuality education beliefs.

To date, no such theoretical framework exists. This lack of context forms the root of many larger problems. For example, the rancor surrounding sexuality education in the United States has created an overwhelming din of argument and an underwhelming dearth of listening. This malice simply exacerbates social control attempts by both sides, which, in turn, keeps the cycle of enmity going. Without listening to, let alone understanding, those
who hold opposing beliefs, each side blames and tries to control the other through legislation and local policy decisions. The purpose of this study, then, is to lay out clearly the spectrum of sexuality education beliefs. Even with a preliminary sketch of the range of beliefs, and the beginnings of a theoretical framework within which to explain them and make relevant predictions about the impact of these beliefs on public policy, educators can move beyond divisive rancor and get on with serving the curricular best interests of children and youth.

**Plan for the Work**

Chapters Two and Three present substantive grounded theories of PPFA and orthodox Catholic sexuality education beliefs respectively. Chapter Four provides a preliminary sketch of a formal grounded theory (see Appendix A) of sexuality education beliefs. Chapter Five draws conclusions regarding the need for further research as well as implications related to sexuality education beliefs and the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. Appendix A presents the methodology used in this study, while Appendix B provides important background information on PPFA and Appendix C does the same for the Roman Catholic Church.
CHAPTER TWO

PPFA SEXUALITY EDUCATION BELIEFS

This study of PPFA sexuality education beliefs revealed an intricate network of key individuals and organizations that have arisen as influential leaders. Margaret Sanger, Dr. Mary Calderone, Lester Kirkendall, Dr. Alan Guttmacher, Debra Haffner, Faye Wattleton, and Gloria Feldt (see Appendix B) serve as major players in shaping PPFA sexuality education beliefs and, consequently, this study frequently cites them as PPFA sources. Likewise, an understanding of PPFA beliefs requires introductions of several organizations linked to this study through either historical lineages or key individuals. Founded in 1916, the Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) underwent several name changes before assuming its current name. The Allan Guttmacher Institute (AGI), renamed after the 1974 death of former PPFA President Dr. Allan Guttmacher, arose within PPFA in 1968. Through Dr. Calderone, who served as PPFA medical director from 1952 to 1962, a second line began with the Sex (later Sexuality) Information and Education Council of the United States (SEICUS), which, through Debra Haffner, gave rise to the Religious Institute on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing (Religious Institute). A third parallel, yet related, line involves a network of freethinkers: Unitarians, Universalists, and Humanists, who now find their main organization in the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) and the American Humanist Association (AHA). These key individuals and organizations have shaped PPFA sex education beliefs over the years. Appendix B thoroughly introduces these individuals and organizations.

“Planned Parenthood believes in the fundamental right of each individual, throughout the world, to manage his or her fertility” (PPFA, 1998). This quote, taken from
its mission statement, illustrates PPFA’s profound focus on the individual. All aspects of PPFA’s sexuality education beliefs ultimately find their root in beliefs about the individual. Several major branches grow from this root and form the avenues of analysis in this chapter. The first significant avenue involves PPFA’s rejection of traditional approaches to sexuality education, each rooted in the western heritage of Christian orthodoxy, which they claim has failed to serve individual needs. The analysis then turns to PPFA’s new vision for comprehensive sexuality education rooted in individual well-being and, through this focus on the individual, the well-being of humanity. Given the controversy that has surrounded PPFA throughout its history, the final part of the analysis focuses on coping strategies, how PPFA continues the battle to realize fully its new vision for comprehensive sexuality education.

**Serving the Individual: Rejecting Traditional Sexuality Education**

“We have a group of zealots who believe that their way is the only way and are willing to try to impose their political and moral dogma on ALL of us” (Billings, 2003, ¶ 21).

PPFA sources reject the traditional approaches to sexuality education. These approaches rest on a foundation of Christian orthodoxy, which PPFA sources believe has failed the individual through oppression, abuse, harm, and violence. For literally millennia, silence prevailed. First and foremost, PPFA sources reject the “conspiracy of silence” that has shrouded issues of sexuality in cloaks of secrecy, fear, and shame. Hidden in such silence, no one could even raise the question of sexuality education. Secondly, PPFA sources reject the related notion, derived largely from religious prohibitions regarding
sexuality, that sex is dirty. Finally, PPFA sources reject the religiously motivated fear and shame-based tactics used in early sex education efforts once the silence was broken. They see such approaches as harmful in many ways. This section details the PPFA rejection of the traditional heritage of failed approaches to sexuality education rooted in Christian orthodoxy.

### Oppression, Abuse, Harm, and Violence

PPFA sources believe an inhumane religious point of view has historically led to oppression, abuse, harm, and violence in matters of sexuality and, consequently, sexuality education. For example, “In the mid-19th century, this kind of thinking denied anesthesia to women in labor on the grounds that Genesis 3:16 requires suffering in childbirth” (Davis, 2001, ¶ 2). One interview respondent expressed an all too common religious abuse perpetrated by her family: “I came from a very religious family and was told ‘If you do it, don’t even bother coming home.’” This respondent felt that religious influence led to this potential rejection and caused conflict for her as she grew. Another respondent recounted being a victim of a church organized telephone campaign to eject her from an approved sexuality education program in a public school. Yet another respondent took issue with use of fear and shame to control young people: “A lot of the faith-based abstinence-only messaging is very controlling, very shame based—they don’t, they aren’t treated as competent human beings who can make decisions. We have to make the decisions for you.” This statement reflects the theme of abusing the individual through any means, harmful or not, truthful or not, believing that religious authority outside the individual is more competent to make choices than is the individual—an exercise of power instead of empowerment.
From psychological harm and physical harm due to a type of religious thinking, the stories escalate to violence resulting in death. Clinic violence became more real for me when I visited my first Planned Parenthood clinic to conduct interviews and found myself feeling somewhat shocked by the intense security. I recorded the following in my field notes:

I immediately knew when I was at the Planned Parenthood building because of the intense security. I noticed that someone had completely secured the fire escapes against outside entry using a chain-link type material clear down to a locked gate at the bottom. I also noticed prominent signs that read, “Warning: Video Surveillance in Progress.” . . . The front of the building also prominently displayed video cameras and surveillance signs. . . . I walked into the front door after a security guard just inside the door released an automatic locking system. . . . The guard then searched me with an electronic metal detector and asked if I had weapons. I declared the small tool on my key chain that included a one-inch blade. The guard said he would have to keep it. . . . A little further down the hall toward the restrooms, two sawhorse-type sidewalk signs read, “These people are anti-choice picketers. You don’t have to talk to them.” [My respondent] soon arrived at the security desk and escorted me through a locked door at the top of a staircase leading downstairs to a conference room where we conducted the interview.

Recalling past news of violence at Planned Parenthood clinics helped me to understand the high level of security I faced. I later learned, through continued research, how many people, directly and indirectly associated with Planned Parenthood, from receptionists to doctors, were murdered at the hands of people claiming divine justification (see, for example, Feldt & Jennings, 2002; PPFA, 2003j; Wattleton, 1996). Again, I was shocked. The periodic news
stories that most people recall do not give one a definite sense of the magnitude of death threats, attempted murders, and murders committed in the name of Christianity by people identifying themselves as Christians. Through the year 2000, there were 322 death threats, 16 attempted murders, and 8 murders (PPFA, 2000). The following account of former minister Paul Hill is telling:

Hill, 49, became the first killer of an abortion doctor to be executed in the United States and his death reignited fears that the militant wing of the extreme anti-abortion movement will use him as a catalyst for renewed violence.

Two weeks ago, death threat letters containing rifle bullets were sent to top state officials involved with the execution, but a resolute Gov. Jeb Bush, who signed Hill’s death warrant, said he “would not be bullied” and refused to halt the execution.

Still, fears that Hill’s death would inspire an attempt to disrupt the execution led to the tightest security since serial killer Ted Bundy was electrocuted in 1989.

Hill, who showed no remorse to the end, claimed he was following God’s orders when he kept firing his shotgun at Dr. John Britton until the 69-year-old physician stopped moving in the driveway of the Ladies Center, a Pensacola abortion clinic, on July 29, 1994. Hill also killed Britton’s escort, Jim Barrett, 69. Barrett’s wife, June, was injured.

The day before his execution, Hill told reporters at Florida State Prison that he’s certain he will be rewarded in heaven for his actions.

Across the road from the prison’s death house, about 60 anti-abortion activists held a quiet prayer vigil in a muddy field under rainy skies and under the
watchful eye of scores of police. Fearful that extremists might act out, more than 100 law enforcement officers stood at the ready, though the protest was without incident.

As massive thunderclaps rattled the sky just before Hill was scheduled to die, the activists hailed the weather as a sign from above.

“When they crucified Jesus, the heavens darkened,” said Neal Horsley, a Carrolton, Ga., activist whose newsletter, the Abortion Abolitionist, hails Hill as a hero. “Speak to this nation, O Lord, speak your wrath.” (Long & Clark, 2003; cf. Planned Parenthood reflects . . . 2003).

**Self-Serving Silence, Falsehood, and Hypocrisy**

PPFA sources and historians speak of a “conspiracy of silence,” a phrase first popularized in 1896 (cf. Burnham, 1973; Butler, 1896; Feldt, 2003c; Moran, 1996, 2000; Sanger, 1920). The term refers to a harmful silence imposed by authorities on sexual matters, usually motivated by an unhealthy religious influence. The idea that American culture views sexuality as a taboo not to be discussed continues to this day. Healthy talk about sexuality must, in this context, be distinguished from the unhealthy talk in our sex-saturated media. Consider the following opinion expressed by a Planned Parenthood sexuality educator: “I think, in the United States, we have made sex such a taboo, a mystery, and an uncomfortable topic to talk about” (cf. Evans et al., 1999). This educator also referred to the unhealthy portrayals of sexuality in the media. Almost every interview and documentary source garnered for this study of PPFA sex education beliefs mentions our societal reluctance to engage in healthy talk about sexuality. Another informant noted simply, “Our society in general is very uncomfortable talking about sexuality.” Margaret Sanger sums up the view well:
The church’s failure, its century after century of failure, is now evident on every side: for, having convinced men and women that only in its baldly propagative phase is sexual expression legitimate, the teachings of the [Catholic] Church have driven sex underground, into secret channels, strengthened the conspiracy of silence, concentrated men’s thoughts upon the “lusts of the body,” have sown, cultivated and reaped a crop of bodily and mental diseases, and developed a society congenitally and almost hopelessly unbalanced. (Sanger, 1922, p. 205; cf. pp. 190–205).

Ironically, Sanger elsewhere disputes, at least in part, this view concerning the harm of silence to sexuality education. She recollects, “Sex knowledge was a natural part of life. I had always known where babies come from. My mother never discussed sex with us” (Sanger, 1931, p. 14). For Sanger, however, there was more to sex education than knowledge of where babies come from. She did believe the conspiracy of silence, enforced by legislation like the Comstock Laws, caused harm precisely because it prevented what she saw as necessary sex education regarding contraception (PPFA, 2003j; Sanger, 1920, 1928, 1931). She too saw “the right to knowledge” (Sanger, 1931, p. 101) as an antidote to the conspiracy of silence. While in exile in England, Sanger, through “the friendship of that intrepid rebel Feminist, Stella Browne,” met and began a lifelong relationship with sex psychologist Havelock Ellis who, in her view, “more than any other individual, brought the subject of sex out from the secrecy and dark obscurity where it had lain for centuries” (p. 101). Inspired by Ellis, Sanger continued to fight the conspiracy of silence. Her example lives on in sexuality educators like one who said, “We leave ourselves at the mercy of ignorance when we choose not to formally educate in schools and provide skills on how to pass on accurate information to others.”
Reacting to a continuing conspiracy of silence Mary Calderone, former PPFA Medical Director and founder of SIECUS, advanced the same opinion during a 1979 airing of the Phil Donahue Show. She “posed a riddle to the somewhat abashed host: ‘It’s a four-letter-word ending in K and it means intercourse, and it’s the most important intercourse there is—TALK’” (cited in Irvine, 2002, p. 131; cf. Wiener, 1979). PPFA sources believe this conspiracy continues today, and they have broadened the term to include the silencing of marginalized groups like those that promote gay and lesbian rights (e.g. Haffner & Greenfield, 2001).

This section, however, details not only a conspiracy of silence, but also a conspiracy of purposeful falsehood and hypocrisy on the part of Christian authorities designed to mold and control people into a code of repressive and unhealthy sexual attitudes and behaviors. According to Ellen Chesler:

Sanger’s determined optimism about the possibilities of freeing sex from a culturally and religiously enforced shroud of mystery and myth made her a pioneer of modern sexology and one of the first to take advantage of the popular market for lovemaking textbooks that emerged in the 1920s and ‘30s. (Chesler, 2003b, ¶ 13; cf. Chesler, 2003a).

Many sources believe the problem continues to this day. One interview respondent laments:

Not talking, not teaching, not showing, not sharing is a big void that flashes like a neon sign . . . When left to learn messages about sex from the media, playground gossip, hurtful taunting, embarrassing misunderstandings, back seat fumbling . . . the negative perpetuates itself.
In another interview, a sexuality educator touches on many themes regarding the failure of narrow Christian orthodoxy, but the specific themes of silence and hypocrisy emerge as well:

I began exploring the history of sexual activity (grandma was sexually active at 16 . . . but married) and realized we expect our youth to remain sexually abstinent until marriage, but that should only happen after college and a career has been established. But on the other hand, what kind of information are we giving them to support this expectation? “Just say no!” It is not that simple considering the life experiences many young women have already faced at 14 and 15—sexual abuse, alcohol, pressure that “good girls don’t have sex, only bad girls,” and the list goes on and on. Bottom line is these women (and men) have sexual desires. These are rarely acknowledged. In my classes I’m not afraid to use the word “horny,” i.e.: “When you and your boyfriend are alone and getting to know each other, how can you deal with feeling horny?” In many circles, this would be considered promoting sex. I see it as let’s talk about the real issues—sexual feelings. However, our society in general is very uncomfortable talking about sexuality.

In another interview, the “conspiracy of silence” emerged again. While this respondent saw the conspiracy as perpetrated by school administrators and others in authority, he also saw the problem as rooted in a harmful faith as this quote demonstrates: “My personal view on [the conspiracy of silence] is that in the community that we’re working in right now there’s a lot of conflict with faith-based values and that’s it.”

Another sexuality educator, who also expressed concern about the conspiracy of silence, touched on another theme in this section—falsehood:
So we’re not trying to say that our way is right or that [information on appropriate masturbation] is what every kid should know because, when we teach this, we also say that your family values are the first thing and if your family value, or your faith-based value, is that masturbation is not ok then that is what your family and faith-based value is. The TRUTH and the medical information on masturbation is that it’s not—you’re not going to grow hair on your hand if you masturbate.

This educator demonstrates an internal conflict triggered by a desire to respect a person’s religious beliefs, even when a particular belief conflicts with what she believes is the truth. For her, “medical information,” the product of science, and not religious faith, is the ultimate authority for truth regarding masturbation (see later section: *Truth and the Gift of Sexuality*).

The idea that truth must be rooted in science and nature rather than some unseen religious revelation, is developed below in the section dealing with the new vision for sexuality education. Speaking of the same view of truth, another respondent spoke both as a supporter of Planned Parenthood and as a Unitarian Universalist minister. She noted simply that “responsible sexuality education must honor the truth.”

Sanger also paints a vivid picture of the self-serving hypocrisy surrounding the falsehoods promoted by religious authorities in an exposé of how the Roman Catholic Church changed its doctrines on continence and celibacy over the centuries to suit its changing needs (e.g. Sanger, 1920, pp. 170-75). Sanger says that when the Church needed missionaries more than new members, it taught that there were enough children in the world. When this need reversed, the Church teaching also changed to subjugate women for its own interests. Sanger also saw Christianity as purposely reversing a reasonably good status for
women to suit its own ends (Sanger, 1920, pp. 176-177). She believed the power of the Church was threatened by the rising tide of freethinkers like Robert Ingersoll (see, for example, Ingersoll, 1890). She believed the Church instigated the Comstock Laws: “But the relentless war which Ingersoll waged against the Church and the present-day power of Comstock are somewhat connected” (Sanger, 1915, ¶ 7). Through the Comstock Laws, Sanger believed both Church and State were complicit in the conspiracy of silence by prohibiting the distribution of information about birth control. The hypocrisy of it all really irked Sanger when postal authorities neglected to apply the same standards to distribution of information regarding the rhythm method as they had applied to her information about birth control (Engelman, 2002). In fact, Sanger, along with other PPFA sources today, sees the Church’s promotion of the rhythm method as a further sign of the hypocrisy of changing doctrines motivated by the self-serving interests of the Church (Engelman, 2002).

The ultimate hypocrisy relating to abuse and harm, can be found, perhaps, in the sex abuse scandal that rocked the Roman Catholic Church in the United States since 1998 (cf. Kurkjian, 2002). As Debra Haffner put it:

Parents have been struggling over what to tell their children about priests who didn’t “just say no” . . .

How sad and ironic. A U.S. president teaches the nation’s elementary school children the words “oral sex.” The Catholic Church introduces them to the words “pedophilia” and “sex abuse” . . .

We now have an opportunity for a national discussion about moral sexual decisions. A sexually healthy adult understands the difference between having a sexual feeling and acting upon it as well as the difference between sexual behaviors
that are life-enhancing and those that are harmful to self and others. That needs to be taught in seminaries—and discussed in homes, schools, faith communities, businesses and the White House. We need only to look to the priesthood to understand that “just say no” isn’t enough. (Haffner, 2002, p. 13A).

In fairness to the Church, Haffner points out that sex abuse by clergy is by no means confined to Catholic priests. The hypocrisy, however, is precisely what makes this example of intolerable harm so horrendous.

Degradation of Natural Beauty: Sex is Dirty

“Much of the responsibility for this feeling upon the part of many thousands of women must be laid to two thousand years of Christian teaching that all sex expression is unclean” (Sanger, 1920, p. 109).

PPFA sources blame the heritage of Christian orthodoxy for creating a “sex is dirty” mentality in our culture. Most often, Puritanism, Victorianism, and Catholicism receive direct blame (cf. Burnham, 1973; Harper et al., 1957; Mather, 2001; Moran, 1996, 2000; Sanger, 1920, 1922). An interview respondent had this to say:

We have made sex out to be this dirty thing. When we talk about sex here in the United States, or even when we do a lot of our presentations, it’s something we’re trying to get away from. We talk about STDs, HIV, and unintended pregnancy—bad, bad, bad [thumping table]. We talk about all the bad things that come out of having sex. . . . That’s actually what the money, that’s coming through right now, it’s federally legislated that you have to teach about the psychological harms [Author's
note: respondent is referring to "Abstinence-Only" legislation in § 510 (b) of the "Social Security Act," 1996].

Sanger, as seen in the quote heading this section, shared the belief that our heritage of Christian orthodoxy left American culture with a “sex is dirty” mentality. In the following passage, she blames the first the Roman Catholic Church and then the Christian denominations that followed:

> In the days when the church was striving for supremacy, when it needed single-minded preachers, proselyters and teachers, it fastened upon its people the idea that all sexual union, in marriage or out of it, is sinful. That idea colors the doctrines of the Church of Rome and many other Christian denominations to this hour.

> “Marriage, even for the sake of children was a carnal indulgence” in earlier times, as Principal Donaldson points out in “The Position of Women Among the Early Christians” [Author’s note: Sanger cites Contemporary Review, 1889 here. The article did not appear to be there but did appear in Littell’s Living Age. See Donaldson, 1890]. It was held that the child was “conceived in sin,” and that as the result of the sex act, an unclean spirit had possession of it. This spirit can be removed only by baptism, and the Roman Catholic baptismal service even yet contains these words: “Go out of him, thou unclean spirit, and give place unto the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete.” (Sanger, 1920, p. 171).

Sanger returns to the theme that sex is portrayed as unclean throughout the Christian heritage many times in Woman and the New Race (1920).

> Those who battle sexuality education programs at the local level are often believed to hold the “sex is dirty” mentality (cf. Breasted, 1970; Harper et al., 1957; National Education
Association, 1975; Scales, 1980). Again, PPFA sources highlight this belief in the following account in which a parent defends an abstinence-only sex education program after a “searing, unanimous staff editorial condemning the district, the human-sexuality committee, and the school board for ‘offering a curriculum of questionable value that is as deceptive as it is bigoted’” appeared in the student run high school newspaper:

[The parent] angrily complained that the editorial quoted the abstinence materials out of context, and the adviser, as she tells it, shot back that she was “desperately sad as a fellow Christian that you people have decided to make one of God’s greatest gifts such a shameful and divisive thing.” (Lerner, 2001, ¶ 23; cf. endorsement in Feldt, 2001).

The American Humanist Association (AHA, 2002b) asked PPFA source Lester Kirkendall to draft A New Bill of Sexual Rights and Responsibilities, which was published in The Humanist (Kirkendall, 1976). While this document echoes many PPFA beliefs, the relevance here can be found in the statement: “Physical pleasure has worth as a moral value. Traditional religious and social views have often condemned pleasures of the body as ‘sinful’ or ‘wicked.’ These attitudes are inhumane. They are destructive of human relationships” (§ 7). Along with its forbears such as George Ingersoll mentioned earlier, Humanism has long denounced the heritage of Christian orthodoxy. They loudly condemned Christianity for its abuses, not only in portraying sex as dirty, but in threatening the punishment of eternal damnation and a host of other dictums oppressive to the individual (cf. AHA, 2003a; Bragg, 1933; Ingersoll, 1890; Kurtz & Wilson, 1973).
Control through Fear and Shame

Rooted in Our Heritage of Christian Orthodoxy

“The great central problem, and one which must be taken first is the abolition of the shame and fear of sex” (Sanger, 1922, p. 271).

PPFA sources strongly believe that those who cling to outmoded, narrow, and bigoted views of fringe Christianity use fear and shame to control people. One source attributed the fear his close friend felt to her perceptions of his Catholic upbringing. She had been hiding from him the fact that she had chosen an abortion the previous summer:

Leigh was afraid to tell me because she thought that since I was raised a “Catholic” that I would judge her and that she would lose her best friend. Of course I supported her, and I couldn’t believe the perception that many felt due to one’s upbringing. (Curry, 2003, ¶ 2).

PPFA sources believe that inappropriate use of fear and shame to control behavior is one way Christian orthodoxy has failed the individual. Christian thought places shame right at the beginning of creation according to a PPFA Clergy Advisory Board Member:

The thinkers who shaped early Christian thinking denied their physical bodies. “The famous gesture of Adam covering his genitals with a fig leaf is, according to Augustine, not due to the simple fact that Adam was ashamed of their presence, but to the fact that his sexual organs were moving by themselves without his consent. (Mather, 2001, ¶ 3, quoted material attributed to Michel Foucault without specific reference in the “Clergy Voices” version of Mather’s paper “It’s about sex and power . . . and maybe politics and religion, too”).
However, Mather also sees the use of fear as extending through the Protestant Reformation and on down to today:

The sexual dualism affirmed by the protesters is easy to recognize. Sex outside of marriage is sin. Sex inside marriage is mainly for procreation. They insist on punishment for the violation of these standards. In their view, abortion offers an easy escape from the consequences of actions that they believe defy God’s will. The value of sex as a form of mutual pleasure that brings people closer together is lost on them. Such is the hold of Aristotle, Augustine, and later of St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Bonaventure who, influenced by Aristotle, shaped the basic tenets of later Christian theology. (Mather, 2001).

The idea that the Christian threat of eternal damnation as punishment for sin is an unhealthy and damaging use of fear to control behavior emerged powerfully in PPFA interviews, documents, and observations. PPFA sources do not believe that hell exists or has anything to do with reality, and often address the issue with humor. When treated more somberly, the idea that hell does exist is either summarily dismissed or simply passed over as obviously misguided. Judith Billings, the former Superintendent of Public Instruction in Washington State, who now advocates for comprehensive sexuality education and serves on a Planned Parenthood board, demonstrated this tendency in a lunchtime keynote address in Spokane, Washington. As part of one of the morning sessions she had attended, she commented that in “discussing sexuality education from a religious perspective, there really is a spiritual approach other than raising the specter of the horned fellow with forked tail” (Billings, 2003). Later, expressing bafflement at the need for a law requiring that sexuality education be medically and scientifically accurate, Judith Billings said:
One could easily spark national outrage by saying, “We are going to give you medically inaccurate information about diabetes, cancer, HIV/AIDS, tobacco use— etc.” in order to scare or shame you into what we think you ought to be doing or not doing. (Billings, 2003, ¶ 10).

Near the end of her keynote address, after referring to this theme repeatedly, she concluded it by asserting that, “Using fear as a tactic to achieve goals, particularly with impressionable young people, is totally unacceptable” (¶ 64).

*The Abstinence-Only Movement*

“Taught upon the basis of conventional and traditional morality and middle-class respectability, based on current dogma, and handed down to the populace with benign condescension, sex education is a waste of time and effort” (Sanger, 1922, p. 249).

In this scathing rebuke of what her followers today call abstinence-only or chastity sex education, Sanger continued as follows from the opening quote above:

Such education cannot in any true sense set up as a standard the ideal morality and behavior of the respectable middle-class and then make the effort to induce all other members of society, especially the working classes, to conform to their taboos. Such a method is not only confusing, but, in the creation of strain and hysteria and an unhealthy concentration upon moral conduct, results in positive injury. To preach a negative and colorless ideal of chastity to young men and women is to neglect the primary duty of awakening their intelligence, their responsibility, their self-reliance and independence. (1922, p. 249).
On many occasions, Sanger blasted the efforts in her day to reduce sexuality information to the teaching of continence, abstinence, and chastity (cf. Engelman, 2002; Sanger, 1920; Sanger, 1922, 1931). The debate on both sides of the issue continues with remarkable consistency today.

“Abstinence-Only Sex Education” and “Comprehensive Sexuality Education” define the two camps in the current debate (cf. Besharov & Gardiner, 1997; Selle, 2002). An interview respondent for this study recounted the following after attending a religiously based abstinence-only rally:

They actually had that literature at the end of the presentation saying that if you come from a divorced family, you have a 50% chance of dying four years earlier. So, is that about sex or is that about our own personal values and religion? (cf. Bearman & Brückner, 2001, note 3; Feldt, 2002a, 2002b).

PPFA sources strongly object to the use of such questionable “facts” to control youth through fear and shame. PPFA President Gloria Feldt demonstrated her objection to abstinence-only sexuality education in one of her speeches:

. . . a relentless force that exhibits an amazing abstinence—oops, absence—of common sense presses forward, and the federal government will be spending almost $150 million dollars on unproven and potentially harmful abstinence-only sex education . . .

Planned Parenthood affiliates work diligently to provide real sex education to schools and religious and youth groups. (Feldt, 2002b, ¶ 23).

Feldt makes this comment regarding “real sex education” in opposition to “abstinence-only sex education,” which she and nearly all PPFA sources see as containing unhealthy fear and
shame based tactics rooted in orthodox Christian beliefs in heaven and hell. Another example of this tactic appears in an article on an abstinence-only program called “The Silver Ring Thing” from *The Guardian*, which PPFA posted to their website on September 15, 2003:

[The silver ring] is a constant reminder. They are making a vow tonight to wait until they are married to have sex, Pattyn says before the show. He is a little more explicit on stage where he warns the crowd that the modern world is quite literally a cesspool, swirling with sexually transmitted diseases. “On your wedding day you give the ring to your husband or wife and say, ‘I waited for you, let’s get it on,’” he tells the audience. Then he leads a short prayer, asking the teens to take Jesus into their lives. (Goldenberg, 2003, ¶ 12).

The objection here is twofold: first to using fear of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs; PPFA sources generally prefer the term “STIs” for “sexually transmitted infections”) as a method of control, instead of using scientifically and medically accurate information, and second, to basing sexuality education on Jesus rather than science and medicine. PPFA sources believe that religion has its place, but without accurate and truthful information, it cannot prevent STIs.

In *An Open Letter to Religious Leaders about Sex Education* the Religious Institute on Sexual Morality, Justice, & Healing (Religious Institute), co-founded by PPFA source Debra Haffner (see Religious Institute, 2002a and Appendix B for Planned Parenthood and SIECUS connection), clearly referred to the harms within the abstinence-only movement and the benefits within the comprehensive approach (see Religious Institute, 2002b, ¶ 5-6).
Haffner also notes that the first failure of the “just say ‘no’” approach occurred at the beginning of creation:

“Just say no” didn’t even work in the Garden of Eden. Vows of abstinence, marriage and celibacy don’t have a 100% effectiveness rate. They break. And they break with disastrous effects when one person has power over the other—a priest, for example. (Haffner, 2002, p. A13).

In this article, Haffner’s opening lines simultaneously refer to beliefs that, for those in the abstinence-only movement, religion is misunderstood and misused. Promises of abstinence and celibacy are simply unreliable. Presenting only the failure rates of common contraceptives like condoms is laughable (as Haffner means for her oblique reference, “they break” to be funny). In addition, Haffner’s note that the failure rate of celibacy, as evidenced by the sexual abuse scandal in the Roman Catholic Church, is not funny at all.

PPFA sources sometimes cannot help taking jabs at the opposition, as did Haffner. For example, strongly denouncing the federal abstinence-only legislation, Judith Billings drew laughter and applause with nearly the same Garden of Eden joke. She put it this way:

We are, in fact, asking educators to compromise their integrity when we require prevention programs to limit their information to an approach that has been ineffective in controlling human behavior since Eve shared an apple with Adam against the explicit direction—don’t do it—from the highest authority. It didn’t work then, and it doesn’t work now. (Billings, 2003, ¶ 16).

Additionally, in another allusion to the sex-abuse scandal, the Margaret Sanger Papers Project Newsletter, which consistently demonstrates the highest quality of unbiased scholarship, cannot help taking a shot at the Church in an article that relates the birth control
movement and the approval of the rhythm method declared by Pope Pius XI in his 1930 encyclical *Casti Connubii*. The parting shot at the Catholic priesthood in the otherwise scholarly article quips:

Those today who say the Church can’t change need to look back to the Pope’s 1930 encyclical on marriage and the emergence of a natural birth control movement. Maybe the Catholic Church of 2002 can even borrow some of the same strategies—anyone for periodic abstinence for priests? (Engelman, 2002).

As early as 1922, Margaret Sanger blasted “continence” and “chastity” sex education with the same arguments PPFA uses today to denounce “abstinence-only” sex education. The modern era resurrection of what PPFA sources believe is a failure from the past began with the AFLA (“Adolescent Family Life Act,” 1981) under the Reagan administration. It continues under Section 510 of the U.S Social Security Act (“Social Security Act,” 1996), known as “Abstinence-Only Sex Education.” The battle continues.

**Individual Well-Being: A New Vision for Sexuality Education**

PPFA believes in a positive vision of sexuality education that focuses on individual well-being. Individuals, operating ethically and with full freedom to exercise their gift of reason, must secure their own well-being on their own authority—without reliance on an outside authority that too often protects its own power at the expense of individual needs. Working together from the ethical principles of securing well-being for all, consent, mutuality, and respect for all human beings as competent decision-makers, individuals can fulfill a new vision for sexuality education.

PPFA’s commitment to individual choice and its view of truth show its belief in this new vision. *Individual Well-Being: A New Vision for Sexuality Education* consists of three
major sections: *Individual Choice and Religious Truth*, *Individual Ethics: A New Vision for Morality*, and *Individual Rights*. The first demonstrates the PPFA belief in the nature of truth as well as the autonomy of the individual in matters of religious truth. The second explains the development of a new morality so often called for by Sanger. Finally, the third discusses those individual rights relevant to sexuality education emphasized by PPFA sources.

**Individual Choice and Religious Truth**

Perhaps the best summary of PPFA’s beliefs about individual choice and religious truth came during the 2002 Christmas season when President Gloria Feldt responded to “anti-choice attacks on Planned Parenthood’s ‘Choice on Earth’ holiday card” saying, “Planned Parenthood believes in every individual’s right to make choices and live in peace with our planet and wishes people of all beliefs a peaceful and safe holiday season” (Feldt, 2002c, ¶¶ 1, 4; cf. Planned Parenthood mocks Christianity . . . 2002). PPFA embraces religions that openly promote similar statements honoring the individual. For example, one PPFA sexuality educator interviewed referred to the *Our Whole Lives (OWL)* sexuality education curriculum “that was developed by the Unitarian Universalist Church and the United Church of Christ” (cf. Unitarian Universalist Association [UUA], 2002). This source went on to say that the program, versatile enough to be used in both secular and religious settings, won over youth everywhere. Other sources also mentioned this curriculum widely used by PPFA affiliates (e.g. Fine, 2003). Both the Unitarian Universalist (UU) Church and the United Church of Christ (UCC) share PPFA’s belief in the primacy of the individual in discerning matters of religious truth, through private choice and a democratic church governance structure that empowers individuals, and not institutions, with ultimate authority (Sias, 2000; UCC, 2003).
This section on *Individual Choice and Religious Truth* details PPFA beliefs about the nature of truth and the truth that sexuality is a beautiful gift. PPFA sources believe that, historically, orthodox Christian leaders distorted the nature of religious truth in general and tainted the truth about sexuality, in particular, by casting this gift as something unclean. After presenting PPFA beliefs about the nature of truth and sexuality, this section goes on to show how PPFA and its allies seek to reclaim truths about sexuality, both through defining them directly and redefining traditional Christian views, to shape the future of religion.

**Truth and the Gift of Sexuality**

The truth makes free. Viewed in its true aspect, the very beauty and wonder of the creative impulse will make evident its essential purity. We will then instinctively idealize and keep holy that physical-spiritual expression which is the foundation of all human life, and in that conception of sex will the race be exalted. (Sanger, 1920, pp. 183-184).

PPFA sources believe there is a truth different from that believed by their opponents. An example emerged earlier (see *Self-Serving Silence, Falsehood, and Hypocrisy*) in the words of the interview source who said, “The TRUTH and the medical information on masturbation is that it’s not—you’re not going to grow hair on your hand if you masturbate.” The source said this in contrast to the religious beliefs of some individuals regarding the immorality of masturbation. One can understand the difference in beliefs about the nature of truth in terms of the dogmatism rejected by PPFA sources. The very nature of dogmatism depends upon an independent, objective, and absolute truth that exists apart from any individual experience. For PPFA sources, this kind of truth simply does not exist or is
irrelevant to sexuality education. Instead, truth depends completely on relevant individual experiences. Scientifically verifiable and repeatable experiences form the foundation for general truths. The simplistic notion of absolute truth fails to explain the complexity found in the real world. Individuals in differing circumstances, differing contexts, and from differing cultures all experience and hold different beliefs about what is and is not “true.” PPFA sources absolutely reject the idea that anyone has the right to impose such beliefs upon any of these individuals.

PPFA sources accept empirical science, and not religious revelation, as the foundation of truth. Sanger called for a new moral code built on such a foundation:

To effect the salvation of the generations of the future—nay, of the generations of today—our greatest need, first of all, is the ability to face the situation without flinching; to cooperate in the formation of a code of sexual ethics based upon a thorough biological and psychological understanding of human nature; and then to answer the questions and the needs of the people with all the intelligence and honesty at our command. If we can summon the bravery to do this, we shall best be serving the pivotal interests of civilization. (Sanger, 1922, pp. 25-26).

In *The Pivot of Civilization*, Sanger (1922) calls not only for the new morality built on the sciences, but also for the rejection of failed moral codes based on revelation. The passage above demonstrates the belief that true intelligence uses science to answer authentically “the questions and the needs of the people.” Throughout her writings, Sanger consistently rejects the reliance on dogma rooted in religious revelation. Making clear that her belief in science as the foundation of truth applies to spiritual matters as well, Sanger continued, “Our spiritual and psychic difficulties cannot be solved until we have mastered the knowledge of
the wellsprings of our being” (1922, p. 236). She referred to chemistry, applied to physiology, as the source of such knowledge.

Before turning to the real truth about sexuality according to PPFA sources, consider a summary of their beliefs regarding the nature of truth. These beliefs can be understood in terms of two angles on the subject. First, religious truth must be subject to individual choice, and religious institutions must serve the choices of the majority in a democratic way. This belief rejects the idea that a universal truth revealed by God exists. Those who claim authority based upon such truths may not impose them on others just because they believe these truths to be universal. Second, real truth must be based upon experience and subject to science. This belief rejects religious revelation as a foundation for truth. For example, one may not truthfully claim that masturbation harms an individual because such harm cannot be verified by experience. Such a statement may be based upon a religious revelation that masturbation is sinful and may cause eternal harm in the afterlife, but PPFA sources reject such revelation as a source of truth. The fact that physiologists and psychologists have scientifically verified no harmful effects from masturbation serves as the foundation for the real truth that it causes no harm (cf. SIECUS, 1970a). PPFA sources believe that the real truth about sexuality has been a victim of such inaccurate views of truth. We turn now to this belief.

In the opening line of its main declaration, the Religious Institute states directly the PPFA belief in the positive nature of sexuality as a gift: “Sexuality is God’s life-giving and life-fulfilling gift” (Haffner & Greenfield, 2001, ¶ 1). While some PPFA sources believe God is the source of that gift (e.g. Calderone, 1983; Wattleton, 1996), others see nature as the source (e.g. Guttmacher, 1970). The Declaration on Sexuality goes on to open the
second paragraph with another affirmation about sexuality: “Our faith traditions celebrate the goodness of creation, including our bodies and our sexuality.” Along with other PPFA sources, the Religious Institute believes the gift of sexuality may be expressed without shame by all people regardless of their sexual orientation. For example, Judith Billings expressed this belief as follows:

The latest research announced within the last few days indicates that people’s sexual orientation is “hard-wired” in their genes. So those groups which want to stigmatize and shame [those with homosexual orientation] apparently will have to take up their argument with the Creator. (Billings, 2003, ¶ 60).

In the same keynote address, Billings stressed the importance of scientifically and medically accurate information. Referring to Washington State’s attempt to pass an act relating to medically accurate information in sex education (“Requiring medically accurate . . .” 2003), she said:

I am totally baffled that in this state we should have to propose a law requiring medically accurate sexuality information to ensure that our kids aren’t subjected to political, ideological moralizing rather than being given scientifically accurate information. Can you imagine, in any other subject area having to insist, through legal action, that what we teach is accurate? How about laws stating: “Teachers must inform students that 2 + 2= 4 (not 3 or 5); 5 x 6=30 (not 29 or 31);” or “when teaching subject/verb agreement, you must make it clear that a plural noun needs to be followed by a plural verb”; or in a biology class that asexual reproduction is common in some life forms; or in geography that the earth is pretty much round, not flat, square, or rectangular? (Billings, 2003, ¶ 10).
From Sanger to Billings, the call for scientific and medical accuracy, heard unanimously in PPFA sources, has its motivation in combating those who advance unverifiable “truth” based upon their own interpretations of religious revelations. The call comes loudly today in the wake of the federal abstinence-only legislation (“Social Security Act,” 1996, § 510). PPFA sources reject such “truth” and accept only that which can be confirmed in experience and tested by science. Both science and experience affirm abstinence as an individual choice, but not the only choice. PPFA sources believe the “abstinence-only” message is unrealistic and dishonest because individuals have a right to comprehensive information on all scientifically and medically accurate choices available to them.

“God hears the cries of those who suffer from the failure of religious communities to address sexuality. . . . Faith communities must therefore be truth seeking, courageous, and just” (Haffner & Greenfield, 2001). This statement from The Religious Institute on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing (see Appendix B) confronts directly the nature of truth, the failure of historical orthodoxy, and the call to faith communities to face the true reality of individuals who suffer. The Religious Institute also calls for “comprehensive sexuality education that honors truth telling and the diversity of religious and moral values represented in the community” (Religious Institute, 2002b). Again, the implicit reference is to a truth different from the religious heritage that does not honor truth telling and diversity; truth itself depends on the diversity of individuals in the world and includes openness and honesty about the gift of sexuality. Seeming to draw directly from the declaration of the Religious Institute, co-authored by a Unitarian Universalist (see Appendix B, “Debra Haffner”), Cynthia Fine, representing the same faith, expresses the following belief:
Religious support for responsible sexuality education is long-standing and broad-based.

It affirms education that:

* respects the whole person,
* honors truth and diverse values, and
* promotes the highest ethical values in human relationships. (Fine, 2003, ¶ 3).

She also echoed the call of the Religious Institute for courageous truth telling that reflects the dignity of all individuals, in all their diversity.

Judith Billings picks up on the theme of “truth telling” emphasized by the Religious Institute as well:

If we believe in “truthtelling” with our young people—and I do—we should take to heart the definition of truthtelling: “conformity to fact or reality; a verified fact; that which is true or actual.” It doesn’t take much analysis to figure out how poorly abstinence-only sexuality education curricula adhering to the infamous eight federal requirements [see “Social Security Act,” 1996, § 510 (b) (2)] would fare using that standard for content analysis—“conformity to reality; that which is true or actual.” (Billings, 2003, ¶ 16).

She too believes in a truth different from that promoted by those “zealots” who promote their “moral dogma” based on orthodox Christianity (¶¶ 21, 27-28).

PPFA sources often repeat a truth about sexuality that they believe has been denied historically:
I choose to believe that a truly divine purpose is served by the delay of capacity to reproduce until puberty, around age 12, while in contrast the sexual response system has been functioning since earliest days . . . This timing makes it possible for the pleasure aspect of human sexuality, whether male or female, to be ours from the beginning of life to its end. (Calderone, 1983, cited in Marshall & Donovan, 1991, p. 126).

This quote from Dr. Mary Steichen Calderone (see Appendix B), who served as PPFA Medical Director from 1953 until she resigned in 1964 and founded SIECUS, illustrates well the PPFA belief that individuals are sexual beings from birth until death (cf. Moran, 2000; PPFA, 1998, 2003j). This often repeated truth guides much of PPFA’s approach to comprehensive sexuality education.

Another important truth asserted by PPFA sources, and historically denied by Christian orthodoxy, is that one can morally separate pleasure from procreation in sexual behavior. After the Lambeth Conference of 1920, the Anglican Church reversed its historical agreement with the rest of orthodox Christianity on this point and accepted birth control (cf. Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops, 1908, 1920, 1930). Never before had the Christian tradition separated pleasure from procreation by accepting contraception as morally licit. The Roman Catholic Church is the only Christian denomination that continues to hold that all sex acts must be open to procreation (CCC, 1994). Moran (2000) noted how acceptance of contraception first separated pleasure and procreation. The Calderone quote above refers to this pleasure aspect of sexuality as a lifelong gift, and thus implicitly refers to the truth that sexual pleasure may be disassociated from procreation. Sanger made explicit
reference to this truth: “The technique of birth control dissociates two ideas: the ritual of physical and spiritual communion and the process of reproduction” (Sanger, 1929, ¶ 15).

**Fulfilling the Gift of Sexuality**

**Truth and Reproductive Freedom**

PPFA sources believe religious leaders who face the truth unflinchingly conclude that religions must promote reproductive health care options and include honest information about sexuality (e.g. PPFA, 1998). Consequently, religious individuals should be able to access comprehensive sexuality information through their churches and the information should include scientifically and medically accurate facts about all issues relating to sexuality (e.g. Religious Institute, 2002b). A look at PPFA belief statements makes the range of issues more clear:

There should be access to information and services related to sexuality, reproduction, methods of contraception, fertility control, and parenthood. Furthermore, Planned Parenthood asserts that both parenthood and nonparenthood are valid personal decisions. (PPFA, 1998, “Reproductive Freedom,” ¶ 1). . . .

Sexuality is the interplay of gender, gender role, gender identity, sexual orientation, sexual preference, and social norms as they affect the physical, emotional, and spiritual life. It includes emotions, attitudes and values, relationships, self-image and ideals, as well as behaviors. All people are sexual beings from birth to death. (PPFA, 2003m, “Value Statements”).

PPFA sources believe reproductive freedom, and access to all information necessary to achieving its fullest measure, reflect such a fundamental truth about human nature that
individuals have a basic right to both (see *The Rights Debate* below); religions that promote contrary beliefs refuse to face this truth honestly.

The belief that religion should be involved in issues of sexuality emerged in all sources. For example, Margaret Sanger asserted, “Birth Control concerns itself with the spirit no less than the body” (Sanger, 1922, p. 16). Demonstrating a consistency of beliefs over the years, an interview respondent said, “We have a clergy committee here at Planned Parenthood that supports sexuality education, but sometimes there are other faith-based organizations or different groups that oppose it.” This source went on to discuss Focus on the Family and others who they believe unreasonably oppose comprehensive sexuality education in favor of the abstinence-only approach. Younger adherents to PPFA beliefs, who may have been led to believe that religion somehow does not belong in issues of sexuality, find the religious perspective intriguing. Emily Goodstein, a leader in *Vox*, PPFA’s campus outreach program at George Washington University (GWU), expressed this feeling after a chance encounter on Washington D.C.’s Metro led to a special roundtable meeting of her *Vox* chapter “Voices for Choices”:

> This event was a first for Voices for Choices! We had never before combined the issues of religion and choice and we found that doing so created a very productive, thought-provoking conversation. With help from the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, we presented an entirely new dimension of the choice movement to the GWU community. (Goodstein, 2002, ¶ 6).

The point can also be confirmed in the very existence of the Religious Institute and its hallmark declaration (Haffner & Greenfield, 2001). Debra Haffner was the driving force behind the creation of the Religious Institute. Similar to SIECUS cofounder Mary Calderone
before her, Haffner worked for Planned Parenthood and then went on to work for SIECUS before she began studies to become a Unitarian Universalist minister and co-founded the Religious Institute. She made a deep personal and professional commitment to ensuring that religion would become more involved with issues of sexuality. Another document from the Religious Institute clarifies this commitment:

**RELIGIOUS SUPPORT FOR SEXUALITY EDUCATION**

In 1968, the National Council of Churches of Christ, Commission on Marriage and Family, the Synagogue Council of America’s Committee on Family, and the United States Catholic Conference called upon churches and synagogues to become actively involved in sexuality education within their congregations and their communities.

More than 10 religious organizations are members of the National Coalition to Support Sexuality Education, including the American Jewish Congress, the Office of Family Ministries and Human Sexuality of the National Council of Churches of Christ, and the Unitarian Universalist Association.

Almost eight in ten conservative Christians support sexuality education in high school and seven in ten support it in middle school.

Eight religious denominations, and the Office of Family Ministries and Human Sexuality, National Council of Churches of Christ, have policies supporting sexuality education in schools. They include:

- Central Conference of American Rabbis • Church of the Brethren
- Episcopal Church • Evangelical Lutheran Church of America
- Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) • Unitarian Universalist Association
- United Church of Christ • United Methodist Church.
More than 2100 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.

More than 550 clergy have signed a new statement by Planned Parenthood Federation of America calling for comprehensive sexuality education in schools and opposing abstinence-only education. The Central Conference of American Rabbis and the Justice and Witness Ministries, United Church of Christ have also endorsed it. (Religious Institute, 2002b, p. 4).

In many ways, Debra Haffner, who took part in writing this “Open Letter” published by the Religious Institute, continued the cause of her mentor Mary Calderone who:

As a representative of family planning . . . took part in the first American Conference on Church and Family run by the National Council of Churches. Attended by sociologists, religious leaders, educators and public health professionals, the conference highlighted the suffering of thousands of people because of ignorance about frigidity, impotence, homosexuality and contraception. (Brody, 1998, § 1 p. 52; cf. Haffner, 1997).

Both religious women who got their professional starts working for Planned Parenthood, Calderone and Haffner leveraged their influence as presidents of SIECUS to ensure that everyone understood that the responsible religious response to issues of sexuality was comprehensive, both in terms of reproductive freedom and sexuality education (e.g. Fine, 2003).
Truth and Lifelong Sexuality Education

PPFA believes that “sexuality is a natural, healthy, lifelong part of being human” and that “all people are sexual beings from birth to death” (PPFA, 2003d, “Value Statements”). This belief demonstrates the value of lifelong sexuality education. One sexuality educator interviewed recalled:

I used to teach a class and my target audience was parents of preschoolers. Guess what. I got parents of high school kids who were terrified at what they were already doing. I wanted parents of preschoolers to help them lay a foundation early in their child’s life. . . . I had a curriculum focused on how to begin this process at a very early time in your family life so as the child got older, they realized this is a safe subject with mom and dad.

In response to the question, “Should five-year-olds get sex education?” Andrew Dakoutros answered, “If teaching a million 5 year olds sex education saves even one child from abuse, then we have succeeded” (Should five-year-olds get sex education?, 2003). Believing in lifelong sex education, PPFA distributes specific guidelines for the sexuality education of children through age five as shown by the following excerpt:

By Age Five, Children Should:

• Use correct terms for all sexual body parts, including the reproductive organs.
• Be able to understand and identify the concepts of “maleness” and “femaleness.”
• Understand that their bodies belong to themselves and that they have a right to say “No” to unwanted touch.
• Understand the concept that a woman does not have to have a baby unless she wants to.
• Know where babies come from, how they “get in” and “get out.”
• Be able to talk about body parts without a sense of “naughtiness.”
• Be able to ask trusted adults questions about sexuality.
• Know that “sex talk” is for private times at home.
• Know that it is normal for them to touch their genitals for pleasure—but that should be done in private. (Newcomer, 1987).

Designed for school aged children and youth, these PPFA guidelines written by Newcomer continue for education through age 18. Consistent with its belief in lifelong sexuality, PPFA provides comprehensive information on sexuality before age five and after age 18 as well.

_Individual Ethics: A New Vision for Morality_

We expect [woman] to demolish old systems of morals, a degenerate prudery, Dark-Age religious concepts, laws that enslave women by denying them the knowledge of their bodies, and information as to contraceptives. (Sanger, 1920, pp. 70-71).

Out of woman’s inner nature, in rebellion against these conditions, is rising the new morality. Let it be realized that this creation of new sex ideals is a challenge to the church. Being a challenge to the church, it is also, in less degree, a challenge to the state. (Sanger, 1920, p. 178).

Margaret Sanger called Chapter XIV of _Woman and the New Race_ “Woman and the New Morality.” PPFA sources today follow her in the belief that the old moral code based upon repression and abuse of power must give way to a new vision of morality based on the individual and collective well-being of humanity. Lester Kirkendall summarized this new morality well:
In all sexual encounters, commitment to humane and humanistic values should be present. No person’s sexual behavior should hurt or disadvantage another. This principal applies to all sexual encounters—both to the brief and casual experience and to those that are deeper and more prolonged. In any sexual encounter or relationship, freely given consent is fundamental—even in the marital relationship, where consent is often denied or taken for granted. (Kirkendall, 1976, § 9).

Echoing the ethical themes expressed by Kirkendall, Cynthia Fine asked her listeners to remember how they learned about sex. She asked, “Did it help you develop your capacity for personal relationships that express love, justice, mutuality, commitment, consent and pleasure?” (Fine, 2003, ¶ 4). In remarkably consistent terms, all PPFA sources that speak to issues of ethics and morality enumerate similar principles to guide responsible sexual behavior. Later in her speech, Fine returned to the theme:

Because sexuality is often used to influence, manipulate, and control others in ways that are harmful and destructive to the body and spirit, faith communities are called to support an ethic of human sexuality that embraces healing and health, justice and mutuality. (¶ 7).

As seen earlier, Fine is a Unitarian Universalist who draws from principles enumerated by UU minister Debra Haffner who coauthored the principle works of the Religious Institute (cf. Haffner & Greenfield, 2001; Religious Institute, 2002b). An analysis of the endorsers of the major works published by the Religious Institute shows that UUs endorse at a higher rate than any other religion. The United Church of Christ (UCC) has the second highest endorsement rate. One study of the endorsements in 2000 concluded that 20% of the endorsers were UUs and 14% were members of the UCC (P. Hunter, 2000). Nevertheless,
nearly all PPFA sources express belief in the moral and ethical principles espoused in these documents.

PPFA believes sexuality “is conditioned by cultural and religious norms” (PPFA, 1998, § 4 ¶ 1) and “therefore, Planned Parenthood’s sexuality education programs for people of all ages must emphasize the importance of making informed choices that are consistent with one’s personal values” (§ 12 ¶ 2). It is important to analyze the phrase “is conditioned by” in order to clarify PPFA beliefs. Behaviorist B. F. Skinner coined the term “conditioned” as it refers to human behavior, of which sexual behavior is a part (e.g. Skinner, 1953). PPFA uses the word consistent with its behaviorist meaning. Skinner teaches that conditioning agents (such as “religious norms”) are stimuli perceived by an individual that evoke a response, which will be repeated if reinforced (e.g. Skinner, 1976). The process is known as operant conditioning. Early in his work, Skinner studied “superstition” in pigeons (Skinner, 1948). He noted that nearly all pigeons developed a “ritual,” which had nothing to do with the actual time of the feeding, between incidents of receiving food delivered on a variable reinforcement schedule. The implication for Skinner’s beliefs about religion becomes clear. He confirms his beliefs about religion later in life; Skinner was a humanist who did not believe in God (AHA, 2003b; Skinner, 1987). With Skinner, many PPFA sources believe that religious behavior is the result of operant conditioning produced by the environment, not the supernatural. While some PPFA sources do not discount the supernatural, many believe sexuality is conditioned by religious norms that have evolved through a natural process, not a supernatural deity. God is not necessary for the existence of religious norms and no religious norm is immutable.
PPFA affirms “the importance of making informed choices that are consistent with one’s personal values” as quoted above. PPFA maintains an extensive and diverse Clergy Advisory Board. For PPFA sources who support humanist beliefs, Humanism is the only way to accept all people, religious or not, into their view of sexual morality, which is why Planned Parenthood presidents, doctors, and affiliate leaders like Margaret Sanger, Mary Calderone, Lester Kirkendall, Faye Wattleton, and Gloria Feldt have all accepted formal awards from AHA recognizing them as outstanding humanists (AHA, 2003b, 2003c). To assert that any absolute “Truth” exists would entail acceptance of those ideologies that possess it and rejection of those that do not. For PPFA, such a position is untenable. With AHA they agree that “the preciousness and dignity of the individual is central” (Kurtz & Wilson, 1973, § 5; and PPFA, 1998; cf. PPFA, 2003d). “In a pluralistic society, we must respect diverse sexual attitudes and behaviors, as long as they are based on ethics, responsibility, justice, equality, and non-violence” (PPFA, 1998, “Value Statements,” § 4).

Values Clarification

One PPFA source, knowing that I was conducting research for this dissertation, opined, “I think the issue of values clarification is so important that it should have its own section.” This opinion reflects the belief of all PPFA sources in the individual as the ultimate foundation of moral decision-making. Given that so many PPFA sources, religious and irreligious, reject any dogmatism based upon supernatural revelation, the process of values clarification has been a hallmark of many sexuality education programs since SIECUS made the concept popular over three decades ago (SIECUS, 1970a, esp. ch. 11).

One can apply the process of values clarification alone and introspectively, or with the guidance of a leader, as in sexuality education classes (cf. Morris, 1994; SIECUS,
One begins the process by identifying those things that one values. Usually, a brainstorming process helps individuals to identify and name their values. Once the brainstorming process has reached a reasonable conclusion, the next step usually consists of organizing values. For example, one may consider a value for justice as part of a larger value for people. Once they have organized their values, individuals may order them and, thus, clarify not only what they value, but also which values they hold most deeply.

One can see the prevalence of values clarification in comprehensive sexuality education programs promoted by PPFA sources. For example, PPFA’s Educators Update, an online journal for sexuality educators, often mentions values clarification, both in the training of sexuality educators and in comprehensive sexuality education programs for youth (PPFA, 2003e). One can see values clarification in most curricula endorsed by PPFA (e.g. 1999b). SIECUS provides descriptions of a host of sexuality education programs deemed effective which show frequent inclusion of values clarification programs (e.g. SIECUS, 2003a).

Values clarification reveals that any one individual may hold somewhat different values with different organizational schemas, and different levels of depth. PPFA sources, however, believe that universal human values do exist. Those enumerated above like mutuality, consent, non-violence, and well-being emerge for nearly all individuals. Based upon these commonalities, PPFA sources accept and promote universal values (e.g. Kirkendall, 1976; PPFA, 1999b; PPFA, 2003m; SIECUS, 1970a).

**Masturbation, Homosexuality, Contraception, and Abortion**

Masturbation, homosexuality, contraception, and abortion emerge as the most hotly contested topics in the sexuality education debate (e.g. Buston & Wight, 2001; Chethik,
1981; Clawar, 1977; Eaton, 1989; Evans et al., 1999; Goldenberg, 2003; Huerta, 1996; John Birch Society, 2003; W. Johnson & Schutt, 1966; Lerner, 2001; National Education Association, 1969; Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995; Sivulich, 1973; Sonfield & Gold, 2001; Webber, 1999; Whitehead, 1996). The many sources cited do not even touch the tip of the iceberg! No matter where a researcher begins, any review of contemporary sexuality education literature reveals the massive volume of material in the “comprehensive” versus “abstinence-only” approach. Within this material, the researcher finds copious disagreement about the morality of masturbation, homosexuality, contraception, and abortion.

PPFA sources take a clear stand that each of these issues is a matter of individual choice. Masturbating, engaging in homosexual acts, using contraception, and choosing an abortion are all personal matters that hurt no one and violate no universally held values when done responsibly. Each affects an individual’s, especially a woman’s, own body over which he or she has ultimate control. PPFA sources believe that no religious precept or civil law may justly interfere with the fundamental right of individuals to control their own bodies (e.g. Feldt, 2002d, 2003b; Greenberg, 2001; PPFA, 1998; Sanger, 1920).

While some believe that masturbation, homosexuality, and contraception are the issues that most often kill comprehensive sexuality education programs (see, for example, Breasted, 1970; Scales, 1980; Selle, 2002), the most controversial issue underlying opposing beliefs about sexuality is abortion. PPFA sources believe that choosing an abortion is a moral decision (e.g. Bigelow, 2000; PPFA, 1998, 2003i). For PPFA sources, universal values such as mutuality, consent, and well-being do not contradict the choice of aborting a pregnancy because they do not agree that the embryo constitutes a person with individual
rights. The two sides of this issue can be seen in the following quote from PPFA’s continuing chronicle of *George W. Bush’s War on Women*:

The use of the word “adoption” comes from the adoption agency Nightline Christian Adoptions, an anti-choice organization that implies that an embryo is equal to a child. This is consistent with the Bush administration’s efforts to elevate the legal status of the fetus or embryo at every opportunity. (PPFA, 2003f, “July 25, 2002”).

The Reverend Mark Bigelow, a member of the PPFA Clergy Advisory Board, argues that the language of choice has supplanted the true issue in the abortion debate:

I believe that we progressive clergy must reshape the debate over abortion to focus on the moral and ethical dimensions of the decision to terminate a pregnancy. Too often we have referred to abortion as a tragic choice or a last resort when it is, in fact, a moral decision, made out of consideration for the needs of the family, the community, and the wider world in which we live. (Bigelow, 2000, ¶ 1).

Another PPFA clergyman, Reverend Mark Pawlowski (1999), draws on the Jewish revelation of “nephesh” in presenting the common PPFA belief that life, and therefore individual rights, begins with the first breath after birth. Exploring the issue of life’s beginning as related to the debate over stem cell research, yet another clergyman asks, “What leads people to place a greater value on an embryo than on research that might lead to a cure for ailments that ravage the lives of millions of people, now and into the future?” (Davis, 2001, ¶ 4). For Davis, there are no good answers. Those who value an embryo over the lives of those who suffer have taken “absolutism” and “abstraction” to a level of excess he believes constitutes “idolatry.” Pointing out hypocrisy, Davis continues:
When it comes to war, unconscionable disparities in wealth, and threats to the environment, the anti-abortion churches are so much more flexible. In the 1950s when there was no women’s movement and no abortion rights, those who today oppose abortion said nothing when fetal cells were used in research to develop the polio and rubella vaccines. (¶ 5).

PPFA sources also believe that the right to abortion is so fundamental to women that in the absence of safe and legal abortion options, they will choose them anyway. Margaret Sanger makes this case at length in many of her works (e.g. Sanger, 1920, 1922, 1931). The stories provided in Sanger’s *Motherhood in Bondage* (1928) and Feldt’s *Behind Every Choice is a Story* (2002) provide abundant evidence for this belief. One interview source shared a story with me that does not appear elsewhere in print:

The story belongs to a childhood classmate of mine who grew up on “the wrong side of the tracks” in our very small town (1,200 population). I remember the first time I heard about human abortion (I had seen plenty of animal spays); I was horrified like any child is! I was preteen and expressed my strong and righteous opinion to my parents. My father was silent, but my mother gave a response that I heard so many times for other strong opinions that I had . . . “You don't know what you would do until you are faced with the circumstance. Many issues in life aren’t simple or easy . . . and most people do the best they can do in the circumstances.” I don’t think she said it, but in retrospect I believe it was implied that being able to make safe choices is important. Now fast forward to my classmate. Early high school years, pregnant with a drunken stepfather’s child, dropped out of school and got bigger and bigger. Every dysfunctional thing that could be wrong with a family was wrong with
hers. It was the mid-1970’s. Abortion was legal. Chances are this young woman didn’t know that, but even if she did how would she have been able to access one as a poor, abused, child in [a] very rural northern [state]? Actually, chances are that this young woman didn’t even know abortions existed or maybe even that there was a word or medical procedure for such a thing. But she understood the concept and she knew she did not want to have a baby, or at least not this baby. My classmate waited until her belly was big enough to slam it over and over and over in a car door. She was successful in terminating her undesired pregnancy. Women will, can and do end undesired pregnancies, with or without available, legal, or safe options. They will choose. The issue for me is choice. Nobody has to choose abortion. A safe medical choice has to be better than slamming car doors, poison, coat hangers, or suicide.

This story illustrates powerfully why PPFA believes, “People need accurate and complete information to make childbearing decisions that are appropriate for them. They want and need to know about abstinence, birth control, abortion, adoption, prenatal care, and parenting in an age-appropriate context” (PPFA, 2003d, “We Believe”). PPFA believes children should begin learning what abortion is at age nine (Newcomer, 1987). The story also makes clear why PPFA opposes legislated parental notification requirements (cf. Wattleton, 1996).

No doubt about it, masturbation, homosexuality, contraception, and abortion rise to the top of the “controversial hot topics” list. One interview respondent confirmed the point: Homosexuality is a huge hot topic. Masturbation is a huge hot topic. Abortion! And, you know, we’re from Planned Parenthood which means that’s all we do is abortions. Well it is less than 4% of what we do and we actually here, are promoting
. . . we’re trying every day to stop abortion from happening. We do more everyday to stop abortion from happening. But those are hot topics in our society and so somebody catches wind that, you know what, they may talk about masturbation and that masturbation is really, it’s actually a normal healthy part of growing up and that young people do it from the time they’re born basically, you know, a lot of kids do. You know, we talk about it appropriately and all the different kinds of things, but that’s going to shut the program down. That one thing that we’re going to talk about for probably 15 minutes in a whole 30 hour presentation is going to shut that program down. And it has. It just happened.

The respondent’s tone, somewhat evident in print, but much more so on tape and during the interview, expressed the frustration of conflicting worldviews regarding the morality of these issues. This respondent, like all PPFA sources, held a new vision of morality based not on any inflexible moral principles, but on the ethics of individual and collective well-being.

**Individual Rights**

Why “individual rights” and not “human rights”? One may exchange the terms wherever they appear in this analysis, but the term “individual” better captures the PPFA point of view. For example, in answering a question about abortion rights in an interview on National Public Radio (NPR), PPFA President Gloria Feldt makes reference to fundamental human and civil rights, reproductive rights, the right to plan and space children, and the right to privacy. She does so in less than 100 words and concludes by calling them all “individual rights” (Williams, 2001, interview transcript). In the same interview, and in another piece strongly endorsed by Feldt, “abortion rights” are seen as part of the larger picture of “individual rights” (Chesler, 2001; Feldt, 2001).
The theme of oppression and emancipation, which motivated the pioneers in the struggle for women’s rights (cf. Wattleton, 1996), serves as another example. Not all human beings suffer from oppression; individuals or individual classes do. Much of the PPFA point of view regarding rights has roots in efforts to emancipate those who cannot freely access their rights because they experience oppression. “We believe in acting courageously, especially as allies with those who have little or no voice and little or no power” reads today’s quote atop the PPFA web page (PPFA, 2003h). Different quotes rotate through that position, but many refer to those who must bear the burden of oppression and need help in casting it off (for a complete list of these quotes, see PPFA, 2003i, “Beliefs”). Among others, PPFA represents women, the poor, gays and lesbians—all individuals who have historically suffered, and continue to suffer, unjust trampling of fundamental rights.

Focus on the individual accurately captures the PPFA perspective because, in PPFA sources, the concept of human rights nearly always begins with the individual human being, not a creator deity. The humanist ideals of self-determination, self-realization, and self-actualization appear as fundamental rights throughout PPFA sources. When individuals can freely access these rights, the whole of humanity joins “in creating a sustainable world and living in peace with our planet” (PPFA, 2003i, “Beliefs,” ¶ 10; cf. Sanger, 1922). Consistent with this humanistic outlook, PPFA holds that “the ultimate goal should be the fulfillment of the potential for growth in each human personality—not for the favored few, but for all of humankind. Only a shared world and global measures will suffice” (Kurtz & Wilson, 1973, Preface, ¶ 8; cf. PPFA, 2003i). Humanism, as embraced by the Unitarian Universalists who spearheaded the AHA and now sit on the PPFA Clergy Advisory Board in large numbers,
certainly provides the philosophical foundation for the PPFA view of individual rights (see especially signatories AHA, 2003a; Bragg, 1933; Kurtz, 1998; Kurtz & Wilson, 1973).

The story of individual rights begins with the historical roots of PPFA in oppression and emancipation. This history shows how the humanistic perspective drove Planned Parenthood’s approach to emancipation because much of the oppression arose from dictates arising from traditional religious beliefs. A clear vision of how PPFA and Humanism evolved together emerges and helps to explain the debate over human rights—a debate that rests on fundamentally different worldviews.

**Rights Debate**

In order to appreciate debates about rights, one must clearly understand the concept itself. *Webster’s* gives an incisive definition: A “right” is “something to which one has a just claim” (*Webster’s*, 1967). This definition frames the debate over rights squarely within the concept of “justice.” One does not simply make a “claim” and call it a right; rather, one must make a “just claim.” Differing notions over the source and content of justice, then, define the battleground for the rights debate. Given this understanding, it comes as no surprise that PPFA and the Catholic Church differ in their focus upon specific rights and their beliefs about rights in general.

This difference regarding beliefs about rights emerged in the concept of polarization. For example, one potential PPFA source refused to participate in this study because she believed inclusion of orthodox Catholic beliefs would “polarize the debate.” PPFA President, Gloria Feldt, demonstrates her recognition of the polarization this debate has caused and her desire to humanize the discussion. In response to a question regarding her new book, *Behind Every Choice is a Story* (Feldt & Jennings, 2002), she says, “By telling
my story I want to open the door to the power of storytelling and empower others to tell theirs. That’s how we can create a more productive discussion about reproductive health and rights: By opening our hearts to personal stories and becoming less polarized” (PPFA, 2003c).

The rights debate emerged as a major category in this analysis because PPFA sources so often refer to those who oppose their beliefs regarding individual rights. For example, PPFA sources often refer to “right to life” and “pro-life” groups and individuals in order to distinguish more sharply how their perspective on rights differs (see especially PPFA, 2003f). What PPFA refers to as the “global gag rule” serves as a good case in point. Where PPFA emphasizes the woman’s “right to make childbearing decisions,” others emphasize the “right to life” of the unborn. As PPFA sources so clearly indicate, the rights debate rests on differing ethics, fundamentally different beliefs rooted in conflicting worldviews. The rights debate begins with the PPFA commitment to the right of individuals to hold beliefs as long as they do not act on any belief that would infringe upon the legal choices of those who hold contradictory beliefs.

The PPFA point of view regarding beliefs has remained largely unchanged over the years. Consider the following passages from both the founder and current leader of Planned Parenthood. First, Margaret Sanger’s perspective:

Furthermore, while conceding to Catholic or other churchmen full freedom to preach their own doctrines, whether of theology or morals, nevertheless when they attempt to carry these ideas into legislative acts and force their opinions and codes upon the non-Catholics, we consider such action an interference with the principles of democracy and we have a right to protest. (1922, p. 196).
And now compare Gloria Feldt’s view:

Some pharmacists elect not to provide emergency contraception, citing a so-called “conscience clause”—another abuse of language that deserves to be challenged. Whose conscience? Whose conscience counts? What about the doctor whose conscience says children should be planned and wanted? What about the patient’s conscience? Individuals have a right to their beliefs. But to imply that one conscience sets the standard is absolutely a corrosion of thought. When new reports parrot such inaccurate framing, how can Americans think clearly about these issues? (Feldt, 1999, ¶ 11).

Both Sanger and Feldt acknowledge the individual right to personal beliefs, but they vehemently oppose any perceived right to impose those beliefs on others by impeding their right to choose. No one has the right to infringe on personal choice through legislation or refusal to deliver legal products or services.

**The Struggle for Women’s Rights**

“In our movement, we’re very focused on women’s rights”—Alfredo Vigil, M.D., PPFA Chairman (2002).

“In solidarity, women need not fear the price of claiming what is ours—our right to full equality and opportunity”—Faye Wattleton, PPFA President 1978-2002 (1996, p. 470).

PPFA sources frame the struggle for women’s rights within two prerequisite struggles, first for comprehensive sexuality education, the right to information, and second
for reproductive freedom, the right of a woman to control her own body. Margaret Sanger defines the struggle in the following terms:

Woman must have her freedom—the fundamental freedom of choosing whether or not she shall be a mother and how many children she will have. Regardless of what man’s attitude may be, that problem is hers—and before it can be his, it is hers alone.

She goes through the vale of death alone, each time a babe is born. As it is the right neither of man nor the state to coerce her into this ordeal, so it is her right to decide whether she will endure it. That right to decide imposes upon her the duty of clearing the way to knowledge by which she may make and carry out the decision.

(Sanger, 1920, p. 100).

In this passage, Sanger frames women’s rights within the concept of “freedom” and immediately turns to the necessity of reproductive rights, “choosing whether or not she will be a mother,” to securing women’s rights. She then turns to the issue of education, “the duty of clearing the way to knowledge.” Thus, women’s rights come only through reproductive rights, which come first through comprehensive sexuality education.

Only when free “from oppression because of the unique reproductive characteristics of [her] gender” (Wattleton, 1996, p. 469) can a woman gain her freedom. Voices for Planned Parenthood have echoed this sentiment throughout the years and continue today (Feldt & Jennings, 2002; PPFA, 2003j; Wattleton, 1996). In her speech Winning with Agenda Discipline, delivered to the Political Academy in Washington, D.C. on July 23, 2002, Gloria Feldt spoke about the battle leading up to the historic Roe v. Wade decision (“Roe,” 1973) and summed up the point nicely: “women’s rights are human rights—and without reproductive rights, women’s rights are meaningless” (Feldt, 2002e, ¶ 4).
History and Definition of Women’s Rights

Margaret Sanger championed women’s rights long before her fight for birth control. After she refused to return to her grammar school because she felt insulted by her teacher one day when she arrived late to class, Margaret’s parents sent her to Claverack, a boarding school where “one could prepare for Cornell College” (Sanger, 1931, p. 23). She reminisced:

I spent three years at Claverack, three full and happy years. I was interested in social questions, I was ardent for suffrage, for woman’s emancipation. A paper I wrote on “Women’s Rights” was to be read in Chapel on Saturday morning. News of it spread about. Boys shouted at me in class, drew pictures of women smoking huge cigars, wearing trousers and men’s clothing. I studied and wrote as I never had before. I sent long letters to Father getting facts on woman suffrage, facts on woman’s history. (Sanger, 1931, pp. 23-24).

Sanger saw both church and state abuse power. In her childhood, Margaret felt the abuse of power wielded by a Catholic priest who prevented her father from holding an oration in the only town hall in Corning, New York after he “had rented and paid for the use of it” (Sanger, 1931, p. 7). She viewed calls from the state for large families, like that of Theodore Roosevelt, as calls for cheap labor and soldiers (Sanger, 1920).

As she grew, Sanger came to a realization that, in order to protect themselves from abuses, women must learn to control the generative functions of their bodies as a prerequisite to securing their rights (e.g. Sanger, 1920, 1922, 1928, 1931). Sanger said that women “are determined to decide for themselves whether they shall become mothers, under
what conditions and when. . . . It is for the woman the key to the temple of liberty” (Sanger, 1920, p. 5).

Sanger could not fathom that any woman would not stand with her against the oppression of the state, which sought to stop her from educating women through the distribution of information about birth control. Her recollection of the arrests made at her first birth control clinic at 46 Amboy Street in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn in New York serves as an example of this attitude:

We were not surprised at being arrested, but the shock and horror of it was that a woman, with a squad of five plain clothes men, conducted the raid and made the arrest. A woman—the irony of it! (Sanger, 1931, p. 159).

In Sanger’s view this woman, by virtue of her office, represented the oppression of the state. Sanger went so far as to accuse those women who did not fight for reproductive rights of joining the oppressors, both church and state (Sanger, 1920, 1931). Remembering the women lined up outside the clinic just before the arrests, Sanger wrote:

As I sat in the rear of the car and looked out on that seething mob of humans, I wondered, and asked myself what had gone out of the race. Something had gone from them which silenced them, made them impotent to defend their rights. (Sanger, 1931, p. 160).

While the role of Planned Parenthood in the fight for women’s rights begins with Sanger, Faye Wattleton points out the overlap between the oppression of African Americans and the oppression of women when she recounts the story of Sojourner Truth, a powerful story that takes the historical struggle for both women’s rights and the larger civil rights movement back further into history:
When the first national women’s rights convention was held in Worcester, Massachusetts, in October 1850, Sojourner Truth was the only black female delegate in attendance. Born in 1797, Sojourner had spent the first forty years of her life in slavery and servitude. . . .

Women’s rights are incontrovertible, Sojourner Truth was telling us. They are our birthright. All we have to do is claim them. It seems that women have not fully absorbed the wisdom of this former slave, who understood women’s potential more clearly than we do today. Women have made phenomenal progress since she spoke in Worcester, but until the day arrives when all women decide that our rights are not negotiable, our future choices will not be secure. (Wattleton, 1996, pp. 465-66).

With Margaret Sanger and Gloria Feldt, bookends of Planned Parenthood leadership, Faye Wattleton sees reproductive self-determination, won first through comprehensive sexuality education, as fundamental to securing women’s rights.

Continuing the cause of its founder today, PPFA battles for women’s rights against those in power who would suppress them (e.g. PPFA, 2003f). Nearly half of all PPFA source quotes on the issue of women’s rights speak to the continuing battle to retain what they have gained (see especially PPFA, 2003f). In her June 18, 1999 speech to journalists in Washington D.C., Feldt speaks out on how words serve as weapons of war to set back gains made by women:

You all make your living by using words. You know how language forms us as it informs us. Language creates context—shapes and defines how people think about issues. When “affirmative action” became “reverse discrimination,” redress for
generations of racial and gender oppression was set back. When the word “feminist” became demonized, women demurred with “I’m not a feminist but . . .” Even many who asserted their rights to equal opportunity and equal pay. Language shapes the public debate that shapes public policy. Let’s look at how women’s reproductive health and freedoms are damaged in the crossfire, through choice of topics, choice of words, and choice of positioning. (Feldt, 1999, ¶ 4).

**Reproductive Rights**

“It is the policy of Planned Parenthood Federation of America to advocate reproductive freedom as essential to women’s rights” (PPFA, 1998, “Women’s Rights”).

Margaret Sanger’s vision lives on in this current PPFA policy statement. For her, neither the right to vote nor equal rights in general “were so necessary to woman’s progress as the right to control her own generative functions and the right to obtain knowledge for this purpose” (Sanger, 1931, p. 74). Just as Sanger recognized the primacy of comprehensive sexuality education, the means “to obtain knowledge,” in securing reproductive rights, PPFA champions the same cause today.

Gloria Feldt provides a concise definition of reproductive rights in her speech delivered to the City Club of Portland on May 16, 2003. She refers to PPFA’s creation of legislation called “a new Freedom of Choice Act” (Feldt, 2003a, closing remarks). This act defines reproductive rights as including medically accurate sex education, insurance coverage for contraceptives, abortion rights and access, family planning and reproductive health care throughout the world secured through the abolition of gag rules, and the availability of emergency contraception pills for use after sexual intercourse.
PPFA views reproductive rights as women’s rights. Never do PPFA sources speak of men’s rights in regard to childbearing choices concerning pregnancies they have been partners in producing. For example, on PPFA’s webpage, the “Teen” section includes the following in the article called “A Young Man’s Guide to Sexuality”:

Remember—if your partner gets pregnant and chooses to have the baby and raise it, you can be legally responsible for sharing expenses. Or she can choose to have an abortion—whether you like it or not. (PPFA, 2003h, “Health Info: Teen Issues”). This statement makes explicit a point sometimes implicitly assumed in PPFA sources: Reproductive rights are distinctly women’s rights.

**Right to Information: Comprehensive Sexuality Education**

“No system of society depending for its continuation on intelligent humans can stand long unless it encourages the control of the birth rate and includes contraceptive knowledge as a right” (Sanger, 1931, p. 64).

Margaret Sanger spent her entire life fighting for the right to information. Continuing her zeal for comprehensive sexuality education, PPFA champions the cause of comprehensively informing people of all ages about their lifelong sexuality (PPFA, 2003d). One Planned Parenthood sexuality educator put it this way: “I believe access to full, complete, and honest information is a basic human right. Knowledge is powerful and a common language that assures mutual understanding is essential.” The right to all scientifically and medically accurate information about all aspects of sexuality serves as the foundation first to comprehensive sexuality education and then to reproductive freedom, a necessary prerequisite to women’s rights.
The Continuing Struggle

Many see reproductive rights as “beginning with Margaret Sanger’s campaign to provide basic fertility information to women, and culminating with the 1965 Griswold and 1973 Roe decisions by the Supreme Court” (Mather, 2001, ¶ 10; cf. “Griswold,” 1965; “Roe,” 1973). Both Griswold and Roe defined a constitutional right to privacy, the former bearing on the issue of contraception and the latter on abortion. However, PPFA sources point out quickly that, although Griswold and Roe are a sort of culmination, the battle to both access and retain reproductive rights continues to this day. In the continuing battle to maintain them, Faye Wattleton notes that “women’s rights—especially women’s reproductive rights—are held together by a very fragile political thread” (1996, p. 468). That thread has become even weaker, and the battle does continue.

The battle continues most notably in the political arena, where those who oppose PPFA beliefs continue to attack in a relentless “War on Women” (PPFA, 2003f); the first attack cited aims directly at the foundation of women’s rights, comprehensive sexuality education, through Bush’s appointment of abstinence-only proponent Tommy Thompson. The battle then escalates. “The Bush administration and its allies in Congress threaten women’s rights and health, not only in the U.S., but around the world” (¶ 1). Battles include judicial nominations, reversals of position on treaties regarding women’s rights, and reinstitution of what has become known as the “Gag Rule” or “Mexico City Policy,” which prevents countries from receiving U.S. aid even if they use their own money to advocate for abortion.

It continues daily in unexpected ways as seen in the following: “We also have fundamental disagreements about sex and about the role and rights of women” (Fisch, 2000,
¶ 6) comments Audrey Fisch, illustrating the ongoing struggle over women’s rights. Fisch’s article lamented and condemned the attack on the Northern Illinois Women’s Center, the city of Rockford’s only abortion clinic, by Fr. John Earl, a Catholic Priest, on September 30, 2000 (see also “Priest takes car . . .” 2000). It continues in very personal ways as seen in this passage from Faye Wattleton in a letter to her daughter, urging her to carry on the fight: “Americans’ fundamental rights, women’s rights, your rights, your children’s rights, must not be allowed to hang in the balance” (Wattleton, 1996, p. 468).

One can also see the continuing the fight for women’s rights in a flyer promoting the April 25, 2004 “March for Choice” provided by a PPFA source on September 29, 2003 (name later changed to “March for Women’s Lives,” see Feminist Majority, NARAL Pro-Choice America, National Organization for Women, & PPFA, 2003):

The crisis that the country is facing over women’s rights has never been greater. To meet this challenge, organizers of this march have decided to act as one. For the first time in the history of the women’s rights movement, a march is being called and organized by four major women’s rights and reproductive rights groups—Feminist Majority, National Organization for Women (NOW), NARAL Pro-Choice America, and Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

The flyer encouraged people to attend the rally in front of the Supreme Court, 1 First Street, NE in Washington D.C. on October 4, 2003. While the direct link to the flyer was not provided, it did carry the “Feminist Majority” logo; the “March for Choice,” referred to in the passage, and was promoted on their website (Feminist Majority . . . 2003; cf. Save women’s lives . . . 2003).
In another small battle, PPFA posted an article opposing Bush’s nomination of Alabama Attorney General William H. Pryor Jr. to the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals (Planned Parenthood . . . 2003). The article concluded with the simple comment, “Planned Parenthood urges the Bush administration to nominate fair-minded nominees who respect the rights of women . . .” (¶ 4). PPFA’s chronicle entitled “George W. Bush’s War on Women” (PPFA, 2003f) details many skirmishes in the political battle for women’s rights. The “War on Women” ranges from the Bush administration’s about face on the issue of ratifying the international treaty ‘Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women’ (CEDAW) on the world front to the nomination of Federal District Court Judge D. Brooks Smith to the 3rd Circuit Court of Appeals on the domestic front (PPFA, 2003f). PPFA vigorously lobbies even lower court nominations because these “federal courts exercise enormous power in deciding cases involving women’s rights” (Feldt, 2003c, ¶ 39). Continuing Sanger’s founding vision, PPFA fights all of these battles, first to ensure reproductive rights through comprehensive sexuality education and then to maintain and expand these rights as prerequisite to ensuring women’s rights.

**Coping Through Individual Power in the Democratic Process**

PPFA has always coped by exercising its rights individually and collectively through the democratic process. As one individual, against what she believed were injustices perpetrated by church and state, Margaret Sanger conceived PPFA in activism. That same activism continues today (e.g. PPFA, 2003b; PPFA, 2003k, 2003n; Save women’s lives . . . 2003). There is a difference, however. When Sanger began her life’s mission in 1914, she represented a minority. Through her activism, PPFA believes it represents the majority of Americans today as seen in the first subsection below. The gains PPFA has made through
the years, however, must be vigilantly maintained. The following section details how these gains have gradually eroded and PPFA must fight to maintain the wall of separation between church and state.

*The True Majority: Zealots in Perspective*

Speaking about the harms of abstinence-only sex education programs, especially as based upon religious beliefs, an interview source commented, “That can be a personal opinion but then are you, I don’t know, are you missing a big bulk of the population out there?” She expressed the PPFA belief that the majority of people reject, or are at least indifferent to, the religious beliefs of the zealots who promote a narrow Christian view of sexuality. PPFA sources state the belief not only negatively, but also positively. A majority of people not only reject the narrow beliefs of PPFA opponents, but also embrace PPFA’s belief in tolerance and inclusion (cf. Feldt, 2002c). In response to opponents, Gloria Feldt stated, “Well, I say, forced motherhood is a violation of women’s human rights and a violation of the ethical and religious beliefs of most Americans” (Feldt, 2003a, ¶ 32). In another speech, she said, “Perhaps the reason [that Congress fails to support the majority] is the growing electoral influence of a tiny group of religious political extremists whose sensibilities are totally divorced from the mainstream” (Feldt, 1996, ¶ 32). Clearly, Feldt sees the mainstream as supporting PPFA beliefs. Cynthia Fine, a speaker at a Spokane, Washington convocation cosponsored by the local Planned Parenthood, agrees:

> There are religious extremists who claim to speak for all families, and for all people of faith. This vocal minority opposes responsible sexuality education and seeks to make their narrow religious beliefs the law of the land. To, in fact, create a
theocracy. Make no mistake—they don’t represent most people of faith. (Fine, 2003, ¶ 2).

Drawing from the Religious Institute and the PPFA Clergy Advisory Board, Fine answers the question, “Who supports comprehensive sexuality education?” as follows:

For more than three decades, major Christian and Jewish religious organizations have supported comprehensive sexuality education.

* At least eight of the major religious denominations have policies supporting sexuality education in the public schools.

* More than 15 religious institutions are members of the National Coalition to Support Sexuality Education, a coalition of mainstream national organizations that supports comprehensive sexuality education.

* More than 2200 individual clergy, theologians and religious educators from more than 35 religious traditions, ranging from Southern Baptists and Catholics to mainline Protestants to Buddhists and Unitarian Universalists, have endorsed the Religious Declaration on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing, which calls for comprehensive life-span sexuality education in congregations, schools, and seminaries.

* Almost 1700 clergy have endorsed a statement by Planned Parenthood’s clergy network opposing abstinence-only until marriage education.

* In the words of the sexuality education policy of the Presbyterian Church, all schools “should provide comprehensive kindergarten through twelfth grade human growth and development education that is complete, factual, accurate, free of bias, and does not discriminate” . . . (Fine, 2003, ¶ 4).
Fine, along with all PPFA sources, believes that the faithful majority rejects the “vocal minority” and supports PPFA beliefs.

**Maintaining the Wall of Separation**

“Theocracy: government of a state by immediate divine guidance or by officials regarded as divinely guided” (*Webster's*, 1967).

Gloria Feldt gave a speech entitled “Hypocrisy, Theocracy, and Reclaiming our Birthright of Freedom” to the City Club of Portland on May 16, 2003. The very title indicates her strong opposition to what she believes is a fundamental violation of the doctrine of separation of church and state. In the speech, Feldt specifically blames the George W. Bush administration as well as a host of other “right-wing” and “religious” ideologues of breaching the “wall of separation” set up in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution (*Bill of Rights*, 1791). Feldt offers the following as her first example of the Bush breach:

Reducing access to family planning and medically accurate sex education: Bush selected anti-choice Tommy Thompson to head the all-important Health and Human Services Department. Thompson, in turn, has put abstinence-only and anti-family planning ideologues in charge of major reproductive health programs. The federal spending on abstinence-only programs will top $133 million next fiscal year. I call that an abstinence of common sense. And it appears that one-third of the new and much touted HIV/AIDS prevention funds will be spent on preaching abstinence rather than teaching prevention. I call that cruel and inhumane. (Feldt, 2003a, ¶ 16).
While Feldt counts many holes in the wall of separation, she clearly sees the Bush-led strengthening of the abstinence-only movement as a primary and fundamental breach.

The specific language relevant to the phrase “wall of separation” in the *Bill of Rights* reads: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof” (1791, “Amendment 1”). The PPFA interpretation, shared by many, that the First Amendment “builds a wall of separation between church and state” comes from a letter written by Thomas Jefferson to Nehemiah Dodge and others of the Danbury Baptists Association in Connecticut (Jefferson, 1802, p. 510). Another PPFA source demonstrates agreement with the concept of a wall of separation:

The Bush Republicans have poked more than a few holes in the wall between church and state. We’ve seen faith-based policies in the White House, Bible study in the attorney general’s office, and senators parsing good and bad Catholics in the Senate.

Now anyone working to patch up the wall is accused of attacking religion.

(Goodman, 2003; see also PPFA, 2003g for PPFA link).

Feldt and Goodman speak unanimously on this issue for those who share PPFA beliefs.

Margaret Sanger fought what she believed to be excessive entanglement between church and state her entire life (e.g. Sanger, 1914; Sanger, 1931). She saw the Comstock Laws as a case in point. These federal and state statutes forbade her to distribute several issues of *The Woman Rebel* using the U.S. mail because, in part, inspectors deemed the content regarding birth control obscene (Katz, 2002; Sanger, 1914, 1915). The Griswold decision regarding contraception (“Griswold,” 1965), just months before Sanger’s death, seemed to seal a victory for her life’s work in terms of separating church and state.
Feldt speaks so fervently now because she, speaking unanimously for PPFA sources, sees Griswold and subsequent victories slipping away. The most glaring example to date, for PPFA sources, is the Partial Birth Abortion Ban (‘Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act of 2003,’” 2003). Along with other setbacks like the abstinence-only education provision (‘Social Security Act,’” 1996, § 510), PPFA sources see the resurrection of a past failure, namely excessive entanglement of church and state.

Feldt commented:

Left unchecked, this pernicious web of anti-choice assaults will strangle reproductive health and rights. Without strong action immediately, we will lose the war on women by default. People often ask me why is this happening. It’s because many anti-choice lawmakers—in blatant contempt of our nation’s doctrine of separation of church and state—have infused their religious ideology into our revered democracy. (Feldt, 2003a, § “And finally . . .”, ¶ 3).

Regarding the argument that the “Founding Fathers infused their rhetoric with references to God,” Feldt counters:

But what is inarguable is that, despite their rhetoric, they believed strongly in separating the sacred from the secular in order to guarantee respect for diverse views—not something we see in the Bush administration, its nominees to federal benches, or in the U.S. Congress. (Feldt, 2003a, § “And finally . . .”, ¶ 4).

Judith Billings referred to the excessive entanglement between church and state mainly in reference to abstinence-only education:

Certainly every citizen in this country has a constitutionally protected right to the religion of their choice—or none at all if they so choose. What they don’t have is a
right to attempt to foist those beliefs on young people in our public schools under the guise of sexuality education. It is up to each of us to be vigilant and insist that our government enforce the Federal and State Constitutions’ prohibition of the use of government resources on behalf of any religion. (Billings, 2003).

In this belief, she echoes Sanger, Feldt, and those everywhere who share PPFA beliefs. The reproductive rights movement enjoyed success in disentangling religious doctrine from public policy. But in the past couple of decades it has suffered serious setbacks, and threats of more, because ideologues have resurrected the past failure of infusing democracy with religious beliefs. They have begun again to violate the wall of separation between church and state.

PPFA copes by fighting to maintain the wall of separation. For the first time in its history, President Gloria Feldt announced that Planned Parenthood will endorse a candidate for president in the 2004 election (Bennett, 2003). That candidate will not be George W. Bush. This study has demonstrated that PPFA sources believe Bush is one of the zealots bent upon defeating its vision for comprehensive sexuality education. PPFA copes through the activism that has been its stock and trade since Margaret Sanger first violated the Comstock Laws in 1914. It continues to adapt as necessary, taking on ever expanding political roles, to ensure that comprehensive sexuality education, a foundation of its larger mission for reproductive freedom, thrives in the future.

**Conclusion**

PPFA sexuality education beliefs have their foundation in activism. Based upon the belief that traditional approaches, rooted in our heritage of Christian orthodoxy, failed to face the realities of individual needs, Margaret Sanger called for a rejection of that
orthodoxy and a new vision for comprehensive sexuality education. The new vision, centered on the individual, rather than blind obedience to moral dogma, calls for the rational and ethical exercise of choice. Comprehensive sexuality education provides full scientifically and medically accurate information on all options so that individuals can make choices in their own best interest. PPFA continues Sanger’s activism to ensure that this generation, along with those to follow, also have full reproductive freedom.
CHAPTER THREE
CATHOLIC SEXUALITY EDUCATION BELIEFS

The idea of official Catholic doctrine, for the average layman, connotes opposition to sexuality education. Indeed, I initially took such a narrow view: that a productive study could be undertaken of those who support and those who oppose sexuality education in the schools. As the most extreme in its opposition, I viewed the Catholic Church as simply opposed to sexuality education. My developing analysis revealed the narrowness of my initial bias, which saw only half of the picture. Roman Catholics who claim to support fully their official doctrine, termed “orthodox Catholics” throughout this analysis, fully support sexuality education, just not the kind typically found in public, private, or even Catholic parochial schools. Their support for what they might term “authentic Catholic sexuality education” is as strong as their opposition to most other types. For example, one Catholic demonstrated orthodox support of sex education in saying:

I think sex education belongs at home and only when children are truly old enough to understand. It should be one-on-one so that the child can ask anything of the teacher and not be embarrassed or harassed by their peers. It should, above all else, include chastity as the only method of prevention (see Appendix A regarding anonymity of interview sources).

Another Catholic said, “I favor an abstinence-based program in the schools. It shouldn’t have too much graphic detail—the kids can get that on MTV—and it shouldn’t be a ‘how-to’ program.” This person, although claiming to be “faithful to the Magisterial teachings” of the Catholic Church actually dissents, perhaps unknowingly, from official teaching, which insists that all sexuality education be done within the moral context of Catholic doctrine.
(Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995). While one might predict the opposition of orthodox Catholics to sex education in the public schools, their opposition even to programs in Catholic parochial schools comes as a bit of a surprise. Here is an example:

Even a Catholic school has explained the street terms for various sexual behaviors to one of my friend’s boys. She was homeschooling her younger ones but trusting her parish school to teach her older sons. They were signed out of the school the very next day, after the teacher, the principal, and pastor got a piece of her mind.

Although, as seen in these three statements, orthodox Catholics indeed largely oppose sexuality education programs in schools, the first two viewpoints also show support for specific kinds of sexuality education. This chapter provides an explanation of orthodox Catholic opposition to most sex education programs, their support of “authentic Catholic sexuality education,” and their coping strategies in light of the ubiquity of programs they oppose.

I want to include a note about style. I use both “sex education” and “sexuality education” interchangeably because Catholic sources did. I also adopt several stylistic uses of language that, while no longer popular, orthodox Catholics continue to use. First is use of the masculine to describe God. Orthodox Catholics insist on the masculine because they stress both the divine Fatherhood of God the Father and the divine sonship of God the Son. Second is the use of capitalization in referring to synonyms for God, pronouns referring to God, and His attributes. You have already seen capitalization of “Father,” “Son,” and “His” in this paragraph, for example. Attributes like “Will” are also capitalized when they specifically refer to the Will of God, for example. These stylistic conventions used by many
orthodox Catholics are important in accurately presenting their beliefs regarding sexuality and sex education.

**Opposition to Sexuality Education in the Schools**

Most orthodox Catholics oppose all sex education in the schools. Others favor sex education in parish schools and religious education programs as long as the teaching is done in accordance with doctrine. Generally, most orthodox Catholics, if they support anything other than one-on-one sex education, call for gender separation in any group instruction regarding sexuality. The bottom line is that a large majority of orthodox Catholics oppose practically all sexuality education in schools of any kind. This section introduces orthodox Catholic opposition to school sexuality education in terms of *Moral State* and *Mistrust of Schools*.

**Moral State**

“Our schools are amoral in that they are indifferent to any kind of moral standard” (Interview quote).

The quote above summarizes what orthodox Catholics might term “moral state theory,” a “mini-theory” that emerged from this analysis. Basically, this theory declares that not only human beings, but also organizations like schools, have some moral state, either “amoral” or “moral value.” In a sense, “amoral” can be understood as “morally neutral,” having a moral value of zero, while “moral value” can be understood as having either “positive” or “negative” value. Thus, an orthodox Catholic would see a parish school that unequivocally promotes Catholic magisterial teachings as having a completely positive moral state. The more doctrine a school contradicts, the more negative the moral state.
Moral state theory also claims that any organization striving to be morally neutral, or “amoral” in the vernacular in which this theory originally emerged, will fail. Like a garden in which weeds grow absent an active force to prevent them, an organization will develop a negative moral state in the absence of a positive moral force. According to orthodox Catholics, some schools have bought the myth of moral neutrality and have become “toxic,” “polluted,” “hostile,” and “corrupt” to coin just a few of the words used by interview sources to describe this perceived moral decay. One parent described this phenomenon by saying, “the schools are corrupting our children and creating a toxic environment for them.” Moral neutrality simply does not work according to orthodox Catholics.

One attempt at moral neutrality often presented in public schools is termed “values clarification” (Morris, 1994, p. 25, cf. SIECUS, 1970). Use of values clarification as a teaching method involves having the teacher guide students in subjectively clarifying their own values while remaining neutral themselves. Such an approach “incorrectly equates subjectivity with subjectivism. . . . While objectivism tells the world what it is rather than listening to what is says about itself, subjectivism is the decision to listen to no one except ourselves” (cf. Palmer, 1983, p. 67). Catholic Magisterial teaching warns specifically against programs that use values clarification in which “young people are given the idea that a moral code is something which they create themselves, as if man were the source and norm of morality” (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995, § 140). That humans are “the source and norm of morality” is the humanist position (cf. AHA, 2003a; Bragg, 1933; Kurtz & Wilson, 1973).

Orthodox Catholics want to be the active force that creates the moral state they desire for their children; they do not trust anyone outside of their orthodox Catholic faith to
stand in for them. “Sex education has no place in the public schools” one respondent stated bluntly while another said, “you can’t teach anything in a vacuum.” Both expressed the view that teachers cannot present sex education outside a context of values. Catholic parents want to provide that context themselves, as illustrated by one who declared, “It is my duty and my joy as a parent to reveal God’s awesome plan of sexuality to my children.” Indeed, the Catholic Magisterium insists that, as the primary educators of their children, parents must take full responsibility in this area, and delegate only to those they know will present sexuality within the Catholic moral framework (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995).

**Mistrust of Schools**

Interviews revealed that orthodox Catholics mistrust public schools in general, but they especially mistrust them in dealing with sexuality education. Interviews also strikingly revealed that many mistrust private schools, even their own parish parochial schools, with sex education because they believe many in the Catholic Church have abandoned magisterial teachings regarding sexuality. Orthodox Catholics mistrust schools because they believe they rob children of their innocence and perpetuate a larger decay in society.

**Robbing Their Innocence**

The idea that children pass through a stage of “innocence” equates somewhat with the idea that they also pass through a stage of sexual “latency.” Many have questioned and dismissed both concepts throughout the century-long history of sex education (cf. Calderone, 1983; Moran, 2000; Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995). Orthodox Catholics not only continue to hold the idea of innocence, but, as we see in a later section, they elevate it to the status of a human right. These opponents of those who dismiss latency
and innocence argue that the public schools harm children spiritually and that sexuality education curricula are developmentally inappropriate and often “over the line.”

One orthodox Catholic opined:

I don’t believe that sex education has a place in public schools. Once upon a time it consisted of what happened at puberty to boys and girls and was taught in separate rooms. Now they are handing out condoms and telling you which states allow abortion without parental consent.

This particular opinion packs several ideas of this section into a short statement. Singling out public schools shows the mistrust of this greater institution in contrast to other institutions that exist to educate children, especially private and home schools. Use of the phrase “once upon a time” transports one to a storybook time of innocence that no longer exists. Public schools further rob children of their innocence by teaching them sexual matters in coeducational groups. Contraception and abortion, both morally abhorrent to orthodox Catholics, are linked and serve as examples of egregious attacks on their religious beliefs. Finally, the phrase “without parental consent” hints at the mistrust orthodox Catholics feel for a society in decay, one that believes the state is in a better position to instill morality, or remove a perceived false morality, than parents. Another orthodox Catholic echoes many of these ideas and believes they comprise the root of greater societal problems:

I believe with all my heart that sex ed promotes a lack of respect for women, sexual promiscuity, and the use of contraception and abortion. It conditions people into developing a lack of respect for life with the end result producing a society that condones and promotes euthanasia, stem cell research, contraception, and abortion. I
believe in my heart that sex ed is at the heart of damaging the formation of our children.

While not always so directly stated, the idea that societal ills begin with sex education underlies many of the beliefs and opinions of orthodox Catholics. Because sexuality is so inextricably bound with issues of life and creation, they reason that any attack on God’s plan for sexuality strikes at the moral root of society.

“Our sons went to various non-public schools by the time they were 13 because I could see that the public school was having a disastrous effect on them.” This sentiment shared by another respondent generalizes a feeling shared by nearly all orthodox Catholics interviewed. Those who object less comprehensively to all sexuality education administered in groups take issue with integrating boys and girls for such instruction. One parent who sent children to a parish school objected, “The sex ed was done co-ed and nothing was sent home to parents before it happened to explain what would be taught.” Ironically, this parent found the public schools more accommodating of orthodox Catholicism than the Catholic school.

Orthodox Catholics universally believe that public schools should remove sex education from the curriculum. At best, they think sexuality education curricula are inappropriate; at worst, they believe these curricula actively attack religious beliefs. Believing some specific aspects of public school curricula are simply inappropriate, one parent shared:

The first week she was there, in public school first grade, she came home with a “Cinderella-type” book called Cinderfella. The class was studying “Cinderella stories.” It was all about a guy who, instead of losing his glass slippers, lost his
pants. He wore an apron throughout the book and the whole story revolved around him finding his pants!

Regarding sexuality education more directly, a parent objected to the lack of moral content arguing, “They are not taught the difference between right and wrong.” Expressing a similar sentiment, a respondent stated, “They are given all the knowledge they need, at very young ages, to become sexually active, but not the wisdom or experience of what to do with that knowledge.” Another parent lamented, “The maturity level of each child was not a consideration.”

Others argue more strongly that sexuality education curricula do not simply present information inappropriately, but “cross the line”; they attack religious beliefs directly. In discussing comprehensive sexuality education as commonly presented in the public schools, one respondent objected, “you can’t have sex education without talking about abortion and artificial birth control,” both subjects directly offensive to Catholic doctrine (CCC, 1994). Still others see the problem as more than just an attack: “No institution or people would allow sex education to fall away since the main agenda here is to remove innocence, promote ‘free yet safe’ love, and further the abortion crisis in this country”; this respondent hints at a conspiracy.

All of these beliefs associated with inappropriateness of curricula, coed grouping, methods, and even conscious attacks on religious beliefs relate to the main concept Robbing Their Innocence. A Catholic parent stated sadly, “At every turn in public schools, children are made to think about adult things. Education in the public schools is, frankly, depressing.” Another parent hints that, indeed, the “robbing” of innocence is conscious and active: “My then 10-year-old fifth grader had her innocence robbed from her. She was not
ready for the information that the sex ed program conveyed to her.” Demonstrating more support for the idea of an active “robbing,” yet another parent stated, “sex ed in public and Catholic schools robs children of their innocence way before they are ready to hear what they hear.” This belief in an active attack on the innocence of children, even in Catholic schools, leads parents to feel like they need to protect their children. Expressing this point of view, a parent commented, “I could not protect my kid’s innocence in our Catholic school.” Parents opt-out of public schools, often for private parochial schools, only to find that what they perceive as the “sex ed agenda” has infiltrated there too. With weariness and exasperation, many of these parents opt-out of all institutional education and homeschool their children, a phenomenon analyzed in a later section of this chapter.

**Big Brother**

“This thing is even bigger than the people involved” (Interview quote).

One orthodox Catholic offered the quote above when commenting on the reluctance of teachers and administrators to follow their better instincts and abandon sexuality education programs in the public schools. Like George Orwell’s Winston Smith who, in the novel *1984*, sought membership in the “brotherhood” to overthrow “Big Brother’s” social control in Oceania, orthodox Catholics fight what some among their ranks perceive as a powerful and evil conspiracy to replace parental authority with the authority of the state (cf. Orwell, 2000). Even those who do not subscribe to any conspiracy theory believe that simple social control methods, used politically by those who have promoted sex education over the last century (cf. Hottois & Milner, 1975; Scales, 1980), have led to a societal decay obvious in today’s world.
The problem begins, for orthodox Catholics, with the concept of parent inadequacy. Referring to parental rights, a notion developed in a later section, one respondent complained sarcastically, “Parents need to have their rights usurped by the school because teachers and school officials know better what the children need.” Another respondent put it this way: “The squeaky wheels along with the media have lorded over parents that sex education is necessary and that they can do it better than parents.” These opinions hint at the ideas of conspiracy, parent inadequacy, power, and social control, which emerged here along with the concepts of evil and societal decay. Some also believe in an active presence of evil: “It is just pure evil. We fight a spiritual battle every day. Old Sparky has his hand smack in the middle of all of it.” While not all express such a vivid belief in Satan’s influence, the idea that school-based sex education causes societal decay is nearly universal among orthodox Catholics as seen in these words of another respondent:

- It shouldn’t matter what faith or lack of faith a person has. They only have to look at where society is headed and conclude that these kids are learning it somewhere.
- Since they spend most of their early life with teachers in school, even more so than in front of the TV, then something is wrong with school.

A younger Catholic also expressed a perception of societal decay as follows:

- When I was in school, problems were just beginning. Now they don’t say the Pledge of Allegiance and there is no ‘moment of silence’ like I had in high school. Students fear for their physical safety. Girls dress with butts, breasts, and bellies showing at every turn. There are gangs. Fights are no longer just wrestling with each other and making up later. Now enemies tell their friends and they go get knives and then guns.
Like nearly all orthodox Catholics, this respondent sees symptoms of a larger societal problem manifest in a rejection of traditional customs, sexual immodesty, violence, and death.

Orthodox Catholic opposition to overturning the Comstock Laws in the very beginning of the birth control movement also expressed this idea of moral decay. Consider this passage from a statement issued by the National Council of Catholic Women found in Margaret Sanger’s *Pivot of Civilization*:

> The further effect of such proposed legislation will inevitably be a lowering both of public and private morals. What the fathers of this country termed indecent and forbade the mails to carry, will, if such legislation is carried through, be legally decent. The purveyors of sexual license and immorality will have the opportunity to send almost anything they care to write through the mails on the plea that it is sex information. Not only the married but also the unmarried will be thus affected; the ideals of the young contaminated and lowered. The morals of the entire nation will suffer. (cited in Sanger, 1922, p. 194).

This progression of symptoms leads to a characterization of a “culture of death” that one parent sees as a “philosophy” pervading society: “Children need to be indoctrinated starting as early as possible in the ‘culture of death’ philosophy; nothing is wrong—just a different way to live that needs to be accepted.”

Pope John Paul II (1995) coined the phrase “culture of death” and developed his thinking in *Evangelium Vitae*, which means, “Gospel of Life.” Quoting a document from the Second Vatican Council, the Pope defines this culture of death and the decay of society referenced by the orthodox Catholics interviewed:
Whatever is opposed to life itself, such as any type of murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia, or willful self-destruction, whatever violates the integrity of the human person, such as mutilation, torments inflicted on body or mind, attempts to coerce the will itself; whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children; as well as disgraceful working conditions, where people are treated as mere instruments of gain rather than as free and responsible persons; all these things and others like them are infamies indeed. They poison human society, and they do more harm to those who practice them than to those who suffer from the injury. Moreover, they are a supreme dishonor to the Creator. (Pope John Paul II, 1995, § 3; cf. Pope Paul VI & Second Vatican Council, 1965, § 27).

“Big Brother,” then, has caused societal decay, in the eyes of orthodox Catholics, by improperly taking a role rightfully belonging to parents and actively teaching a doctrine of sexuality directly contradictory to the Catholic moral position. This error causes societal decay by attacking its very root, the conception of human life, through the promotion of contraception and abortion, elements of “the culture of death” that defines the societal decay orthodox Catholics observe (cf. Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995; Pope John Paul II, 1981).

**Support for Authentic Catholic Sexuality Education**

Orthodox Catholics strongly support sexuality education consistent with the teachings of their Church. Any approach to sexuality education rests on beliefs about sexuality. For orthodox Catholics, beliefs about sexuality rest on beliefs about the family and the human person, which in turn rest on beliefs about God. Based on the data in this
study, an explanation of orthodox Catholic sexuality education, which informs larger beliefs about sexuality, follows.

**The Family**

Within their beliefs about family, we find a unity that ties all orthodox Catholic sexuality education beliefs together. Orthodox Catholics cannot understand the family apart from God, His creation, and His plan for that creation. God is the cause of the human family, complete with the faculty of sexuality. As this study explains, orthodox Catholics believe God created the human person, complete with all gifts including sexuality, in His image and likeness. For this reason, a former evangelical minister, who gave up his livelihood to convert to orthodox Catholicism, said in a recorded presentation to a group of Catholics, “Sex is not good—no, Campbell’s soup is good . . . sex is not great—no, Frosted Flakes are grrreat . . . sex is sacred” (S. Hahn, 2000). Sex is sacred because it completes the full family: father, mother, and the love between them that creates a child. This human family mirrors the Holy Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the latter being the Person who embodies the Love between Father and Son (cf. West, 2000).

**God’s Plan**

The human family, sexuality, and everything in creation have a purpose in accordance with God’s plan, an idea further developed in the section on Natural Law. The human person, however, given the gift of free will, has the capacity to choose to follow, reject, or even maintain indifference to God’s plan. To follow that plan is virtue, and to cross it is sin. Understanding the beliefs about sexuality of orthodox Catholics, and their consequent approach to sexuality education, requires the understanding that God’s plan
governs all aspects of creation and that sexuality, itself an image of God’s creative potential, holds a central position in that plan (cf. CCC, 1994).

“God’s Plan” belongs to God Himself and reflects His nature. According to orthodox Catholics, God is Truth and God is Love. It follows, then, that God’s plan reflects Truth and Love. Outside God’s plan, one finds only falsehood and selfishness. Thus, teachings about the human family and sexuality are either true, inasmuch as they partake in the Truth of God’s plan, or they are false. A discussion of Truth and Love, important dimensions of God’s Plan follows.

**Truth**

“They aren’t getting the Truth as God meant for things to be” (Interview quote).

The interview respondent quoted above referred to sex education in the public schools. The belief expressed shows that “Truth” is a dimension of God’s plan and that God created human beings and their sexuality with a meaning and a purpose. Another respondent expressed a very similar sentiment: “When God is left out of the sex ed equation, the children are not being taught the truth.” It is important to orthodox Catholics that their children know that following God’s plan for sexuality is virtue and leads to Truth while ignorance of God’s plan or worse, conscious rejection of His plan, leads to sin and error.

Many respondents expressed a joy in finding God’s plan, as reflected in this sentiment: “I was extremely ignorant throughout my formative years to the Truth of God . . . then I reached out to God and embraced His Truth.” In a lengthy interview, this “born-again Catholic,” like many others interviewed, referred to many sexual mistakes in the past that led to unhappiness and even despair. The common counterpoint in this pattern found with
many respondents is the joy they discovered in the Truth of Catholic teaching regarding sexuality. They lament not embracing this lasting joy when they were younger, and they feel a special mission to pass on the Truth of sexuality to their children while, at the same time, protecting them from the corruption of Truth pervasive in the secular world. One respondent expressed this idea with the following words:

Parents themselves first need to be educated in what God truly intended for sex between a man and woman, so they can teach their children the truth, and have the ammunition to stand up and say no to what is promoted in our schools and society. Many of those I interviewed shared how they had received this education the hard way—through promiscuous relationships that led to a loss of self-respect, broken relationships, and the lingering psychological pain of choosing an abortion.

One of the most common falsehoods regarding human sexuality mentioned by orthodox Catholics is the idea that it is part of a natural evolution in the animal kingdom. Usually without reference to Darwinian evolution, these respondents reject a simply scientific approach, which stresses mammalian biology alone. Believing in both scientific truth and Truth revealed by God, one respondent rejected what she perceived as the purely mammalian concept of sexuality promoted in school programs commenting, “how much greater and elevated are the truths of human sexuality?” She, like all orthodox Catholics, believes that God elevated the human person and, therefore, human sexuality, to His image and likeness.
Love

“It’s not love if it’s not prepared to sacrifice” (Interview quote).

Orthodox Catholics find the ultimate expression of Love on the cross. The Love of Jesus Christ is the model for all human love (CCC, 1994). As one orthodox Catholic put it:

Love is what endowed Christ’s suffering and death with its infinite value and power.

Opponents of Christianity sometimes claim that other people have suffered more than Jesus. Yet no one has ever loved more. And nowhere is Jesus’ love more active than in His obedience unto death” (S. Hahn, 2002, p. 85).

That love looks not to one’s own desires, but to the good of the other. That is the love referred to by the Catholics quoted above. Sexuality belongs within the context of true love, always ready to sacrifice for the good of the other (CCC, 1994; Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995; Pope John Paul II, 1981, 1997). The following comment from another respondent expresses this idea well:

Making love, on the other hand, is a commitment to the other. It’s less a fulfillment of your pleasure and more a way of showing how much you love and cherish the other. When both partners feel this way, they gain pleasure, but it does not become selfish and one-sided.

This self-giving sacrifice extends beyond husband and wife to potential children; it extends to the “family.” Consider the following responses that show how the sacrifice of self-interest must go beyond the moment and extend to potential future family members: “The ultimate disconnection of love from sex happens when we deny that the proper and intentional culmination of human sexuality is the birth and raising of children.” Another Catholic summed up this idea as follows: “Self-sacrificing love for the other extends not only to the
one you’re with, but to the potential ‘others’ who may be the fruit of your union.” Yet another echoed this idea: “In this context, sex is an act of giving pleasure to the beloved and a child becomes another way of giving even more.” Sexuality is not about “self,” but “family.”

Orthodox Catholic opponents of school sex education programs express frustration with the corruption of this fundamental teaching about Christian love. One respondent lamented, “Everything about sexual love has become so shopworn and cheapened.” Commenting on the “ways of the world” as opposed to “the ways of God,” another orthodox Catholic summed it up nicely:

These are ways of thinking that result when love is divorced from sacrifice. The only place I ever found that lesson taught in its fullness is the Catholic Church, and what inspired my conversion was the realization that the love/sacrifice connection was the only answer to the obvious fact of the world’s incredible suffering. I just can’t see the public schools coming anywhere near to teaching this stuff!

Orthodox Catholics believe that God conceived His plan with the human family as an integral part of it. God created human beings with free will so that they could choose to follow, reject, or remain indifferent to His plan (CCC, 1994). Again, Truth and Love constitute the major dimensions of God’s plan, and they provide vital contexts for exercising God’s gift of sexuality. There is both truth and falsehood in the use of sexuality. Choosing to exercise sexuality within God’s plan, a self-giving love willing to sacrifice for others, is virtuous and leads to Truth, while choosing to use sexuality outside Love is sinful and leads to Falsehood (cf. Lawler, 1998).
**Created in the Image and Likeness of God**

Turning now from the idea that God created the human family according to a plan, this section details another important attribute of the human person. Catholics believe God created human beings in His image and likeness (CCC, 1994). Understanding this statement from the orthodox Catholic viewpoint requires a detailing of their beliefs about God and creation.

God is the creator of all things. Fundamentally, God has revealed Himself as a “family”: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—Trinitarian in nature. Thus, for human beings to be created in God’s own image and likeness, we must somehow reflect the capacity to create as well as the Trinitarian nature (CCC, 1994; S. Hahn, 2002; West, 2000). This section turns first to Creator and then to Trinitarian to explain these key aspects of the human image and likeness of God.

**Creator**

Part of being created in the image and likeness of God is the ability to create. As one respondent put it, “nowhere else do we humans get to participate in the act of creating something so beautiful as a baby.” Catholics believe that God granted humans the gift of co-creation (CCC, 1994). One Catholic defined it this way: “Sex is a gift from God reserved for marriage between a man and a woman for the purposes of unity and procreation.” According to God’s plan, in the “marital union,” husband and wife participate with God, not only in creating a new life, body and soul, but also in creating a family, which mirrors the Trinitarian image of God (K. Hahn, 2001). The spouses provide for the body, by the Grace of God, but He alone provides for the soul, which is infused into the body at the moment of conception (CCC, 1994).
While the Catholic Church acknowledges a twofold purpose for sexuality, strengthening the unity of spouses and procreation, doctrine maintains that no sex act may ever exclude either purpose; no conjugal act may exclude deepening and strengthening the sacred bonds of matrimony or the creation of new life (CCC, 1994; Lawler, Boyle, & May, 1998). For example, use of in-vitro fertilization violates the unitive purpose of sexuality, even when a married couple are the parents, because conception occurs outside their union. Contraception violates the procreative purpose because, by using it, couples actively intend to prevent the possibility of conception. Orthodox Catholics consider both of these violations sinful because they contradict the divine dual purpose of sexuality (CCC, 1994).

This section focuses only on the aspect of procreation. Just as God exists as Trinity out of pure self-giving Love, He also creates human life without suppressing any of His creative potential; so too humans, created in His likeness and image, must honor “family,” the trinitarian potential their marital embrace signifies. They too must practice pure self-giving love, not suppressing any creative potential in the marital union (Pope John Paul II, 1997; West, 2000). The responsibility of this openness to family life is so profound to orthodox Catholics that one respondent despairs of a sex education in which, “there is no responsibility for the consequences of the failure of contraception—the creation of a new life.” This statement came in the context of discussing abortion and illustrates the rejection of both contraception and abortion as assaults on the family because they block the conjugal union from its potential to add to the human family. For this reason, orthodox Catholics believe they must never consciously shut out the procreative aspect of sexuality. Another orthodox Catholic expressed frustration with widespread acceptance and promulgation of contraception in this way:
Perhaps we should more directly acknowledge how these deep beliefs of ours make contraception a great lie fueled by the common societal acceptance of, reverence for, and dedication to contraception. Our society promotes the belief that contraception is good, prudent, and responsible. We don’t want our children confused by this seeming logic without being there to explain why and how it is a lie promulgated by people of good but misguided intentions.

**Trinitarian**

“The Christian family is a communion of persons, a sign and image of the communion of the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit. In the procreation and education of children it reflects the Father’s work of creation” (*CCC*, 1994, § 2205).

The passage from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* quoted above provides an excellent bridge between the concepts of “Creator” and “Trinitarian” as they apply to reflections of the image and likeness of God in the family and the human person. The third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, is understood to be the embodiment of the total self-giving Love between the Father and the Son, the first and second persons of the Trinity (*CCC*, 1994; Pope John Paul II, 1997; West, 2000). Orthodox Catholics believe the human person, created in the image and likeness of God, reflects this Trinitarian nature of God as seen in the following interview statement:

Marital love is the way in which we can most closely mirror our maker, in whose ‘Image and Likeness’ we are made . . . each spouse giving fully to the other, with the potential creation of a new life, just as Father and Son give fully to each other with the result that their love is embodied in the Holy Spirit.
Just as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit comprise the Trinity, husband, wife, and child also comprise a trinity (West, 2000). Just as Joseph, Mary, and Jesus comprised the Holy Family, husband, wife, and child mirror God’s plan for creation. According to West and other orthodox Catholics, this idea derives from the Gospel accounts of the Holy Family as well as Genesis 1:26-28, which reads:

Then God said: ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and the cattle, and over all the wild animals and all the creatures that crawl on the ground.’ God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them, saying be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. (New American Bible, Old Testament, p. 4).

In creating us “male and female” with the capacity to “be fruitful and multiply” God imbues the human person with His own Trinitarian image. The fruit of the marital union further reflects the Trinity conceived as “Family.” Thus, according to orthodox Catholics, we are called to love as God loves, in a “life-giving communion of persons” (West, 2000, p. 19, cf. CCC, 1994, § 372). Orthodox Catholics believe God intended sexuality to unite husband and wife in a one-flesh communion of persons completely open to creation of new life—a trinitarian embrace imaging both the family nature of the Holy Trinity and Holy Family in which God chose to come to us. Any other use of sexuality crosses God’s plan and is, therefore, sinful (CCC, 1994).

**God’s Gifts**

Orthodox Catholics believe that God bestowed gifts upon the human person. These gifts further enhance “the image and likeness of God.” While Catholics believe God’s gifts
are manifold, this discussion examines only the fundamental gifts of life, free will, and sexuality. These three integrally related faculties of the human person comprise the fundamental topics associated with Catholic beliefs about sexuality education. They also define the sharpest points of disagreement between competing beliefs.

Life

For orthodox Catholics, the question of life must be approached from both metaphysical and physical points of view. Metaphysically speaking, life exists because God willed it so. Experience shows us that each life we encounter has at least a biological cause. This chain of causality stretches back into the ages. In contemplating this seemingly infinite regress, reason grasps that there must be an uncaused cause. Aristotle first recorded this thought as a proof for the existence of a “prime mover” (Aristotle, trans. 1941). Catholics have used forms of Aristotle’s proof for thousands of years to prove the existence of God from reason alone (e.g. Aquinas, 1920; CCC, 1994).

Biologically speaking, orthodox Catholics believe human life begins at the moment of conception (CCC, 1994). Catholics cite Psalms 22:10–11 and Jeremiah 1:5 as proof texts. The frequency with which they cite these texts makes them worth repeating here: “You have been my guide since I was first formed, my security at my mother’s breast. To you I was committed at birth, from my mother’s womb you are my God” and “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you” (New American Bible, Old Testament, pp. 616, 893). Nevertheless, orthodox Catholics also appeal to science, as did the respondent who said, “I don’t think anyone who has taken high school biology will deny that life begins at conception.” That human life begins at the moment of conception seems so obvious to orthodox Catholics that they are sometimes flippant in responding to the views of people who do not hold this view.
For example, one respondent said, in response to someone who believes that life begins with a baby’s first breath:

> The idea that life begins at first breath is ludicrous. It’s not something dead in my womb kicking me for four months. It’s not something dead moving on the ultrasound. So a preemie born at 6 months is alive and a full term baby still in the mother is not? Ridiculous. Sounds like somebody is desperate to justify murder.

Another orthodox Catholic responded to the same issue on a more somber note with the following:

> My mother believes, to my sadness, that although life begins at conception, personhood begins at first breath, i.e. birth and, that this includes artificial breath, babies on respirators for example. I’ve had a hard time debating this gently with her (and respectfully because she is my mother after all). It seems the prevailing justifications for abortion are: pregnancy, and thus life, begins at implantation and that personhood begins at birth.

**Free Will**

Contrasting views regarding life, free will, and sexuality all mark sharp divisions in competing sexuality education beliefs, but perhaps the sharpest rifts result from contrary ideas regarding free will. Sources commonly express the idea of free will by use of the words “choice” and “decision.” Religiously liberal, secularist, and traditional notions regarding the exercise of choice distinguish some differing views embedded in the sexuality education beliefs that have emerged in this study. Those with competing views advocate “moral” or “ethical” applications of choice, but the differing ideas about what constitutes what is moral or ethical are worlds apart.
“In faith, the human intellect and will cooperate with divine Grace: ‘Believing is an act of the intellect assenting to divine truth by command of the will moved by God through Grace’” (Aquinas, 1920, II, II, 2, 9; CCC, 1994, § 155). Saint Thomas Aquinas’ words, repeated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, demonstrate the complexity of Catholic doctrine regarding free will. Orthodox Catholics believe they are called by God to align both their intellects and their wills with the divine Will through the Grace of God. Intellect and will, both free, are separate faculties of the human person and need not cooperate with divine Grace. According to orthodox Catholics, any choice to exercise these faculties outside divine Grace will cause the moral decay referred to in “moral state theory.”

With freedom, supremely manifest by autonomy of will, comes responsibility. For orthodox Catholics, responsibility is precisely the aligning of reason and will in cooperation with God’s Grace. “By his reason, man recognizes the voice of God which urges him ‘to do what is good and avoid what is evil’” (CCC, 1994, § 1706). Doing good and avoiding evil is the mandate of orthodox Catholic morality (cf. Pope Paul VI & Second Vatican Council, 1965). God’s revelation defines good and evil. Orthodox Catholics believe not only that the human person is called to responsibility, but is also, by virtue of freedom, completely accountable as seen in the following: “Man is rational and therefore like God; he is created with free will and is master over his acts” (CCC, 1994, § 1730; cf. Irenaeus, trans. 1996, 4, 4, 3). For purposes of the present examination of orthodox Catholics sex education beliefs, note that: (1) The human person is master over every sexual act, (2) Every sexual act is “good” inasmuch as it participates in God’s plan for sexuality and “evil” inasmuch as it deviates from God’s plan, and (3) The human person is responsible and accountable for all freely chosen sexual behavior. The following doctrine further illuminates these points:
“Freedom makes man responsible for his acts to the extent that they are voluntary. Progress in virtue, knowledge of the good, and ascesis enhance the mastery of the will over its acts” (CCC, 1994, § 1734). This statement also introduces the concept of “ascesis” to which we turn next.

According to Webster’s, Ascesis may be defined simply as “self-discipline, asceticism” (Webster’s, 1967, p. 51). The Catholic Encyclopedia provides more detail:

The word asceticism comes from the Greek askesis, which means practice, bodily exercise, and more especially, athletic training. The early Christians adopted it to signify the practice of the spiritual things, or spiritual exercises performed for the purpose of acquiring the habits of virtue. (Catholic Encyclopedia, 1907, "Asceticism").

Orthodox Catholics believe God calls us to ascesis, because of fallen human nature, in order to follow His plan for human sexuality (CCC, 1994).

Free will must be distinguished from reason and desire. We have already discussed the relationship of reason, or intellect, and will, as well as the distinction between the two. Desire may be “ordered” or “disordered.” When oriented toward that which is “good,” desire is ordered, and when oriented toward that which is “evil,” it is disordered. In terms of sexuality, then, desire is good when it is oriented toward the unification or bonding of the spouses and openness to life within the Grace provided by the sacrament of matrimony (see Appendix C). Any other sexual desire, according to orthodox Catholics, is disordered. Disordered desire often results from the dynamic tension between body and soul. Such desire becomes sin only when indulged by assent of the will. Ascesis, then, increases virtue by enhancing the power of the will to choose the good, revealed by God to the faculty of
reason, by denying all disordered desires of the body (cf. Catholic Encyclopedia, 1907, “Asceticism”).

Sexuality

As seen earlier, orthodox Catholics believe that human sexuality comes from God and reflects His image and likeness by providing a means to unite as the Trinity is united; sexuality also provides a means to create as an expression of Love just as God creates (CCC, 1994; Pope John Paul II, 1997; West, 2000). It is a gift to be used within God’s plan, in cooperation with His Grace granted specifically through the sacrament of matrimony, open to the inseparable dual purposes of unification and procreation (CCC, 1994; Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995; Pope John Paul II, 1981, 1997). “Human sexuality is thus a good, part of that created gift which God saw as being ‘very good’” (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995, § 11).

“Sexuality affects all aspects of the human person in the unity of his body and soul . . . the capacity to love and to procreate, and in a more general way the aptitude for forming bonds of communion with others” (CCC, 1994, § 2332). In this teaching, one sees the importance of family, love, procreation, and unification—often-repeated themes in this chapter. True sacrificial and self-giving love forms the proper context for sexuality while unification and procreation are the proper ends. Commitment to one’s family, both spouse and potential children, reflects one dimension of love. The words of an orthodox Catholic express this sentiment: “Love and commitment make all the difference; and to be practical, why give your most intimate self to someone who can’t or won’t put a ring on your finger and pledge himself to you before God and family?” Another orthodox Catholic demonstrates the rancor often present in the sex education controversy by saying, “Planned
Parenthood and the like . . . seek only pleasure, totally divorced from the natural and God-given dual purpose of human sexuality.” Another respondent even sees God’s design in physical causes of bonding: “the chemicals that our bodies are designed to release to strengthen marital commitment.” These three statements demonstrate the strong “groundedness” of the concepts of family, love, procreation, and unification in orthodox Catholic beliefs about sexuality in all sources.

Abuses of the Gift: “Simply Biological,” Homosexuality, Masturbation, Contraception, and Abortion

Orthodox Catholics believe God created us as a duality, body and soul, but that sexuality is much more than just bodily or physical. “The physical is merely the surface layer for sexuality,” explained one respondent who echoed the words of Pope John Paul II who said:

Sexuality, by means of which man and woman give themselves to one another through the acts which are proper and exclusive to spouses, is not something simply biological, but concerns the innermost being of the human person as such. It is realized in a truly human way only if it is an integral part of the love by which a man and woman commit themselves totally to one another until death. (1981, § 11).

A strong pattern in orthodox Catholic opposition to sexuality education as presented in school programs is that it is presented as “simply biological,” to repeat the phrase used by the Pope. As seen in the quote under the section on “Truth” above, orthodox Catholics believe human sexuality is “elevated” above the purely biological to “the image and likeness of God.” Most respondents compare animal sexuality to human sexuality when making this kind of reference. They complain that school sex education programs present the merely
animal aspects of sexuality; they further complain that these programs imply that humans, especially teenagers, have no more self-control than animals acting from instinct. Referring to this human/animal comparison, one respondent says simply, “human sexuality cannot be compared.” While acknowledging that the physical dimension of being human can cause us to “behave like animals,” orthodox Catholics argue that such behavior is disordered, and that while animal sexuality can be understood in terms of the physical dimension alone, human sexuality cannot. The human soul, created in the image and likeness of God, makes human sexuality both bodily and spiritual, not merely commonplace, but sacred (S. Hahn, 2000; Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995).

Orthodox Catholics believe that since human beings were created “male and female” (Genesis 1:27) in God’s image and likeness, homosexual acts pervert the meaning of sexuality. The complementarity of the sexes is central to the orthodox Catholic view of sexuality as seen in the following:

Each of the two sexes is an image of the power and tenderness of God, with equal dignity though in different ways. The union of man and woman in marriage is a way of imitating in the flesh the Creator’s generosity and fecundity. . . . All human generations proceed from this union. (CCC, 1994, § 2335).

Any “imitation in the flesh” other than “the union of man and woman in marriage,” then mocks, rather than imitates, the Creator. Thus, the orthodox Catholic view of sexuality excludes all sexual acts outside of marriage, between persons of the same sex, with non-persons, and with one’s self. In a discussion about “lifestyle choices” in school sexuality education programs, one orthodox Catholic objected to “lifestyles that are not ‘normal’ relationships between men and women [being] taught to be okay.” Another expressed
similar objections: “It’s okay, they are told, to pleasure themselves, have safe relations with others . . . with the same sex, and by the way, if somehow you do make a ‘mistake,’ we have a safe way to take care of that too.” One respondent exclaimed, “The idea that a ‘baby’ is a ‘mistake’ is abhorrent!” In Catholic theology, these kinds of acts disfigure the image of God and, as a result, mock “the Creator’s generosity and fecundity” (CCC, 1994, § 2335). This “theology of the body” reveals God’s plan stamped by the Creator on our very bodies created male and female (Pope John Paul II, 1997; West, 2000). Referring to this idea about homosexuality, one respondent replied at length:

Homosexuality: I’m afraid that all that needs to be done to refute this one is to just check the body parts. Homosexuality is not what they were designed for. Teaching otherwise to children is truly awful. The Church does teach that some people are born with homosexual tendencies as seen in the Catechism, section 2358. My opinion is that this is an abnormality or defect in either the physical or mental make up of such people. This in no way makes them ‘less than human’ nor should it be allowed to be used as an excuse to mistreat them in any way. There are many defects that some people are born with. Some people, we’re told, are born predisposed to problems with addiction. Some people are born predisposed to violence. Others are predisposed to cancer. Some people are born predisposed to homosexuality. Whatever our defects, we must struggle to rise above them and to conquer them. Holiness comes from these struggles and the sacrifices they entail.

While one might argue with the delicacy with which this respondent states his opinion, his response certainly demonstrates the point regarding the complementarity of the sexes.
The gift of sexuality is a call to chastity, “a successful integration of sexuality within the person and thus the inner unity of man in his bodily and spiritual being.” The *Catechism* continues:

Sexuality, in which man’s belonging to the bodily and biological world is expressed, becomes personal and truly human when it is integrated into the relationship of one person to another, in the complete and lifelong mutual gift of a man and a woman. The virtue of chastity therefore involves the integrity of the person and the integrality of the gift. (*CCC*, 1994, § 2337).

Just as the gift of a musical instrument is a call to learn to play it well, so also the gift of sexuality is a call to use it as God intended. According to orthodox Catholics, God calls us to chastity. A fuller explanation of the lifelong call to chastity, both within and outside marriage, may be found in the later section entitled *Sexual Behavior*.

The sacrament of matrimony sanctifies sexuality and grants spouses Grace to unite reason and will with God’s plan for sexuality (*Appendix C*). The sacrament also serves as a sign of the twofold purpose of sexuality. In the spouses’ promise to a lifelong inseparable union, they fulfill the purpose of unity in terms of both their personal bond ordered toward their good and the good of their potential family. In their promise to accept children lovingly from God, Catholics commit to remaining open to life, never shutting the door on God’s plan, a fulfillment of the purpose of procreation. The sacrament is itself a source and sign of the Trinitarian Life of God just as the promises made in receiving the sacrament fulfill the purpose of the sacrament, realized in a special way through the gift of sexuality (*CCC*, 1994; K. Hahn, 2001; Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995; Pope John Paul II, 1981, 1997;
One orthodox Catholic summed up this entire discussion quite succinctly: “Sex is acceptable in the bonds of marriage and the beauty of God’s plan for man and woman.”

The beliefs of orthodox Catholics make opposition to nearly all sex education programs in the schools quite understandable, whether one agrees with their beliefs or not. One respondent voiced her opposition this way:

We can be specific about what the schools teach versus what our Church teaches about the gift of sexuality, but we will never be able to put into words the way we feel when our child’s soul is attacked in subtle or obvious ways.

One mom described a sex education lesson at home for her boys that public schools do not allow in today’s political climate: “We have discussed marriage, procreation, the sacredness of the body, and we have prayed for their future wives’ purity and for their own purity.” A dad commented, “I think it is very important to discuss sex with your child with a Bible in your hand to give examples of the holiness of marriage and procreation.” Expressing the futility of public schools ever teaching the kind of sex education demanded by the Catholic faith, one parent exclaimed, “How can we expect schools to teach the truths of sexuality?”

I referred earlier to the joy many orthodox Catholics have expressed in finding the Truth in God’s plan for sexuality. Part of that joy is born of sorrow. So many of those I interviewed expressed regret at past mistakes in exercising God’s gift outside His plan. One Catholic laments the loss of potential new children in her family:

But we will never have any more [children] because I had my tubes tied after the birth of our second child, which cannot be reversed. I can’t say for sure, but I believe that I would have made different choices in my life had I been taught about the sacredness of life and sex. It’s too late now, but if any good came from our mistake,
it is that our children will be able to see for themselves the consequences of making bad choices.

For orthodox Catholics, “the sacredness of life and sex” means never purposely separating the life-giving love of sexuality from its expression in sexual union by any means including not only contraception, but also sterilization (CCC, 1994; K. Hahn, 2001; J. Smith, 1994).

Another couple expressed the same regret for a vasectomy: “We finally realized our horrible mistake and four years ago he had it reversed, which is much more painful than the original surgery.” The last clause in this respondent’s statement is significant; it suggests the Catholic belief that following God’s plan leads to happiness while crossing it leads to pain: emotional, spiritual, and even physical. Orthodox Catholics believe that such pain as that suffered in a surgery to reverse a vasectomy can be offered in atonement for the sin that created the later desire for correction (CCC, 1994). Respondents express the deepest regret for the choice of having had an abortion. Expressing her sorrow, one woman shared, “I made mistakes, and I used the quick and easy methods to get rid of my mistakes, and the price I paid was with my soul!” This woman expressed great joy and healing in her conversion to Catholicism and the Truth of human sexuality. One respondent presented both the cause and the cure of sexual mistakes:

Our society as a whole has become deluded with the belief that sex without commitment and consequences is the way to true happiness and joy. However, our belief as practicing Catholics is that sex WITH commitment is the only way to true happiness and joy.

Orthodox Catholics object to sex education that includes instruction about contraception partly because they strongly link contraception with abortion. We saw this
earlier when Pope John Paul II defined “the culture of death.” In terms of sexuality, this definition points most strongly to abortion as that which would “poison human society” (Pope John Paul II, 1995, § 3). It is worth quoting *Evangelium Vitae* at length to grasp the Catholic perspective on this link:

It is frequently asserted that *contraception*, if made safe and available to all, is the most effective remedy against abortion. The Catholic Church is then accused of actually promoting abortion, because she obstinately continues to teach the moral unlawfulness of contraception. When looked at carefully, this objection is clearly unfounded. It may be that many people use contraception with a view to excluding the subsequent temptation of abortion. But the negative values inherent in the “contraceptive mentality”—which is very different from responsible parenthood, lived in respect for the full truth of the conjugal act—are such that they in fact strengthen this temptation when an unwanted life is conceived. Indeed, the pro-abortion culture is especially strong precisely where the Church’s teaching on contraception is rejected. Certainly, from the moral point of view contraception and abortion are specifically different evils: the former contradicts the full truth of the sexual act as the proper expression of conjugal love, while the latter destroys the life of a human being; the former is opposed to the virtue of chastity in marriage, the latter is opposed to the virtue of justice and directly violates the divine commandment “You shall not kill.”

However, despite their differences of nature and moral gravity, contraception and abortion are often closely connected, as fruits of the same tree. It is true that in many cases contraception and even abortion are practiced under the pressure of real-
life difficulties, which nonetheless can never exonerate from striving to observe God’s law fully. Still, in very many other instances such practices are rooted in a hedonistic mentality unwilling to accept responsibility in matters of sexuality, and they imply a self-centered concept of freedom, which regards procreation as an obstacle to personal fulfillment. The life which could result from a sexual encounter thus becomes an enemy to be avoided at all costs, and abortion becomes the only possible decisive response to failed contraception.

The close connection which exists, in mentality, between the practice of contraception and that of abortion is becoming increasingly obvious. It is being demonstrated in an alarming way by the development of chemical products, intrauterine devices and vaccines which, distributed with the same ease as contraceptives, really act as abortifacients in the very early stages of the development of the life of the new human being. (Pope John Paul II, 1995, § 13).

Orthodox Catholics other than the Pope also link contraception and abortion as Father Julian Porteous did when quoting the United States Supreme Court:

This link between the contraceptive mentality and abortion was well illustrated in the U.S. Supreme Court decision in Planned Parenthood v. Casey which confirmed Roe v. Wade [see (“Planned Parenthood v. Casey,” 1992; “Roe,” 1973)]. This decision stated that “In some critical respects abortion is of the same character as the decision to use contraception. . . . For two decades of economic and social developments, people have organized intimate relationships and made choices that define their views of themselves and their places in society, in reliance on the availability of abortion in the event that contraception should fail.” (Porteous, 2003, March 22).
Janet Smith, Ph.D., an orthodox Catholic professor at the University of Dallas also makes this point in a paper specifically addressing the issue:

I think that we will not make good progress in creating a society where all new life can be safe, where we truly display a respect for life, where abortion is a terrible memory rather than a terrible reality until we see that there are many significant links between contraception and abortion and that we bravely speak this truth. We need to realize that a society in which contraceptives are widely used is going to have a very difficult time keeping free of abortions since the lifestyles and attitudes that contraception fosters create an alleged “need” for abortion. (J. Smith, 1993).

Orthodox Catholics believe that failing to follow God’s plan abuses His gift of human sexuality. This section has detailed five such abuses. The first is reducing human sexuality, which orthodox Catholics believe reflects, in part, the image and likeness of God, to a merely biological level. For orthodox Catholics, human sexuality is sacred, set apart from the merely natural order because of its spiritual dimension. Orthodox Catholics then refer to the four “hot topics” seen in Chapter Two: homosexuality, masturbation, contraception, and abortion. They see engaging in acts in any of these categories as contrary to the divine plan for sexuality, and, therefore, an abuse of God’s gift.

**Human Rights and Duties**

The previous section, *Free Will*, discussed how that concept defined differences between competing ideas of sex education. These contrasting beliefs become even clearer when seen within the category of human rights and duties. Not only do life, free will, and sexuality define faculties of the human person, but as fundamental aspects of being human,
they also define aspects of human rights and duties. For purposes of this chapter, I present
the rights and duties emphasized by orthodox Catholics in discussing the topic of sexuality.

**Right to Life**

Every human being has an inalienable right to life and each person has a duty to protect this right from the moment of conception to the moment of natural death (CCC, 1994; Pope John Paul II, 1983; Pope Paul VI, 1968). Orthodox Catholics emphasize strongly this fundamental right and corresponding duty, especially within the contexts of remaining open to life in every conjugal act, protecting the life of the unborn, and arguing for God’s sovereignty over human life until He allows for the passage from mortality to eternity. One orthodox Catholic expressed frustration with competing uses of the word “right” by quoting an Internet news article:

> It takes audacity to take the word “right” and place it next to a word that is tantamount to murder. When so-called “pro-choice” activists complain that their “right to an abortion” is being impeded upon, I grimace. There is no “right” to take another person’s life, no matter how inconvenient the situation is (M. Hunter, 2003).

The last sentence from the article above demonstrates orthodox Catholic opposition to taking life, or refusing to protect it, whether by abortion, euthanasia, or assisted suicide.

**Family Rights**

Human rights have a fundamental social dimension expressed in the family, which is based on marriage, “the natural institution to which the mission of transmitting life is exclusively entrusted” (Pope John Paul II, 1983, Preamble § A-C). Emphasizing the family as “a natural society,” Pope John Paul II emphasizes that the family “exists prior to the State
or any other community, and possesses inherent rights which are inalienable” (Pope John Paul II, 1983, Preamble § D). Stressing that the good of society depends on promoting the fundamental rights of the family as well as defending it against attacks, the Pope calls for:

- The individual right to marry or remain single without pressure or discrimination,
- The right to have children and to decide on the number of children to be born using just means,
- The right to educate children,
- The intolerability of any government interfering with the right of parents to bear any number of children desired,
- The unacceptability of conditioning international economic aid on acceptance of contraception, sterilization, or abortion,
- The right of every human being to family life and recognition that abortion and scientific experimentation and manipulation of the human embryo attack this right,
- The right to social protection of all children whether handicapped, born in or out of wedlock, orphaned, or separated from their parents by just action of the state,
- Recognition that divorce presents a fundamental attack on the family,
- Protection of religious liberty for every family,
- And the right of families to advocate for, and the State to provide for, the basic needs of families for food, shelter, and economic justice. (Pope John Paul II, 1983, 1994).

Parental Rights and Duties

Orthodox Catholics understand many rights and duties associated with parenthood. Here, education, and more specifically sexuality education, provides the focus. “The right and duty of parents to educate their children are primordial and inalienable” (CCC, 1994, §
While parents may delegate their duty, Catholic doctrine insists upon their right and duty to take primary responsibility for educating their children. Furthermore, parents must personally attend to sexuality education (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995; Pope John Paul II, 1981, 1983).

Right and Duty to Educate

When discussing issues of sexuality, more than any other right, orthodox Catholic sources mention parental rights (cf. *CCC*, 1994; Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995; Pope John Paul II, 1981, 1983). Parental rights come to such focus in this arena because parents feel violated. One orthodox Catholic indicated such a violation: “Public schools have no right to intrude. Sex education should be the responsibility of the parent who has been given the gift of the child.” Catholic magisterial teaching makes the point even more strongly, “Sex education, which is a basic right and duty of parents, must always be carried out under their attentive guidance whether at home or in educational centers chosen and controlled by them” (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995; Pope John Paul II, 1981). Feeling a similar assault on this basic right and duty, another orthodox Catholic declared, “Parents need to take their rights back as the final teachers of their children and not let this most important part of their duty go to someone they may not even know.” Another respondent even blames some parents for giving up their rights: “I think parents are abdicating their rights and leaving it up to institutions to teach morals and I don’t believe that is the mandate of the schools.” Still another seems to blame both parents and schools: “Having sex ed in the school system gives the right of every parent to be the most important teacher of their children to the teacher! It’s a cop out in my opinion.” Some even feel
violated by their parish parochial schools: “My right to teach my children myself was taken away from me by our Catholic school.”

**Formative Right and Duty**

“The fecundity of conjugal love cannot be reduced solely to the procreation of children, but must extend to their moral education and their spiritual formation” (*CCC*, 1994, § 2221).

Parents have the duty to provide solid spiritual formation and to protect their family from “immoral or inadequate formation being given to their children outside the home” (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995, § 44). Parents must, both directly through instruction and indirectly by example, provide personalized formation in: (1) developing a right conscience, (2) virtue, specifically chastity, (3) true Christian love that is willing to sacrifice for the other, (4) morality, (5) chaste love especially as applied to conjugal love, and (6) preparation for marriage (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995).

The school, making itself available to carry out programs of sex education, has often done this by taking the place of the family and, most of the time, with the aim of only providing information. Sometimes this really leads to the deformation of consciences. (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995, § 1).

One orthodox Catholic parent echoed this sentiment saying, “I believe in my heart that sex ed is at the heart of damaging the formation of our children.” The Magisterium calls on school and other institutional leaders to respect and safeguard the rights of parents:

The rights of parents must be recognized, protected and maintained, not only to ensure solid formation of children and young people, but also to guarantee the right
order of cooperation and collaboration between parents and those who can help them in their task. (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995, § 148).

Taking square aim at the United States system of public schools on this point, Pope John Paul II says, “The rights of parents are violated when a compulsory system of education is imposed by the State from which all religious formation is excluded” (Pope John Paul II, 1983, § 5d).

Children’s Rights

Orthodox Catholics point to the duty of parents and society to protect children’s rights. While fewer in number and simpler to express, these rights are no less important than any human rights. Orthodox Catholic sources, cited within the following subsections, enumerate the rights to family, innocence, chastity, and information.

Right to Family

Orthodox Catholics believe children have the right to a family. Teaching about the grave immorality of fertilization techniques “that entail the dissociation of husband and wife” like use of donated sperm, a surrogate uterus, and artificial insemination, the Catechism states that these techniques “infringe on the child’s right to be born of a father and mother known to him and bound to each other by marriage” (CCC, 1994, § 2376). The Catechism further asserts that no one has a “right to a child,” but that “only the child possesses genuine rights: the right ‘to be the fruit of the specific act of the conjugal love of his parents,’ and ‘the right to be respected as a person from the moment of his conception’” (§ 2378).
Cardinal Ratzinger, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, provided more depth for this teaching in *Donum Vitae*, a document published by order of the Holy See, by the authority of Pope John Paul II:

The child has the right to be conceived, carried in the womb, brought into the world and brought up within marriage: it is through the secure and recognized relationship to his own parents that the child can discover his own identity and achieve his own proper human development. . . . The vitality and stability of society require that children come into the world within a family and that the family be firmly based on marriage. The tradition of the Church and anthropological reflection recognize in marriage and in its indissoluble unity the only setting worthy of truly responsible procreation. (Ratzinger, 1987, II, A, 1).

A child’s right to a family constitutes the very core of all orthodox Catholic beliefs about sexuality.

**Right to Innocence**

Orthodox Catholics not only affirm a stage of innocence in growing children, but also assert the right of each child to that innocence (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995; Pope John Paul II, 1981, 1983). One orthodox Catholic parent said, “Ideally, it is the parents who can slowly reveal the wonders and sacredness of the human body and all that sexuality entails as the individual child is ready, protecting the wonderful, irreplaceable innocence of childhood.” The “years of innocence” extend “from about five years of age until puberty . . . this period of tranquility and serenity must never be disturbed by unnecessary information about sex” (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995, § 78; cf. Pope John Paul II, 1981, § 37). Catholic parents mention the right to innocence more than any other children’s rights. As
before, this emphasis comes in defense of their children from what they see as an onslaught that, at best, inadvertently harms innocence and, at worst, intentionally seeks to rob children of this right. Some blame society in general, like one respondent who listed signs of moral decay since the sexual revolution of the 1960s and 70s: “children born out of wedlock, broken homes, sexually transmitted diseases including AIDS, pornography, depression and suicide among our young people, and a complete loss of innocence and modesty.” Others blame school sex education programs specifically:

I think that the crude and explicit information given to the high school students is the reason four teenagers at our local high school decided to give a public performance in fornication. I know of no positive side to the stripping of children’s innocence from them.

Another respondent follows suit:

Sex education at the public school is presented as any other subject that the kids need to know in order to function in this world. They are advised to abstain until they marry, but they also learn all about condoms, with the classic demonstration on the banana. It is horrible. There is no character development; birth control is an accepted assumption. What is left of the kids’ innocence after 13 years of exposure to television and the formative years of public schooling is now passé.

“Parents should politely but firmly exclude any attempts to violate children’s innocence because such attempts compromise the spiritual, moral and emotional development of growing persons who have a right to their innocence” (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995, § 83). Agreeing, one mother warned, “What you are tapping into here is a mother’s God-given radar screen on how to protect her children’s innocence.” Another respondent
sees “an agenda to remove innocence”; in the same interview, that respondent also referred to an active “choking off of innocence.” This respondent does see a conspiracy of sorts, larger than any one organization, but definitely including Planned Parenthood as a major player. So disturbed by the loss of innocence she perceives, yet another mother sought saintly intercession, openly praying, “Saint Maria Goretti, pray that the innocence and purity of our children will be protected.” Canonized by Pope Pius XII in 1950, Maria Goretti was martyred in Italy on July 6, 1902 at age 12 at the hands of a 19 year-old neighbor, Alessandro Serenelli, who, enraged by her rejections of his constant sexual advances, stabbed her 14 times; Maria is credited not only with forgiving Alessandro before she died, but with his miraculous conversion after appearing to him in a vision in his jail cell (Jones, 2003a).

**Right to Chastity**

The right to chastity? Granted, many people misunderstand the full scope of the Catholic concept of chastity as we see under the following section *Behavior and Morality: Sexual Behavior*. The idea that orthodox Catholics view chastity as a fundamental right for children, however, emerged as one of those surprises in the data. Consider this strong statement: “Since each child or young person must be able to live his or her own sexuality in conformity with Christian principles, and hence be able to exercise the virtue of chastity, no educator—not even parents—can interfere with this right to chastity” (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995; cf. Matthew 18:4-7 [Biblical reference in the original]; cf. Pope John Paul II, 1983, 4d). The council goes on:

> It is recommended that respect be given to the right of the child and the young person to be adequately informed by their own parents on moral and sexual questions.
in a way that complies with his or her desire to be chaste and to be formed in chastity. (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995, § 119; cf. Pope Paul VI, 1965, § 1).

Because “the right to chastity” surprised me as a dimension of “human rights,” I did some research to determine what orthodox Catholic respondents thought of the idea that “chastity” is a human right. In response to the question: Do you believe children have a “right” to chastity? one respondent said:

Absolutely, children have a right to childhood. . . . [and] to be left inviolate in their childhood, whether from bad food or bad ideas like learning about sex too early. . . . Just as we all have a right to life, part of that right is to be left to the natural order that God designed in the first place, and the natural order of childhood is purity. Exposing children to sexual things too early is tantamount to giving them crack or hard liquor.

**Right to Information**

The right to chastity serves as a check to balance the right to information in the orthodox Catholic view. According to Kenneth Whitehead (1996), a former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Education and now an orthodox Catholic author and contributor to journals including *Catalyst, Crisis, Catholic World Report, Fidelity, and New Oxford Review*, sex education “should not be primarily a matter of giving explicit ‘information’ at all, but rather it should be a matter of inculcating modesty, purity, chastity, and morality.” Nevertheless, “The right of young people to adequate information must be maintained” (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995, § 144). The council specifies this right in order to clarify an admonition to preserve traditions of modesty and reserve that exist in other societies,
without corrupting these traditions with a Western model of sex education. This caution underscores the orthodox Catholic insistence that sexual information be given within the context of Christian love, sensitive to the virtue of chastity, and in a personalized and age appropriate manner (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995; Pope John Paul II, 1981, 1983).

**Behavior and Morality**

The centrality of the concepts of human behavior and morality calls for reporting them in a section of their own rather than including them as subcategories of the human person. Human acts are moral when they are the result of reason and will working in cooperation with God’s Grace. Such behavior is virtuous, consistent with God’s Plan. Behavior in which reason or the will work at odds with God’s plan is sinful. God has revealed His moral code through the Eternal Law, Natural Law, and Positive Law. The Eternal Law can be considered simply as God’s eternal Wisdom. Natural Law partakes in the Eternal Law by virtue of the fact that all created things have a purpose in the divine Plan, their “nature” so to speak. Positive Laws are precepts specifically revealed by God that are not discernable in the natures of things. For example, the commandment to keep the Lord’s Day holy is part of God’s Positive Law (CCC, 1994; cf. Catholic Encyclopedia, 1907). In the following discussion, we concern ourselves with the Eternal Law only tangentially, inasmuch as the Natural Law derives from it. The Positive Law does not apply to the discussion. Natural Law is our direct concern in discussing behavior and morality, specifically the morality of sexual behavior.
Natural Law

An understanding of Natural Law is critical to fully comprehending the Catholic position. One orthodox Catholic source said, “Natural Law is extremely important in this discussion [about sexuality education] because it defends the Catholic faith on a more objective basis, not so dependent on faith.” According to the same source, “We can’t change the nature of things; trying to causes problems.” This source echoes authoritative doctrine that says, “The Natural Law is immutable and permanent throughout the variations of history” (CCC, 1994, § 1958). Another orthodox Catholic respondent gave a good overview of Natural Law with the following comments:

The Church basis for much of its teaching on sexuality is Natural Law. Everything God created has a design and purpose. If we use things according to that design, we can expect blessing in our life. If we go outside those designs and parameters, we can expect chaos and disorder in our lives. Just like the purpose of eating is health, going outside this purpose causes disorders like anorexia and bulimia. The purpose of sexuality is reproductive and unitive; going outside these designs causes disorders in our hearts and bodies.

This respondent echoes in some ways the article on Natural Law in The Catholic Encyclopedia (cf. 1907, “Natural Law). That article uses the term “nature” in the same way this respondent uses the phrase “design and purpose,” but also adds the term “end,” thus clarifying the concept of Natural Law even more: “When God willed to give existence to creatures, He willed to ordain and direct them to an end” (Catholic Encyclopedia, 1907, “Natural Law,” ¶ 2). This “end” is in the very “nature” of human beings created by God for
a “purpose.” The respondent also echoes the article in terms of the moral goodness that follows from compliance with the Natural Law and the immorality of crossing it:

The rule, then, which God has prescribed for our conduct, is found in our nature itself. Those actions which conform with its tendencies, lead to our destined end, and are thereby constituted right and morally good; those at variance with our nature are wrong and immoral. (*Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1907, ¶ 2).

The idea that sexual morality is rooted in the Natural Law has solid grounding in a variety of orthodox Catholic sources. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* has a full section on the Natural Law (*CCC*, 1994, § 1950–1960). From both interview and document sources, one gathers that the Natural Law is an ethical principle with an overriding mandate to do good and avoid evil. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* expresses this idea, and the whole of Natural Law, with exceptional depth and clarity:

The exposition of St. Thomas is at once the most simple and philosophic. Starting from the premise that good is what primarily falls under the apprehension of the practical reason—that is of reason acting as the dictator of conduct—and that, consequently, the supreme principle of moral action must have the good as its central idea, he holds that the supreme principle, from which all the other principles and precepts are derived, is that good is to be done, and evil avoided. (cf. Aquinas, 1920, I-II, 94, 2; *Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1907).

The Natural Law shows man the path toward good, toward the end for which he was created, is apprehended by reason working through faith, is written on the heart of every man, extends universally to all men, remains constant across all cultures, is immutable and
permanent, is the foundation for all moral law, the building of the human community, and forms the basis for all civil law (CCC, 1994).

The Catholic Church teaches the sexuality must conform with the God given “end” or purpose of the gift:

The spouses’ union achieves the twofold end of marriage: the good of the spouses themselves and the transmission of life. These two meanings or values of marriage cannot be separated without altering the couple’s spiritual life and compromising the goods of marriage and the future of the family.

The conjugal love of man and woman thus stands under the twofold obligation of fidelity and fecundity. (CCC, 1994, § 2363; cf. Kippley, 2002; Lawler, Boyle, & May, 1998; Pope John Paul II, 1997; West, 2000, 2003).

Because human beings themselves have a “nature” ordered to an “end,” both created by God in the human person, and because the gift of sexuality also has a twofold end as indicated in the previous quote, human beings have an obligation to discern and follow the Natural Law regarding sexuality. Following this law yields blessings and happiness while crossing it yields brokenness and unhappiness, consequences of sin (CCC, 1994).

**Sexual Behavior**

“The Catholic vision of sexuality teaches a way of living sexually which is liberating and genuinely good for human beings” (Lawler et al., 1998, p. 65).

Contrary to the view that “sex is dirty” and must not, therefore, be talked about, the Catholic Church has always taught that sex is good, sacred, and holy when exercised in accordance with God’s Plan (Aquinas, 1920; CCC, 1994; Lawler et al., 1998; Pontifical
Council for the Family, 1995; Pope John Paul II, 1981, 1997; West, 2000). Sex must be ordered to the authentic good of the human person as revealed by the Natural Law (Lawler et al., 1998). As seen throughout this chapter, the goods of human sexuality include the openness of every sex act to the unification of the partners and procreation of new life. These ends comprise the nature of sexuality, discerned though the Natural Law as revealed by God to human reason and as explicitly taught by the Catholic Church. Orthodox Catholics entertain no doubt about these matters because they believe that the Magisterium of the Church cannot err in teaching matters of faith and morals (see Appendix C). Catholic teaching on sexual morality demands chastity, as noted above. We now turn to the specific beliefs of orthodox Catholics regarding chastity.

Chastity Outside of Marriage

Orthodox Catholics believe people can realize the goods of human sexuality only within the sacrament of matrimony. They believe that God established His first covenant with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Other “nuptial” covenants followed: a family covenant with Noah, a tribal covenant with Abraham, a national covenant with Moses, a kingdom covenant with David, and the New Covenant, a universal or “catholic” covenant, with all human beings through Jesus Christ (CCC, 1994; S. Hahn, 2002). Orthodox Catholics further believe that Jesus elevated the status of the marriage covenant to the level of a sacrament, thereby sanctifying marriage and granting Grace to help couples order married life to that which is truly good for them (Aquinas, 1920; CCC, 1994; Codex Iuris Cononici [CIC], 1983; Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995; Pope John Paul II, 1981, 1997).
The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between
themselves a partnership of the whole of life, is by its nature ordered toward the
good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring; this covenant
between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a
sacrament. (CIC, 1983).

According to orthodox Catholic belief, the goods of the family, both spouses and children,
are best nurtured within the family and cannot be fully realized outside the bond of
matrimony. Indeed, the unitive good demands the indissoluble unity of marriage, sanctified
by God in whose likeness and image male and female become one flesh, in order to reach its
fulfillment (CCC, 1994; West, 2000). The procreative good completes the Trinitarian image
of God who, although three persons, is One God—an inseparable Unity. Husband, wife, and
child mirror Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one family—an inseparable unity. For this reason,
the unitive and procreative goods of sex can never be separated without harming the good of
the spouses, the good of offspring, and the good of society (CCC, 1994).

Chastity outside marriage, then, demands abstinence from all sexual acts. This aspect
of chastity is incumbent upon single persons as well as priests and religious sisters subject to
the vow of chastity (CCC, 1994). Many have misunderstood the term chastity as applying
only to abstinence because of this application. Others comment that celibacy for religious
sisters and priests contradicts the goods of human sexuality. Pope John Paul II responds:

Virginity or celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom of God not only does not
contradict the dignity of marriage but presupposes it and confirms it. Marriage and
virginity or celibacy are two ways of expressing and living the one mystery of the
covenant of God with his people. When marriage is not esteemed, neither can
consecrated virginity or celibacy exist; when human sexuality is not regarded as a great value given by the Creator, the renunciation of it for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven loses its meaning. (1981, § 16).

Chastity outside the covenant of married love specifically demands complete abstinence from premarital sexual relations, extramarital intercourse, masturbation, complete and incomplete acts of lust, homosexual acts, bestiality, rape, incest, impurity in thought, and immodesty in dress or behavior; all of these sexual acts are sinful according to orthodox Catholics (CCC, 1994; Lawler et al., 1998).

**Chastity within Marriage**

The goods of the family, the human person, and sexuality must also be pursued within marriage. Again, any deviation from God’s Plan is sinful because it harms the person committing the act as well as others. Every sex act must be open to both unification and procreation (CCC, 1994). According to orthodox Catholics, specific sex acts that harm the good of unification include all acts of adultery without exception, artificial insemination, *in vitro* fertilization, cloning, and any act potentially open to procreation in the absence of true unification of the spouses; specific acts that harm the good of procreation include use of any form of contraception, sterilization, completion of oral or anal sex acts, and any completed sexual act that excludes procreation from sexual activity (CCC, 1994; Lawler et al., 1998).

Orthodox Catholics speak frequently about Natural Family Planning (NFP), a “method of birth regulation based on self-observation and the use of infertile periods [which] is in conformity with the objective criteria of morality” (CCC, 1994, § 2370; cf. Pope Paul VI, 1968, § 16). Such use of the natural cycles of fertility for the spacing of births for just reasons not contrary to the generosity of responsible parenthood is morally
permissible because it never involves contraceptive intercourse (CCC, 1994; Lawler et al., 1998; cf. Pope Paul VI, 1968, § 14). Janet Smith, Ph.D., an orthodox Catholic professor at the University of Dallas explains the difference between NFP and contraception:

The sexual act is morally performed only within marriage where it has the ordination both to deepening the union of the spouses and to building a family. Sexual acts that violate those ordinations or “meanings” are thereby immoral. Contraception violates both meanings of the conjugal act. The conjugal act is meant to be an act of total self-giving, which includes giving the power of becoming a parent with another. Spouses who contracept are not giving totally of themselves to one another; in violating the baby-making power of the sexual act, they confine their act to being ordained solely to mutual pleasure. They are not achieving the union proper to spouses, a union that respects the baby-making power of the sexual act as a proper fulfillment of spousal union. Contraception treats the procreative meaning of the sexual act as though it were an impediment to spousal union. Thus, contraception negates the good of the openness to a new immortal life that is inherent in the sexual act of humans and trivializes the commitment that is implied in the conjugal act.

On the other hand, couples using methods of natural family planning are respecting the nature of the conjugal act through their acts of self-denial. They do not violate the baby-making power of the sexual act. They refrain from acts of conjugal intercourse during the fertile periods because they have judged that responsible parenthood requires them to limit their family size. In these instances, their spousal union is deepened and confirmed by their abstaining from sexual pleasure. Their acts
of conjugal intercourse during the infertile periods do not violate the procreative meaning because it is not present in a way to be violated. (1998, p. 29).

**Authentic Catholic Sexuality Education**

“I believe that Catholic educators have a moral responsibility to teach human reproduction within the strict guidance of Roman Catholic teachings and norms. This topic needs to be addressed openly, honestly, and with great love” (Interview quote).

Orthodox Catholics do not oppose sexuality education. Taking such a simplistic view, as I did before analyzing my data, tells only a small part of the story. Orthodox Catholics heartily support sexuality education that conforms to the teachings of the Church as seen in the interview quote above. The discussion throughout this chapter has informed the phrase “authentic Catholic sexuality education.” This section serves to summarize what has gone before and to expand understanding of the phrase.

**Begins in the Family**

An authentic Catholic sex education emphasizes authentic values of life and love (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995). Orthodox Catholics believe they have the duty to teach these values by example in their homes. One respondent represented this view of sex education: “If it is the normal part of family living everyday, this topic will sit equal with other important topics in the family life like love and worship of God, love of family, and love of neighbor.” Their example must also extend to modesty and decency. The virtue of chastity grows through the exercise of self-control in family life. Hence, lessons in sharing and similar acts of sacrifice for others lay the foundation for practicing chastity in a context of true Christian love. The roots of authentic Catholic sex education grow early through the
model provided by parents in a family raised with Christian values (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995).

Is Nurtured through Faith and the Value of Life

In orthodox Catholic theology, human sexuality cannot be separated from faith and the value of life. Consequently, the Catholic Magisterium teaches that sex education should never be provided outside the context of the faith; to do so would violate a fundamental right and duty of parenthood (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995; Pope John Paul II, 1981). God, and not the human person, is the author of life (CCC, 1994). Consequently, life, a gift from God, must be valued, nurtured, and protected. Furthermore, as demonstrated earlier, all sexual expression must take place between a man and a woman united in the sacrament of matrimony in order to provide the context to nurture and educate the potential new life within a solid family. Sexuality education must draw upon faith in God and this sacred value of life with which our sexuality is so inextricably bound.

Recognizes Learning Stages

The controversy over innocence and latency has already been discussed. Orthodox Catholics believe in latency and the innocence of youth. Based upon this belief, in teaching about sexuality, the timing of information must be personalized, the moral dimension must always be included, and the context of true Christian love must always be provided (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995). Furthermore, the means of imparting information must be personalized. Given that sexual expression is so deeply personal and intimate, orthodox Catholics believe youth show a natural discomfort with group instruction in sexual matters, especially mixed gender instruction.
Developmental stages include the years of innocence, puberty, and adulthood. During the years of innocence, education in the truth and meaning of human sexuality occurs by example in the family. Parents should give direct instruction only when necessary and with sensitivity to the natural innocence of children and their readiness to understand and absorb details. During adolescence, the time between puberty and adulthood, parents should give attention to vocation, God’s call to each individual. Parents should teach their children how the call to celibacy, either through the priesthood or the religious life of sisters and brothers, draws the depth of its meaning from the centrality and sacredness of sexuality in God’s plan (Pope John Paul II, 1981). As children pass from puberty into adulthood, they naturally seek more detailed information. Parents have a duty to provide information in the context of the faith, through continued good example in their married life, conversations with their children, and Catholic resources faithful to magisterial teachings (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995).

Practical Guidelines

General Principles

Since sexuality education must always be carried out under the attentive guidance of parents, whether at home or in carefully chosen educational settings, parents should associate with other parents to promote authentic Catholic sex education, stay completely informed on the details of instruction if delegating their duty to provide sex education to others, and remove their children from all forms of sexuality education that fail to conform to their principles (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995). Sexuality education should always be presented within the context of the Christian mystery of God’s life giving love. Information must be presented proportionate to each person’s stage of development;
specifically, in later adolescence, youth may be introduced to the natural cycles of fertility and receive instruction in monitoring fertile and infertile periods, but only within “the context of education for love, fidelity in marriage, God’s plan for procreation and respect for human life” (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995, § 125a).

Homosexuality should not be discussed before adolescence unless a specific serious problem has arisen in a particular situation. This subject must be presented only in terms of chastity, health and “the truth about human sexuality in its relationship to the family as taught by the Church. (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995, § 125b).

Erotic material must never be used in educating about the truth and meaning of human sexuality. Principles of modesty and decency must inform the virtue of chastity developing within each young person who has a right to chastity and should never be asked to do anything which might offend an individual’s sense of modesty, delicacy, or privacy (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995).

**Instructional Methods**

The ideal instructional method for sex education is personalized and takes place between parent and child. One orthodox Catholic echoed this sentiment about personalization:

Parents know their children best and can make the best decision on when and what to tell their children. Not all children are ready to receive the same information at the same ages. Each child is an individual and at different stages of maturity, physically and emotionally.
In cases where a nuclear family is not possible, those who care for children are called to deliver sexuality education within the same guidelines given for parents. In cases where parents must choose other instructional settings, they must ensure conformity with their principles, including personalization of instruction. Parents must take care to ensure their own formation in Catholic principles of sexuality in order to make sure sex education conforms to God’s plan (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995).

**Methods to Avoid**

Parents who entrust the sexuality education of their children to others must be careful to avoid all methods that threaten the truth and meaning of human sexuality.

In the first place, parents must reject secularized and anti-natalist sex education, which puts God at the margin of life and regards the birth of a child as a threat. This sex education is spread by large organizations and international associations that promote abortion, sterilization and contraception. (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995, § 136).

Parents should exercise caution in trusting endorsements of what appear to be legitimate authorities when the view of human sexuality they promote offends against decency, as is frequently the case with associations of sex therapists and counselors (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995). Parents should also avoid all detailed instruction of genital relationships given in a graphic way, values clarification, which always ignores the objective reality of Natural Law, and the classes that insert false sexuality instruction into other subjects like health, literature, social studies, and science (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995).
Coping through Personal Choice

Given the great abyss between the orthodox Catholic view of sexuality education and the programs provided in schools, which almost universally violate their deeply held beliefs, one naturally asks, “How do they cope?” These Catholics do express what I have termed “battle weariness.” For example, one parent said simply, “I did not want to fight it every year” referring to sex education in the local Catholic school. Another expression of the same fatigue states, “I struggled with the school from day one of that year to get an explanation about what the sex ed instructor would teach, so I as the parent could make an informed decision for my child.” This parent eventually gave up and left the school.

Parents cope in many ways. First, as seen above, they fight the system and often become tired. The least disruptive coping strategy, then, is to remove children from objectionable classes, but keep them in the school. One parent explained, “I did find that in the public school, whenever I found something objectionable, I could just pull my child out without the school or teacher asking any questions.” In another situation, a creative solution was possible: “Our school district allows parents to homeschool their children in any subjects they want as long as they use courses from an accredited school. I plan to take full advantage of this.” This arrangement also allowed for minimal disruption. However, sometimes parents do not find “opting-out” so easy. One respondent complained, “Now public schools . . . make sex education a mandatory class in health. No one can really opt-out.” In these cases, parents take a step one level higher in disruption; they remove their children from the school. After trying to resolve things in the local parish school for a year, one parent finally said, “After that year I pulled our kids out of the Catholic school because the principal told me sex ed in the future would probably start in kindergarten.” These
parents either transfer their children to another school, public or private, or decide to homeschool them. Some parents mix and match by using combinations of public, private, and homeschooling for their individual children. One parent expressed great relief after finally deciding to take the homeschooling plunge:

This year I began homeschooling our younger daughter who is in third grade. It is just easier to homeschool. I as the parent have taken back my rights. I am in charge of everything my children learn. I get to choose their curriculum and integrate the teachings of our Catholic faith into every subject. It is so cool! I am so pleased and at peace with homeschooling. I am proud to say that last year, our oldest tested over all subjects in the top eight percent of the nation on her standardized tests.

**Conclusion**

To view orthodox Catholics as simply opposed to sex education ignores the more interesting side of the story: their support for authentic Catholic sexuality education. This study of orthodox Catholics, conducted through interviews, document analyses, and observation revealed a rich complexity unknown to most people outside orthodox Catholic circles. The presence of a comprehensive sexuality education that directly contradicts their most deeply held beliefs drives orthodox Catholics first out of classrooms, and then out of school systems, both public and parochial. In the introduction, I referred to the overwhelming din of argument and the underwhelming dearth of listening. This study presents the results of deep listening and reveals the depth and complexity of what orthodox Catholics perceive as the truth and meaning of human sexuality, a truth that rests on their foundational belief that God created the family, the human person, and the gift of sexuality, in His own likeness and image.
CHAPTER FOUR
AN EMERGING FORMAL THEORY OF SEXUALITY EDUCATION BELIEFS

The main purpose of this study is not simply to present two unrelated grounded theories, but to seek the roots of a formal theory of sexuality education beliefs by analyzing the results generated from two substantive groups. Studying PPFA and orthodox Catholic sexuality education beliefs reveals a range of categories including truth, God, the human person, family, morality, human rights, and coping. All of these categories head a rich and complex system of beliefs intricately related to the main subject of this study: sexuality education beliefs. In many categories, both PPFA and orthodox Catholic sources voice definite beliefs, often opposed, but sometimes not. In some cases, the two groups unknowingly agree, thinking the other side believes the opposite of what they actually profess. In other categories, one side expresses strong beliefs while the other remains largely silent. A formal theory, however, does not depend simply on two substantive groups. One could enrich this emerging formal theory by studying individuals who do not identify with PPFA or Catholicism. What follows, then, is an emerging theory of sexuality education beliefs grounded in the data from two specific groups that voice strong sexuality education beliefs. Each category first presents the actual variability found in PPFA and orthodox Catholic sources, then additional variability discovered in related sources during the course of this study, and finally, ideas for further study based on gaps in these findings.

In terms of grounded theory methodology (see Appendix A), the core categories within the substantive grounded theories of PPFA and orthodox Catholic sexuality education beliefs are similar in that they focus on the human person, but fundamentally different in that they view the human person in practically irreconcilable ways. The terms “Individual”
and “Family” capture these differing beliefs about the human person. In this emerging formal theory, analysis reveals another category that explains these differences when developed in light of both substantive studies. “Beliefs about Truth” unite and explain all other categories and, therefore, serve as the core category of the emerging formal theory.

**Beliefs about Truth**

Within the substantive studies of PPFA and orthodox Catholic sources, “Truth” did not emerge as the “core category” because sources referred to the topic, not as part of their belief system, but as related to sexuality education alone. There is, however, a wide range of variability in beliefs about truth. This variability explains all differences in sexuality education beliefs; upon beliefs about truth, the whole sex education controversy rests.

An introduction to this critical concept requires definitions. In general, truth has two properties: metaphysical truth and epistemological truth. The former refers to beliefs about existence, while the latter refers to beliefs about knowledge. In this study, metaphysical beliefs range from materialism to dualism and epistemological beliefs from empiricism to rationalism. Materialism refers to the belief that the whole of reality consists of one perceivable substance manifest in many forms. Dualism refers to the differing belief that reality also includes a spiritual dimension imperceptible to our senses. Materialism is incompatible with a belief in God and the human soul while dualism is not. Empiricism refers to the belief that all knowledge arises from sense experiences, while rationalism refers to the belief that reason itself is a source of knowledge independent of and superior to sense experiences. Figure 1 schematizes “Beliefs about Truth” and includes some examples that illustrate the variability, which will be discussed below.
For example, the *Our Whole Lives (OWL)* curriculum comes with an optional religious component often excluded for secular use (Unitarian Universalist Association [UUA], 2002).

*Figure 1. Metaphysical and epistemological dimensions of belief about truth.*

Author’s note: Each of the five figures presented in this chapter are original and result from applying qualitative data analysis to generate formal theory by using two by two matrices (see Appendix A).
The examples in the MR quadrant represent belief systems that rest upon both metaphysical materialism and epistemological rationalism. Along with many others, some PPFA sources express beliefs in this quadrant. “Deism” refers to the belief in a natural religion that assumes materialism and is based on human reason rather than divine revelation. Deistic evolution refers to the belief in a self-existing and evolving universe; it includes the theory of evolution and the Big Bang theory. One should note, however, that these two theories could be included in other quadrants too as explained below. Religious Humanism, practically synonymous with deism because of its historical roots in “free thinkers” (Edwards, 1967), distinguishes a branch of Humanism. Individual choice and relativism go hand in hand because the rational individual is the source of relativism, a belief that religious and moral truth are relative to specific people and cultures. What is true for one person may not be true for another. Situation ethics and values clarification capture this belief systematically.

In the DR quadrant, examples arise from a belief in metaphysical dualism and epistemological rationalism. Theism and traditional Christian beliefs, like those expressed within Catholicism, belong in the DR quadrant because of the classical belief in this understanding of truth. Creationism in this quadrant may or may not include belief in the Big Bang or evolution. Creationists simply believe all of reality has a divine origin. Those in the DR quadrant who believe in the Big Bang and evolution view these theories as the method chosen by the Creator to bring the physical universe and living things into existence. The existence of knowable divine revelation serves as a key metaphysical element in explaining the variety of sexuality education beliefs. One may understand the differing beliefs about morality in terms of exactly which rational mind they refer to. Relativistic
moral systems arise from individual rational minds while absolute moral systems derive from the revealed mind of God. Sexuality education rooted in beliefs about chastity belongs in the DR quadrant. Authentic Catholic sexuality education draws on particularly Catholic beliefs about chastity. While chastity programs like “The Silver Ring Thing” and “True Love Can Wait” draw on other Christian traditions, they also reflect a DR view of truth.

Many PPFA sources also express beliefs in the ME quadrant, which rests upon metaphysical materialism and epistemological empiricism. Denying any reality outside the physical universe, materialists must be deistic, agnostic, or atheistic. Those in the ME quadrant adhere to a strict empirical view that all knowledge derives from that which is observable. This is not to say MEs deny human reason; they simply do not believe that reason alone can produce knowledge independent of sense experience. Thus, since by rejecting revelation one can arrive at knowledge of a deity only by use of reason, those in the ME quadrant deny the existence of any kind of god and are, by definition, atheists. These sources express belief in a self-existing and evolving universe, a belief that can be termed “naturalistic evolution.” Both the Big Bang and Darwinian evolution square perfectly with this belief system. ME sources rely exclusively on the sciences as a source of knowledge. Beliefs not subject to empirical verifiability cannot be true. While many physicians align their personal beliefs with another quadrant, Western medicine has evolved largely by assuming a materialistic empiricist view of truth. In contrast, Eastern medicine and many alternative healing methods assume a dualistic rather than a materialistic view of reality. Comprehensive sexuality education, while often morally justified in the MR quadrant, rests on the ME view of truth. Consequently, PPFA sources insist that sexuality education must be “scientifically and medically accurate.” Given the rancor between those who promote

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comprehensive versus abstinence-only sexuality education, it may come as a surprise that a form of the latter approach lands in the ME quadrant with the former. Since belief in God or the human soul relies on religious dualism, many who promote abstinence-only sexuality education seek to justify it by using the ME view of truth. In that way, they can justify a secular form of abstinence-only sexuality education in the public schools.

In many ways, dualism and empiricism, the DE perspective, seem incompatible because empirical studies can draw only upon sensory experiences and dualism assumes a dimension of reality inaccessible to the senses. Nevertheless, agnostics express doubt or indifference without necessarily denying a dualistic view of reality, and many researchers assume a dualistic perspective in their studies. Some theists seek to justify their beliefs empirically. Creationist researchers assume a dualistic reality and interpret results within this paradigm (e.g. Vardiman, 2003). Paranormal investigations seek to establish proof of a dualistic reality by empirically eliminating materialistic explanations of observed phenomena (e.g. SPI, 2002). Some research concluding that premarital sex, divorce, and abortion cause spiritual harms, cited by many in the abstinence-only movement, assumes dualism—the existence of a spiritual reality (e.g. Rector, Johnson, Noyes, & Martin, 2003). As contrasted with a purely secular abstinence-only sexuality education, that of the dualistic variety, rooted mostly in Christian beliefs, cites both the materialistic and spiritual harms of pre- or extramarital sexual activity. Sexuality education, rooted in beliefs about chastity, inside or outside of marriage as seen in the orthodox Catholic view, is not properly considered abstinence-only sexuality education because the primary justification draws upon divine truths about chastity revealed to human reason rather than empirical justification of the harms of sexual activity outside of marriage. The chastity approach includes beliefs
about the morality of sexual behaviors within marriage as well as those outside marriage. For example, abstinence-only programs do not necessarily denounce premarital masturbation or the use of contraception within marriage, while authentic Catholic sexuality education, a chastity approach, does.

Both substantive studies of orthodox Catholic and PPFA sexuality education beliefs found that each side accuses the other of degrading the gift of sexuality. While orthodox Catholic sources accuse PPFA sources of equating the divine gift of human sexuality with animalism, or making humans into mating machines as one source put it, PPFA sources accuse traditional Christian sources of casting sexuality as something dirty or somehow impure. Both miss the mark by neglecting to deeply listen to and understand the other side. Nevertheless, one can understand the rancor in this aspect of the sexuality education controversy in terms of the differing views of truth delineated in Figure 1. Those who deeply align with a particular quadrant often express the belief that those in another quadrant, especially a diagonally positioned quadrant, fundamentally harm human beings with their beliefs. The greatest rancor arises when MEs accuse DRs of harming bodily or psychological well-being and DRs accuse MEs of harming the soul; this essentially summarizes the conflict between PPFA and orthodox Catholic sources.

**Morality**

Perhaps the aspect of the “Beliefs about Truth” model (Figure 1) most relevant to sexuality education is differing beliefs about morality. In the metaphysical realm, morality may exist relatively, relying on human reason, or absolutely, depending upon divine reason. The Divinity may “program” knowledge into creation and step back (deism) or actively reveal such knowledge (theism). In the epistemological realm, the morality or immorality of
specific acts may be known purely by the human mind or by comparison with the revealed mind of God. Figure 2 offers a model of beliefs about morality presented, as with Figure 1, according to metaphysical and epistemological properties. The model helps to explain the variety of beliefs about morality so important to understanding differing sexuality education beliefs. Further implications of this formal model follow.

The RD quadrant reflects the beliefs about morality of deists and religious humanists. In general, this type of belief asserts that God programmed morality into creation and reason alone provides knowledge of moral principles. Deists believe reason reveals the relativistic character of morality because evidence of conflicting moral beliefs exists between people and cultures (cf. Edwards, 1967). RDs believe that all moral principles must be derivable from reason alone independent of any divine revelation.

Some PPFA sources express RD beliefs. Any behavior deemed reasonable or in conformity with the evolving natural world is morally acceptable. Thus, RDs see abortion, homosexual acts, and contraception as moral when they are reasonable and immoral when they are not. For example, while an orthodox Catholic believes abortion is always immoral, others whose beliefs align with the RD quadrant may make exceptions for rape and incest because they believe it is unreasonable that a woman may be morally obliged to carry to term a forcible pregnancy with which she gave no consent. RDs may view a homosexual act or use of contraception as morally acceptable when completed with the same reasonable standards of propriety expected of all sexual acts, for example, that they involve mutual consent, concern for mutual well-being, and privacy. They may view masturbation as morally acceptable because it is a natural aspect of sexual maturation and all things natural are also reasonable.
**Figure 2. Metaphysical and epistemological dimensions of belief about morality.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relativism</th>
<th>Absolutism</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relativistic Deism (RD)</strong>&lt;br&gt;No divine interference in nature. Moral principles knowable from reason alone. Moral when reasonable:&lt;br&gt;• Abortion&lt;br&gt;• Homosexual Acts&lt;br&gt;• Contraception&lt;br&gt;Natural and therefore moral:&lt;br&gt;• Masturbation</td>
<td><strong>Absolutist Theism (AT)</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Eternal Law&lt;br&gt;• Natural Law&lt;br&gt;• Positive Law&lt;br&gt;Always immoral by Catholic dogmatic morality:&lt;br&gt;• Abortion&lt;br&gt;• Homosexual Acts&lt;br&gt;• Masturbation&lt;br&gt;• Contraception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relativistic Humanism (RH)</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Situation Ethics&lt;br&gt;• Humanistic Ethics&lt;br&gt;• Values Clarification&lt;br&gt;Always moral when chosen by individual(s) involved:&lt;br&gt;• Abortion&lt;br&gt;• Homosexual Acts&lt;br&gt;• Masturbation&lt;br&gt;• Contraception</td>
<td><strong>Absolutist Humanism (AH)</strong>&lt;br&gt;Based on democratic freedom to choose. Often rooted in the values of well-being and freedom of choice.&lt;br&gt;Moral if legal:&lt;br&gt;• Abortion&lt;br&gt;• Homosexual Acts&lt;br&gt;• Masturbation&lt;br&gt;• Contraception</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Orthodox Catholic and most traditional Christian beliefs occupy the AT quadrant. Eternal law derives directly from Divine Wisdom, Natural Law from a participation in Divine Wisdom according to the nature with which God infused each aspect of Creation, and Positive Law from divinely revealed moral absolutes accessible only by faith, through revelation, and not by reason alone. Many traditional Christian beliefs in the AT quadrant differ from orthodox Catholic beliefs. For example, while orthodox Catholics believe all acts of abortion, homosexuality, masturbation, and contraception are immoral, many other traditional Christian denominations find them either always permissible or permissible under certain circumstances.

Some PPFA sources express beliefs in the RD quadrant, but most express them in the RH and AH quadrants. One may view situational and humanistic ethics as relative to individuals or cultures, but always relative to the contexts of various situations in which the moral agent might act. Perhaps due to a lack of belief in any sort of divine plan or eternal law, RHs often seek justification of their beliefs in common civil law, more so than RDs or ATs (cf. Layman, 2001; Layman & Carmines, 1997). The PPFA activism that emerged in the section Coping through Individual Involvement in the Democratic Process illustrates the point. While orthodox Catholic ATs tend to cope by withdrawing from public schools more readily than lobbying to change the public policy that establishes sexuality education contrary to their beliefs, PPFA RHs tend to seek legal change on both the legislative and judicial levels, as well as influence on both laws and the courts through elections involving executive branches of government. On an ethical level, RHs view abortion, homosexual acts, masturbation, and contraception as morally permissible whenever the individual or individuals choose them. Drifting toward a humanistic absolutism, RHs root ethics in the
principles of individual well-being and freedom of choice for all human beings. Thus, even
though individuals may choose to commit rape, believing such an act to be in their own best
interest, RHs believe it to be morally wrong because it violates both the well-being and the
free choice of the person raped. Consequently, RHs advocate civil laws and sanctions
designed to prevent rape and to hold rapists accountable.

Understanding the AH quadrant requires distinguishing between civil law based on
majority rule and civil law in general. Civil law of the majority, established through the
democratic process, reflects the only brand of absolutism among those who believe moral
knowledge comes solely through human reason independent of any submission to the divine
will. Thus, many people believe that civil law is and must be rooted in both Eternal Law and
Natural Law, each revealed by Divine Wisdom. Many believe the founding fathers rooted
American democracy in traditional Christian moral principles and seek, against the
humanists, to keep the legal system on that foundation. Consequently, the AH quadrant does
not represent all beliefs about civil law, but only those beliefs that view human reason as the
only source of absolute principles concerning morality.

The “Beliefs about Morality” model (Figure 2) not only helps to explain differences
in orthodox Catholic and PPFA beliefs, but also anticipates additional variability in other
sources. For example, the two sides do not seem to realize it, but orthodox Catholic and
PPFA sources both believe sexuality to be a gift, either from God or from nature. Yet both
sides express differing beliefs regarding how human beings either honor or abuse the gift.
While orthodox Catholic sources see lifelong chastity, both before and after marriage, as
fulfilling the gift of sexuality through subordination of human desires to the Divine Will,
PPFA sources see many aspects of Catholic chastity beliefs as repressive or oppressive and,
therefore, an abuse of the gift. For example, many PPFA sources see continual repression of
the desire to masturbate as repressive and any prohibition against the use of contraception as
oppressive to women, while orthodox Catholic sources see these choices and dictates as
virtuous fulfillments of the Divine gift of sexuality. On the other hand, orthodox Catholic
sources condemn the use of contraception as perverting the Divine gift, while PPFA sources
see its use as a potentially liberating fulfillment of the gift of sexuality because it frees
couples from the fear of unwanted pregnancy. Additional examples of how other sources
might vary in their beliefs regarding the abuse or fulfillment of sexuality readily spring to
mind simply by imagining middle ground between orthodox Catholic and PPFA beliefs.

One can also better understand differing beliefs about sexuality education in terms of
the “Beliefs about Morality” model (Figure 2). Orthodox Catholics believe the gift of
sexuality is part of a Divine Plan that allows husbands and wives to reflect both the Creative
and Trinitarian attributes of God and to reflect their union in the image and likeness of God.
These beliefs fit in the AT quadrant. On the other hand, PPFA sources believe sexuality to
be a gift of nature—perhaps a divinely created nature and perhaps not. Consequently, they
view all human desires, fulfilled consistent with the reasonable ethical principles of well-
being and freedom of choice, as morally acceptable. Fulfilling these desires fulfills the gift
of sexuality while repressing them causes harm and abuses the gift. These PPFA beliefs fit
in the RD and RH quadrants. An understanding of the “Beliefs about Morality” model helps
to explain, for example, why orthodox Catholic sources disagree with PPFA sources
regarding the inclusion of information about contraception in sexuality education. Such
information violates orthodox Catholic beliefs about morality but does not violate PPFA
beliefs. Even those Christians who do not believe use of contraception is immoral within
marriage differ with PPFA sources because they do believe its use is immoral before marriage. PPFA sources, while sometimes cautioning against premarital sex, do not moralistically denounce it as long as those involved honor well-being and choice.

**The Human Person**

Differing beliefs about the nature of truth drive differing beliefs about the human person. On the metaphysical level, the human person is either both body and soul or body only. In the epistemological realm, the human mind may apprehend truth by faith and reason or by reason alone. Figure 3 helps explain differing beliefs about the human person and, consequently, beliefs about sexuality education.

Rooted in faith, many religious sources, especially orthodox Catholics, believe God reveals truths about sexuality in the human body itself. Recall the orthodox Catholic who said, “Homosexuality: I’m afraid that all that needs to be done to refute this one is to just check the body parts. Homosexuality is not what they were designed for. Teaching otherwise to children is truly awful”; along with many religious sources, this one draws on faith to explain sexual truths stamped on the body by the Creator. People holding such views believe the truths of sexuality reflect a Divine Plan that must be included in any honest presentation of sexuality. They believe conveying such truth requires no reference to any religious belief. For example, some faith-based sexuality education programs include units on the developing fetus complete with realistic models of various stages. While these kinds of units tend to be included in abstinence-only programs, which those who promote comprehensive sexuality education oppose because they believe their opponents seek to indoctrinate students against abortion on religious grounds, adherents of the curriculum argue that a teacher may present such a unit without reference to any religious belief.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body</th>
<th>Soul</th>
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| **Sexuality Education of the Divinely Created Body**  
God reveals His Plan in the human body. Based on faith, deists may believe that natural bodily desires provide clues about sexual truth while theists may believe God reveals truth in a theology of the body.*  | **Chastity Sexuality Education**  
Sexual acts either honor or mock the Creator depending on congruence with God’s Plan. Sexuality education must include Divine Revelation regarding the relationship between sexuality and the soul. |
| **Comprehensive Sexuality Education**  
Sexual truths are known only by reason applied empirically. All sexual expression honoring freedom of body and will is reasonable. Sexuality education must not be based on faith but on medical and scientific accuracy. | **Religious Abstinence-Only Sexuality Education**  
The good of the soul may be known by reason alone. Research demonstrates the harms of sexual expression outside of marriage; sexuality education must present abstinence as the only option good for the human soul. |


**Figure 3.** *Metaphysical and epistemological dimensions of belief about the human person and their relationship to beliefs about sexuality education.*
Rooted in the belief that truths about sexuality, as related to the human soul, may be known by faith, the “Chastity Sexuality Education” quadrant has been thoroughly explained by the example of authentic Catholic sexuality education in Chapter Three as well as by reference in the presentation about truth contained earlier in this chapter. Beliefs about Divine Revelation regarding chastity do vary among believers in this sort of truth. All such people, however, believe that these Divine Truths comprise a much more essential component of sexuality education than truths discoverable in the physical realm.

Those who support comprehensive sexuality education believe that the human person exists as body alone, and that only through empirical methodology can reason grasp truths about sexuality. Therefore, they believe sexuality education should include information regarding all possible forms of sexual expression that honor the rights of individuals to control their own bodies and to exercise freedom of choice. Other forms of sexual expression may also be presented as either detrimental to well-being, morally wrong, or illegal. Those who hold beliefs about the human person in this quadrant also believe that comprehensive sexuality education must be devoid of all faith-based values and beliefs and must be verifiable by the empirical methods of science; all sexuality education curricula must be scientifically and medically accurate.

Those who support religious abstinence-only sexuality education presuppose the existence of the human soul. They believe that one may know what is good for the soul, and likewise, those actions that cause spiritual harm, through reason alone without reliance on faith. These people draw upon the types of research mentioned in Figure 1 regarding the benefits of marriage, for example, and the harms of divorce or premarital sex. Religiously based abstinence-only sexuality education curricula often include such material. Those who
adhere to these beliefs about the human person insist upon presenting such information as a part of sexuality education.

Other aspects of belief about the human person deserve mention. For example, much of the controversy surrounding sexuality education rests upon differing beliefs about the origins of the human person. The term “origins” hints at differing views of the human person because dualists believe that while human beings cause the origin of bodily life, God causes the origin of the soul. Consequently, debates about the beginnings of life miss the point somewhat. While some argue, as seen in Chapter Two, that life begins at first breath, they do not really mean that the fetus is not alive before birth; they mean that personhood, complete with a claim to human rights, begins at first breath. Those who argue that life begins at the moment of conception, then, have no real argument because their opponents would not disagree that the embryo exhibits biological signs of life; what people with these beliefs really mean is that the existence of the human soul, created by God at the moment of conception, makes that living thing a human being complete with a claim for the right to life. Disagreement about whether God, or a natural process independent of any god, causes the human person to exist, lies at the heart of this debate. The “Beliefs about Truth” and “Beliefs about the Human Person” models help to explain this controversy.

The models also shed light on another controversy that emerged in the substantive studies. While orthodox Catholics believe children pass through a stage of sexual latency during which the imparting of sexual information is more likely to cause harm than good, PPFA sources disagree and believe that humans are sexual beings from birth until death. Taking this controversy even further in terms of formal theory, some believe, based upon prenatal images, that human beings may be sexual even before birth (e.g. Calderone, 1983).
This belief in prenatal sexuality hints at further potential variability. For example, although many PPFA sources root their belief in lifelong sexuality in the belief that natural processes often exhibit continuity, some sources may recognize latency in certain aspects of nature, hibernation perhaps, and conclude that there may well be some stage of latency in human sexual development. On the other hand, sources that express belief in a divine role in creation and the human soul may emphasize the physical aspect of human growth over the spiritual and conclude that human beings do indeed manifest continuous signs of sexual development. Viewing the issue from the point of view of the emerging theoretical models in this study helps not only to better understand differences in belief among orthodox Catholic and PPFA sources, but also to ask research questions that may lead to fruitful future studies.

The models help to shed light on yet another controversial issue. While PPFA sources do not seem to acknowledge it, orthodox Catholic sources express belief in reproductive freedom too. Differing beliefs in all three models presented so far help to explain this controversy. For example, orthodox Catholic sources believe that human beings have the right to choose whether or not to become parents just as PPFA sources do. They simply insist on methods consistent with their beliefs about truth, morality, and the human person, each one having its ultimate source in God. Choosing to avoid sexual activity during a wife’s fertile periods, a practice known as Natural Family Planning (NFP), conforms to orthodox Catholic beliefs about divinely revealed Natural Law and revealed truths about the human person. Use of contraception conforms to none of these beliefs and is, therefore, morally unacceptable. PPFA sources, on the other hand, argue that such a strict limitation of reproductive freedom to only one option is unreasonable because truth resides in the natural
processes of the material universe; moral principles must be derived from reason applied through empirical methods alone, and the human being possesses natural desires that make such repression of the sexual instinct not only unhealthy, but also impractical. According to PPFA beliefs, NFP as the only option is simply unworkable. But, consistent with their belief in the right of all individuals to choose, PPFA offers training in NFP methods in many of its affiliated clinics for those who choose that option.

**Family**

In this study, PPFA sources remained almost completely silent on the topic of family. The “Individual” emerged as the core category within the grounded theory of PPFA sexuality education beliefs. PPFA sources express neither the right of an individual to be born into a family nor the responsibility to honor any concept of family in sexual expression. The abundance of orthodox Catholic data on the subject compared to the scarcity of PPFA data suggests profound differences of belief, at least in the importance of “Family” to sexuality education.

Orthodox Catholic sources refer often to the family. Their beliefs about family run so deep that “Family” emerges as the core category in the substantive grounded theory of orthodox Catholic sexuality education beliefs. To summarize the orthodox Catholic belief in a statement, every conceived child has the right to be born into a nuclear family and, as an adult, has the responsibility to express sexuality consistent with revealed truths about family, namely that family unity must be ensured through the sacrament of matrimony and the mutual gift of self in sexual expression, which must always remain open to the full expression of self-giving love—children. Orthodox Catholic beliefs about family mirror the divinely revealed truths of the Holy Trinity as “Family” and the incarnation of God in the
Holy Family– Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. In the orthodox Catholic belief system, sexuality is integrally related to the human person, but profoundly different beliefs about the human person’s spiritual identity as part of a family separates orthodox Catholic beliefs from those of PPFA.

One might speculate about the variability of beliefs between PPFA and orthodox Catholic sources on the topic of family, but this study cannot support any speculation with data. One could further speculate on variability based on common knowledge regarding beliefs from other sources. For example, the issue of gay couples adopting children ignites controversy. Orthodox Catholics object to such an arrangement based on their belief that the traditional nuclear family reflects a divine spiritual reality. In their view, allowing such an arrangement harms the child because the role-model of a gay couple distorts a spiritual truth to which the child has a right. Based on this example, one can imagine differences in beliefs about family rooted in the “Beliefs about Truth” model, but determining all the properties and dimensions of the category needed for a formal theory awaits additional data and analysis. Completing this element of the emerging formal theory of sexuality education beliefs, then, requires future research drawing on additional sources.

**Human Rights**

Both orthodox Catholic and PPFA sources speak frequently about human rights. This study does not examine all human rights claimed by these sources, but only those associated with sexuality or education. While this research reveals that orthodox Catholic and PPFA sources agree that couples may plan and space children (although they disagree about the morality of means), the two sides disagree deeply on all other beliefs about human rights. These differing beliefs do not justify an additional theoretical model, however, because they
can be explained in terms of the three already presented (see Figures 1-3). The plan for this section of the emerging formal theory, then, is to reintroduce the basic concept of a right, present a table of those rights mentioned in this study by both orthodox Catholic and PPFA sources, and comment on agreements and disagreements in terms of truth, morality, and the human person. Again, the table lists only those rights actually mentioned in Chapters Two and Three. For example, orthodox Catholics undoubtedly believe a child has the right to say “no” to unwanted touch, but this right was mentioned only by a PPFA source.

A right is that to which a person has a just claim; it assumes a corresponding responsibility to honor the claim. For example, claiming a parental right to be the primary sexuality educator of children in a family also assumes a responsibility of parents to act as the primary educator; no one may justly interfere with the right or the responsibility. If one truly possesses any right, it is immoral for any other party to deny or interfere with the right. Truth enters the analysis of differing beliefs about rights because claims are just only if they reflect the truth. Morality enters the picture because people will not honor rights that conflict with their beliefs about morality. Beliefs about the human person come into play because differing beliefs about the nature of life, the existence of the soul, and the purpose of sexuality, for example, give rise to different claims for justice.

Table 1 lists the different rights claimed by orthodox Catholic and PPFA sources in this study. Just because a right is not listed under a particular source does not necessarily mean the source denies the right. For example, orthodox Catholics do not deny that human beings have the right to make choices; they just disagree about which choices are moral. Likewise, PPFA sources do not deny that human beings have a right to life; the disagreement is over the question of whether the unborn have a just claim to human rights.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>PPFA</th>
<th>Orthodox Catholicism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Human Person</td>
<td>To make choices</td>
<td>To life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To privacy</td>
<td>To marry or remain single without pressure or discrimination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To beliefs, but no right to impose</td>
<td>To have children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To protest religiously based laws</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classes of Person</td>
<td>Of women to make childbearing decisions</td>
<td>Of children to be the fruit of a specific act of conjugal love of their parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Of women to abortion</td>
<td>Of children to be respected as persons from the moment of conception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Of children to be born into a family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Of children to be born of a father and mother known to them and bound to each other by marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Of children to be raised within marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Of children to innocence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Of children to chastity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodily Control</td>
<td>Of individuals to control their own bodies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To plan and space children</td>
<td>To decide on the number of children to be born using just means</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Of individuals to manage their own fertility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To say “no” to unwanted touch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>To contraceptives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To emergency contraception (mifepristone)</td>
<td>To conscience, i.e. to refuse to provide immoral products and services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To receive abortion services without interference from “refusal” clauses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To reproductive health care services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To insurance coverage for contraceptives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexuality Education</td>
<td>To information and knowledge</td>
<td>Of young people to adequate information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To knowledge of contraceptive use</td>
<td>Of parents to educate their children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To scientifically and medically accurate sexuality education</td>
<td>To sexuality education provided within the fullness of truth according to the faith</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In terms of the “Classes of Person” category, orthodox Catholic sources would not deny that a woman has the right to make childbearing decisions; they fundamentally disagree over issues related to means and mutuality, however. The decision to bear children, or not, according to orthodox Catholics, must be made by deciding to abstain from sexual relations during a wife’s fertile period. The decision integrally involves both husband and wife; neither of them may justly make the decision without full mutuality. Orthodox Catholics never consider contraception or abortion as morally justifiable options in terms of childbearing decisions.

In the other column of the “Classes of Person” category, PPFA sources would argue with each of the orthodox Catholic rights listed exclusively for children. Interestingly, PPFA rights focus on women while the orthodox Catholic rights focus on children—over half of them on children before, or at the time of, birth. Such is the crux of the disagreement. Orthodox Catholics argue that the unborn are fully human and fully entitled to human rights from the moment of conception while PPFA sources grant human rights after birth, when the baby draws first breath.

PPFA sources emphasize “Bodily Control,” whereas orthodox Catholic sources do not. However, orthodox Catholics do not deny the right of anyone to bodily control; they simply disagree about the morality of means. For example, PPFA sources beginning with Margaret Sanger use the phrase “bodily control” in terms of using contraceptives to control whether or not pregnancy occurs because of sexual relations. Orthodox Catholics do not deny a right to bodily control, although they would likely emphasize the word “self” rather than “body,” i.e. the right to “self-control.” This emphasis results from the orthodox Catholic moral view that God prohibits the separation of pleasure and conception. Orthodox
Catholics believe married couples may thoroughly enjoy sexual pleasure because it enhances the unitive purpose of sexuality, but they may not actively block the possibility of conception. Thus, orthodox Catholics exercise “bodily control” by employing “self-control” both before and after marriage. They believe youth must exercise continence before marriage and that couples must refrain from extramarital sexuality after marriage. In addition, they believe that if a couple has just reasons for avoiding pregnancy, they must practice Natural Family Planning (NFP) and avoid relations during the wife’s fertile period, about a week or two per month depending on individual cycles. Thus, in terms of the right to plan and space children, PPFA and orthodox Catholic sources agree on the end but not the means.

The “Bodily Control” section also includes, in the PPFA column, the right to say “no” to unwanted touch. One PPFA source mentioned this right, while no orthodox Catholic source did. This does not mean that orthodox Catholics deny the right, just that it did not emerge in the sources included in this study.

PPFA sources emphasize “access” to contraceptives, abortion, and insurance coverage for contraceptives because they believe these products and services are necessary for reproductive freedom. Orthodox Catholics believe that contraception and abortion are immoral, so they are silent on the issue of “access” and, instead, emphasize their right to refuse to provide contraceptives and abortions as a matter of conscience. This particular disagreement about rights is just heating up and promises much controversy in coming years.

This section will conclude with some comments regarding the differing views about rights related to sexuality education. PPFA and orthodox Catholic sources agree, on the
that young people have the right to information. Orthodox Catholics, however, qualify the right with the word “adequate.” The agreement between sources truly is on the surface; the disagreement runs deep. Again, beliefs about truth, morality, and the human person serve to analyze fully the differences. On the issue of information, PPFA sources ground truth in “scientific and medical accuracy” while orthodox Catholic sources see a different picture based upon their dualistic perspective. For orthodox Catholics, a focus simply on science and medicine, rooted exclusively in the Materialist Empiricist (ME) perspective, fails to represent accurately the fullness of truth grounded in the Dualist Rationalist (DR) perspective. For PPFA sources, “revealed truth,” contrary to or unsubstantiated by scientific or medical findings, is not truth at all. On the issue of including information about the use of contraceptives in sexuality education, the disagreement of orthodox Catholics rooted in their beliefs about both morality and the human person have been dealt with extensively. The same is true for the differences between the “comprehensive” approach versus the “chastity” approach to sexuality education.

The forgoing examples show clearly that the differing beliefs regarding rights between orthodox Catholic and PPFA sources reduce to differences regarding the nature of truth, morality, and the human person. One can analyze each of the differences fully in terms of these categories. Thus, differing beliefs regarding human rights do not constitute grounds for additional theory.

Social Control (Coping)

The substantive studies of both PPFA and orthodox Catholic sources included findings under the category “coping.” Analysis of these findings in terms of formal theory reveals the larger issue of social control. Defined simply in this context, social control refers
to the exercise of power to get some level of society to conform to a particular point of view. The “level of society” upon which people may seek to exert their power ranges from the individual to the family to the larger culture or nation. The findings in the substantive studies show that orthodox Catholic sources currently tend to exercise power directed at the family level while PPFA sources tend to target larger levels of society (see Table 2).

Such has not always been the case, however. For example, Margaret Sanger launched her movement because traditional religion, especially Catholicism, had such a strong hold on the legal system (see, for example, Sanger, 1922). She sought to undo that hold, and her movement has demonstrated much success. On the other hand, in more recent times, orthodox Catholics, and others who share at least some of their beliefs, have sought to exercise power on social levels larger than the family. Even in the late 1960s and early 1970s, orthodox Catholics, with others, sought to remove comprehensive sexuality education from local curricula (see, for example, Breasted, 1970). Such efforts do continue today, but they tend to be the exception rather than the rule as, perhaps, they were then (cf. Hottois & Milner, 1975). Nevertheless, in the substantive studies reported in this work, orthodox Catholic sources mentioned control strategies focused at the family or local level while PPFA source referred to strategies focused at state and national level.

Two theoretical models help to explain the variability. The first presents epistemological beliefs about law along with the level of control (see Figure 4). For materialists law is only a human construct. Dualists believe that civil law must reflect divinely revealed Natural Law. Beliefs about law also vary according to the level of control by which the law is enforced.
**Table 2. Social control strategies by source**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PPFA Sources</th>
<th>Orthodox Catholic Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engage in political activism</td>
<td>Seek “opt-in” rather than “opt-out” sexuality education classes in schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage in political lobbying</td>
<td>Opt-out of a particular school class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage in civil disobedience</td>
<td>Combine options, e.g. dual enrollment in public school and homeschooling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expose breaches in “the wall of separation”</td>
<td>Opt-out of public schooling for private schooling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek mandatory comprehensive sexuality education in schools through legislation with an “opt-out” choice if necessary</td>
<td>Opt-out of all institutional schooling for homeschooling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materialism</td>
<td>Dualism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Materialistic Civil Law</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dualistic Civil Law</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law rooted in metaphysical materialism. Laws must be made and interpreted within the realm of human judgment without reference to any realm of existence apart from that which can be perceived by human senses.</td>
<td>Law rooted in Eternal Law, which exists apart from the physical world. Laws must be made and interpreted within the realm of Natural Law, which exists apart from human senses and reflects Divine Wisdom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relative Family Rules</strong></td>
<td><strong>Absolute Family Rules</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Family” has no absolute form. Rules for child rearing and behavior relative to individual family units according to decision making processes, which may vary from family to family.</td>
<td>“Family” conforms to the divine model of husband, wife, and children. Family rules and behavior governed by beliefs about Natural Law, which are absolute.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The second theoretical model helps explain elements of social control (see Figure 5). Those who seek control target various levels of society ranging from the state or national level to the local level. They also seek policy decisions at various levels ranging from government to individual control.

In terms of Figure 4, PPFA sources operate on the left half of the model while orthodox Catholic sources operate on the right. It is easy to see how the model, suitable to a more formal theory, can apply to those who do not necessarily align themselves with these particular points of view. For example, a Unitarian Universalist may disagree with PPFA about abortion but still align his or her beliefs with the left half of the model, while an evangelical Christian may disagree with Catholicism but still align his or her beliefs with the right half. In general, beliefs about law correspond well to the materialistic/dualistic dichotomy and form the basis for much of the political polarization seen in the United States over the past half-century (cf. Layman, 2001; Layman & Carmines, 1997).

Figure 5 characterizes not only the coping strategies found in orthodox Catholic and PPFA sources, but also strategies available to all who seek to cope, or exert social control, in terms of sexuality education. In this study, orthodox Catholic sources mentioned strategies in the “Absence of Legislation” quadrant while PPFA sources mentioned strategies in both the “Law Focused on Individual Choice” and “Mandates” quadrants. Both sources can choose, and have historically chosen, strategies in all quadrants. As PPFA becomes more committed to political activism, as with its unprecedented decision to back a candidate in the 2004 presidential election, one could reasonably expect their move to provoke orthodox Catholics into more political activism. Historically, such “religious traditionalists,” have been reluctant to enter the political fray unless provoked (cf. Layman & Carmines, 1997).
Figure 5. Dimensions of social control by unit controlled and level of control.

- **Law Focused on Individual Choice**
  State level decisions like Griswold (1967) and Roe (1973) that provide for individual choice. Such decisions affect sexuality education by making information about contraception and abortion legal.

- **Absence of Legislation**
  Individual families exercise “opt-out” provisions to exclude children from sexuality education that conflicts with their family values and beliefs.

- **Mandates**
  Laws requiring either the comprehensive or abstinence-only approach fit here. Federal laws providing funding for one form or the other also fit.

- **School Board Policy**
  Local policy decisions provide for the smallest unit of “state control” over sexuality education.

- **Individual Control**
- **State Focus**
- **Local Focus**

**Government Control**
Conclusion

Rooted in the two substantive grounded theory presentations in Chapters Two and Three, a more formal theory of sexuality education beliefs begins to emerge. The central categories in this theory include truth, morality, the human person, and social control (coping). Beliefs about God, family, and human rights emerge as critical to understanding these central categories related to sexuality education. While further substantive studies may refine this emerging formal theory, a researcher can reasonably expect to find results strongly related to the theoretical models presented here.

As early as 1932, Willard Waller made the following insightful observation that, some dated issues aside, rings as true today as it did the better part of a century ago:

The list of those who have sought to use the tax-supported schools as channels for their doctrines is almost as long as the list of those who have axes to grind. Prohibitionists, professional reformers, political parties, public utilities, sectarians, moralists, advocates of the open shop, labor unions, socialists, anti-vivisectionists, jingoes, chauvinists, and patrioteers—all have sought to control the curriculum, the composition of the teaching staff, and the method of instruction. In widely differing degrees all these groups have succeeded. (Waller, 1932, p. 16).

The point is compelling. The battle over sexuality education curriculum has been raging for nearly a century (Kliebard, 1995; Moran, 1996, 2000; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). It has ranged from no curriculum at all, to a moralistic curriculum rooted in the social hygiene movement, to a comprehensive sexuality education curriculum based on a belief in values neutrality, and back to abstinence-only sexuality education, which critics see as moralization all over again. The battle over the composition of the teaching staff, in terms of sexuality
education has been waged largely between parents, who believe this subject is their exclusive domain, and cosmopolitans and professional elites who believe many parents have failed in their duties due to lack of formal training or religious repression (Balliet, 1927; Hottois & Milner, 1975; Irvine, 2002). The battle has also been waged in universities where those who have sought to replace traditional sexuality education, or non-education in many cases, with the comprehensive model have implemented training programs to ensure that a new generation of teachers are prepared (e.g. Avery & Kirkendall, 1955). The battle rages over methods of instruction as well, especially regarding condoms. For example, while some do not object to instruction about contraceptive methods, they do object to bringing samples of condoms into the classroom or demonstrating the proper use of a condom on a banana; to cope, many instructors resort to secrecy and deception (Balliet, 1927; Moran, 2000; Selle, 2002). Exactly what does and does not constitute “adequate” or “age-appropriate” sexuality education information also divides differing camps in terms of instructional methods. For example, as seen earlier, some believe in a period of sexual latency while others believe humans are lifelong sexual beings.

Those with differing sexuality education beliefs have long sought to exercise control through the public schools. They will continue. This emerging formal theory has provided models within which researchers, sexuality educators working both inside and outside the public schools, parents, and all interested parties may make better sense of differing beliefs about sexuality education and predictions about the impact of these beliefs on public policy.
CHAPTER FIVE

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Suggestions for Further Study

This study raises the possibility of future studies along many different avenues. In addition to those potential research questions that may have crossed the minds of different readers, this section suggests several general lines of research. The suggestions refer to additional substantive studies, parallel research related to other curricular areas, the politics of curriculum, and possible means of creating equal access to public funding for religious schools.

Additional Substantive Groups or Individuals

Many additional substantive studies suggest themselves upon even a casual reading of this study. For example, one may ask about the sexuality education beliefs of many other groups to which this study refers directly or indirectly: mainline Protestants, evangelical Christians, Jews, Unitarian Universalists, members of the National Council of Churches, and members of the American Humanist Association. Other religious groups not referred to would provide additional data of great interest as well. For example, what are the sexuality education beliefs of the Latter Day Saints? Muslims? Branches within Islam? Buddhists? Hindus? Studies of the sexuality education beliefs of any of these groups would undoubtedly enrich this emerging formal theory. In addition, in-depth case studies of individuals may accomplish the same goal. While this study has presented two substantive grounded theories based upon individual affiliation with institutions, many individuals, perhaps most, hold
beliefs not aligned with any one group. A grounded theory based upon case studies of one or more such individuals could shed much light upon this emerging formal theory.

**Beliefs about Other Curricular Areas**

Interestingly, Jeffrey Moran, who has studied the history of sex education with perhaps more depth and insight than any other historian (e.g. 1996; 2000) has also taken a diversion into the history of science education, at least tangentially, by studying the Scopes Trial (2002). I find his diversion quite in line with his interest in sexuality education because many of the same core issues regarding beliefs about truth, morality, the human person, and coping seem to emerge there too. This point raises the parallel research question: What beliefs do people hold regarding science education?

One may also ask such questions about other curricular areas. For example, Ellis and Fouts (1997) have raised questions about self-esteem programs, thinking skills, and whole language learning to name just a few. Although they do not, one could raise questions about math methodologies like the “new math” presented several decades ago or today’s “problem solving” or “investigations” approaches. Within all of these areas, differing curricula have roots in differing beliefs. While these beliefs may not range as deeply as beliefs about truth, morality, and the human person, it may prove instructive to conduct qualitative research exploring beliefs in relation to other subject areas.

**Politics of Curriculum**

This study originally included the politics of curriculum in greater depth than that finally presented because political issues emerged so strongly. To ensure a workable focus for the current study, I dropped any in-depth focus on this fascinating subject. Perhaps
sexuality and science education are the most politically charged subject areas, but the extent to which political factors play a role in curriculum decisions on all levels astounded me. Before conducting this study, I naïvely clung to the belief that curriculum decisions, for the most part, followed the best learning interests of children and youth. The polarization present in the sexuality education controversy, especially as seen in the comprehensive and abstinence-only camps, lays that belief quickly to rest. Both sides exert tremendous political pressure to make their beliefs the law of the land, neither with substantial evidence that their favored curriculum produces the results upon which it is sold (cf. Breasted, 1970; Imber, 1982; Moran, 2000; Selle, 2002). A host of researchers and other authors provide promising work upon which to conduct further research into the politics of curriculum (e.g. Crain, Katz, & Rosenthal, 1969; Dahl, 1956, 1961; Dolbeare & Hammond, 1971; Evans et al., 1999; Gusfield, 1963; Hollingshead, 1949; Hottois & Milner, 1975; F. Hunter, 1953; Kimbrough, 1964; Kliebard, 1995; Layman, 2001; Layman & Carmines, 1997; Lutz & Iannaccone, 1969; Lynd & Lynd, 1929, 1937; National Education Association, 1975; Tyack & Cuban, 1995; Warner, 1949). Following their leads, a deeply interesting study of the politics of curriculum awaits the ambitions of a future researcher. Such a study could add immeasurably to an understanding of both the nature of this political realm and the means to ensure that curricular decisions are better made in the best interests of children and youth. One of the conclusions detailed later, states that equal access to public funding by religiously oriented schools may help solve problems associated with sexuality education. Any realization of this politically charged scenario in the United States would also require additional study.
The First Amendment

This study provokes troubling conclusions regarding the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. While PPFA sources seek to plug holes in the “wall of separation,” they counter their opponents, including orthodox Catholics, who hope to preserve the freedom to exercise their beliefs by referring to the religious motivations of the founding fathers. In terms of the “Beliefs about Truth” model (see Figure 1), both sides in this debate violate the “free exercise clause” of the First Amendment (cf. Doyle, 1997). By lobbying for and successfully passing legislation that funds comprehensive sexuality education in the public schools, an approach that violates the beliefs of many Americans, those who support this approach prohibit the free exercise of differing beliefs by those who do not. The former tend to fall in the ME quadrant and the latter in the DR quadrant. On the other hand, those who align their beliefs with the dualistic side of the model, both the DE and DR quadrants, are guilty as well. By seeking to foist legislation that funds abstinence-only sexuality education, which they have successfully introduced and passed, on those in the left side of the model, the ME and MR quadrants, they also prohibit the free exercise of beliefs about truth.

On both sides of the question, these beliefs about truth take on a fundamentally religious quality. To assert that “creation” is dualistic is to assert a religious belief (see Figure 1). By definition, it presupposes a spiritual world, a realm in which the human soul exists. On the other side of the coin, to assert that “existence” is solely materialistic, whether one claims deistic or atheistic beliefs, is also to assert religious beliefs, or, at least, beliefs opposed to the religious beliefs of others. Either way, religious beliefs are at issue.
One can make the point with equal strength along moral lines (see Figure 2). To foist a relativistic belief about morality on those who hold an absolutist belief, or vice versa, is also to prohibit the *free exercise* of belief. In this case, the religious nature of the beliefs in question seems even clearer. Nevertheless, some may argue that moral relativism, deducible within the materialistic metaphysical view alone, does not constitute a religious belief in morality, but a purely secular belief in humanistic ethics. However, to assert that a purely secular morality exists at all is to assert at least a belief opposed to a religious belief, and religion again remains the issue at hand.

The analysis from the point of view of the human person adds even more perspective (see Figure 3). Those who assert the existence of the immortal human soul certainly express a religious belief. Those who deny such a reality, even if they claim purely secular or humanistic motivations, assert a belief at least contrary to the religious beliefs of those with whom they disagree. The existence of the soul, pro or con, is essentially a religious matter. Again, religious belief is the point of departure.

For the most part, the courts have ruled that sexuality education programs have little or no relevance to the “free exercise clause” (e.g. “Cornwell,” 1969; “Hopkins,” 1971; “Leebaert,” 2002; Hottois & Milner, 1975). These rulings run contrary to the argument that purely secular beliefs have a religious nature, if only by reference to conflicting religious beliefs. For decades now, the courts have treated sexuality education as purely secular. The courts have ruled that comprehensive sexuality education programs do not establish a state sponsored religion, and thus have upheld the rights of those who wish to offer such curricula through the public schools.
The establishment clause has also been a focus on the other side of the debate. Heading off a potentially unfavorable ruling after President Reagan signed the AFLA ("Adolescent Family Life Act," 1981), supporters settled the suit by agreeing to remove what might reasonably be perceived as religious content in abstinence-only curricula or, at least, to withhold federal funding from such programs. Such a potentially unfavorable ruling would have been rooted in the establishment clause, claiming that such religious content would constitute a state endorsement of particular religious beliefs.

The question, then, comes down to whether a belief opposed to a religious belief is also a religious belief. In order to sort out “establishment” and “free exercise” controversies adequately, this critical question must find an answer. For example, a materialist claims only that which is natural, perceivable by the senses in the material realm, exists. On the other hand, a dualist claims the conflicting belief that, in addition to the natural realm, a supernatural reality also exists. By definition, the dualist’s belief is religious. Is the materialist’s belief, then, also religious?

A materialist may argue that the dualist is mad, or at least deluded. To believe in that which one cannot perceive is ludicrous. To assert such a belief is simply “anti-materialist” and has nothing to do with religion because the subject matter of religion, the supernatural, does not even exist. The dualist, on the other hand, may argue that the materialist ignores clues regarding the supernatural. That “life” exists, that “thought” exists, that unexplainable phenomena (miracles) occur, all give clues that the supernatural world does exist even though we cannot perceive it directly. To assert that those who hold such beliefs are mad or deluded is simply “anti-religious.”
Is the glass half-empty or half-full? In light of the First Amendment, only one answer to this question is possible. By guaranteeing citizens the right to *free exercise* of religion, the Bill of Rights grants legal status to religious beliefs. It also, consequently, grants the right not to hold religious beliefs, but religion remains the standard. In terms of the Constitution, by making elements of their belief system the law of the land, materialists do prohibit the *free exercise* of religion for those who do not share their beliefs. Consider Australian support for this interpretation of the “free exercise clause”:

The framers of the Australian Constitution adopted much of our constitutional language, word-for-word, including our First Amendment. Yet, unlike our Supreme Court, the Australian High Court has inclined toward the “free exercise clause,” ruling that, so long as the state supports all religious schools equally, (including nonreligious schools), and prefers none to the other, the wall of separation between church and state is not violated. (Doyle, 1997, p. 91).

However, dualists also share the guilt for restricting the *free exercise* of beliefs contrary to their own. By this analysis, Margaret Sanger fought justly against religious beliefs encoded in the law by dualists, notably DRs (see Figure 1). Just as requiring students to take or opt-out of a class providing information about contraception contrary to their religious beliefs prohibits their *free exercise* of religion today, the Comstock laws that barred Sanger from providing such information prohibited her *free exercise* of beliefs—beliefs that if not religious, were at least contrary to religious beliefs. On religious grounds then, neither materialists like Sanger nor dualists like Comstock can make their beliefs the law of the land without prohibiting the *free exercise* of religion.
Practically speaking, the vigor with which MEs lobby against abstinence-only legislation and for comprehensive sexuality education alongside the force with which abstinence-only proponents (DEs and DRs) do the opposite proves the point. On both sides, the issue is religion. One side seeks to keep religious beliefs out of the law while the other side, claiming that abstinence-only sexuality education is not religious in nature, seeks to preserve their right to exercise freely their religious beliefs. When any kind of public school sexuality education violates the beliefs of either side, neither side is free. Both sides foist their beliefs on the other. Decades ago, using the law to support the comprehensive sexuality education movement was an inappropriate response to legally encoded moralism. The abstinence-only movement today is simply another improper response, this time to the success of the comprehensive sexuality education movement. What, then, is the answer?

**Ditching Sexuality Education?**

One may argue that these troubling conclusions constitute grounds for the elimination of sexuality education from all public learning institutions. The problem with this line of reasoning is that it violates beliefs about truth as well. What about those who passionately believe that sexuality education must be a part of the curriculum? What about parents who want their children to learn about sexuality in school? Based upon the arguments above, ditching sexuality education cannot be the answer either. Reasoning which draws upon the emerging formal theory presented here must seek an answer that honors the beliefs of all people, no matter where they fall in the belief models. The following ideas, *Opt-In Rather Than Opt-Out* and *Equal Sectarian Access to Public Funding*, provide two potential solutions that honor all beliefs.
**Opt-In Rather Than Opt-Out**

One potential answer is to make sexuality education classes elective rather than standard fare. Such an option offers full freedom for students or parents to choose whether to participate, regardless of whether they base their choice on religious grounds or not. Why, then, is this answer the exception rather than the rule in our system of public schools?

Those who seek to mandate comprehensive sexuality education through legislation, providing the choice to opt-out only due to political pressure or legal precedents (cf. Hottois & Milner, 1975), do so because they believe the quality of public health demands it. They cite teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease (STD) rates among the young as public health problems requiring education. In response, those who favor the abstinence-only approach claim their methodology produces better results and fight for funding equity through counter-legislation. However, no research has yet shown that either comprehensive or abstinence-only sexuality education reduces teen pregnancies or STDs (Breasted, 1970; Imber, 1982; Moran, 2000; Selle, 2002). Paraphrasing this claim, I contacted Douglas Kirby, Ph.D. on January 29, 2003. Dr. Kirby is perhaps the most prolific researcher in the field of sexuality education today and a strong advocate of the comprehensive approach (e.g. Kirby, 2003; Kirby, Alter, & Scales, 1979; Kirby & ETR Associates., 1995; Kirby, Mathtech Inc., & Center for Health Promotion and Education (U.S.), 1984; Kirby & National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy (U.S.), 2001; Kirby & National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. Task Force on Effective Programs and Research., 1997; Kirby, Ph.D., 2002, 2003; Kirby & United States Congress, Office of Technology Assessment, Health Program, 1988; Kirby et al., 1989). In the correspondence, I said:
I have encountered the following claim several times in the literature: “Sex education has never been shown to reduce teen pregnancies or STDs.” The claim pertains to both comprehensive sex education and abstinence-only education. I have been unable to locate any solid research that contradicts this claim. Can you point me to any research? Thank you.

While adding that research has demonstrated that comprehensive sex education programs do produce effects that logically should reduce teen pregnancy, Dr. Kirby replied on February 3rd, 2003, “The statement is true” (Kirby, Ph.D., 2003). Kirby provided no caveats regarding STDs. Dr. Kirby helped to confirm what I had found in previous research (Selle, 2002), that no research exists that directly links any sexuality education program to reductions in teen pregnancies or STDs.

In my previous research, I had also found that a new report called into question longstanding statements regarding the effectiveness of condoms in preventing or reducing the risk of STDs (Scientific Evidence on Condom . . . 2001). In response to this report, delivered at a conference organized by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and others, the CDC removed many statements about condom effectiveness from its website. Many PPFA sources expressed the belief that politics motivated these changes due to biases of the George W. Bush administration. These sources said that they still believed condoms do protect against STDs just as effectively as they had always taught. However, peer-reviewed medical research has proven the previous blanket statements about condoms incorrect and added justification to the CDC action (e.g. Fitch et al., 2002). Many factors do decrease any risk reduction attributable to condoms, and those who use condoms, hoping to reduce their risk, have not routinely received full disclosure regarding these factors. The bottom line is
that those who seek to mandate sexuality education, comprehensive or abstinence-only, against the beliefs of those who oppose them, have not yet made a good case to do so based on public health concerns.

Several researchers express awareness that sexuality education has not produced significant results in response to public health concerns; it has not been shown to reduce teen pregnancies or STDs (e.g. Breasted, 1970; Imber, 2003b; Moran, 2000; Trudell, 1985). Although she favors a comprehensive approach to sexuality education, Mary Breasted acknowledges that research regarding results in her time was inconclusive at best. Michael Imber has published many articles about sex education (Imber, 1982, 1984, 1995, 2003a). In each of them, he refers to the ineffectiveness of various attempts to reduce teen pregnancies and STDs. In a personal correspondence (Imber, 2003b), I sought some clarification. Imber made the following comments on the issue:

Educational programs usually cannot solve problems that are not caused by ignorance. Sex ed is a prime example. If kids got pregnant because they didn’t know the cause of pregnancy, sex ed might be an effective way to combat teen pregnancy. But among the causes of teen pregnancy, lack of basic knowledge is far down the list.

Jeffrey Moran (2000) too discusses the ineffectiveness of what he calls the “instrumentalist” approach to sexuality education. Referring to “instrumentalism” in Dewey’s philosophy (cf. Dewey, Schilpp, & Hahn, 1989), Moran demonstrates that since 1904, sex education has failed as an “instrument” to produce specific ends such as reductions in teen pregnancies and STDs. In an excellent critical examination of the first organized attempt to implement sex education in the early 20th century, Bonnie Trudell (1985) compellingly points out that
where many see teen pregnancy as the root problem, perhaps, in light of the fact that teen pregnancy is 10 times greater among lower class blacks than middle class whites, poverty is a more basic problem. Realizing the failure of sex education in producing significant reductions in teen pregnancies and STDs, each of these researchers face the problem without relying on unproven assumptions, realizing that answers might lie outside the realm of sex education.

On the other side of the question, no researcher has established that those who receive any one type of sexuality education, or none at all, have a higher rate of teen pregnancies or STDs. Japan and Italy have the lowest rates of teen pregnancy in the world (Darroch, Frost, Singh, & The Study Team, 2001; Singh & Darroch, 2000). Yet these two countries have resisted sexuality education in their school systems (Curriculum Council, 1998; cf. Brasor, 2003; CDC, 1992). Until June of 1999 when Japan first legalized the oral contraceptive pill (Kihara, Kramer, Bain, Kihara, & Mandel, 2001), the Japanese Ministry of Health and Welfare (JMHW) delayed approval citing, in part, concerns that legalization would increase STDs (Kitamura, 1999). The JMHW may have been right: “Right now, the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases, a good barometer of the probability of HIV infection, is rapidly rising among [15-24 year olds] in Japan” (Brasor, 2003, ¶ 6; cf. Infectious Diseases Weekly Report, 2003). In the absence of evidence that any one form of sexuality education, including silence about the issue, either increases or decreases teen pregnancies or STDs, no one can rationally address these identified public health concerns through legislation or “opt-out” type programs. In the United States, no results more impressive than those from a chastity program called True Love Can Wait (Bearman & Brückner, 2001) have yet been documented. That program, however, has limits and does not
prove any reduction in teen pregnancies or STDs either. It simply produces some of the best results to date in terms of delaying first intercourse. Although no one has questioned the quality of the study, it has been controversial (see, for example, Bearman & Brückner, 2001, note 3). Nevertheless, the evidence from this study, strong though it is, remains insufficient to mandate its use as a public health solution. Neither is the evidence from any other study of any other program or method.

Preferring legally mandated or “opt-out” sexuality education classes that present beliefs about truth, morality, and the human person (see Figures 1-3) contrary to the beliefs of many others in the population, as comprehensive, abstinence-only, and chastity based sexuality education all do, is not justifiable on public health grounds. Preferring “opt-in” rather than “opt-out” formats would truly create a “pro-choice” format for sexuality education in the public schools. Such a format would fully respect the beliefs of all involved by honoring their freedom to choose sexuality education that conforms to their beliefs, inside or outside the public school classroom.

**Equal Sectarian Access to Public Funding?**

Historical interpretations of the First Amendment have made the idea of providing funding for sectarian schools seem un-American. Given that “our fellow liberal democracies, almost without exception, provide funds for non-government, religious-based schooling,” some think these historical interpretations are anti-Catholic (Doyle, 1997, pp. 91 ff.). One such a model in a nation that separates church and state can be found in Canada. St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School in Nepean, a suburb of Toronto (Fournier, 2002), is a Catholic school that receives public funding (see the OCCSB audited financial statement, Fournier, 2002). I had the opportunity to visit with a member of the parent leadership group
of that school during a trip to Toronto in July of 2002. He accurately informed me that all schools in Ontario receive public funding whether or not they have a religious affiliation. He laughed at the idea that such an arrangement might constitute a state-sponsored religion. Since all schools had equal access to funding regardless of any religious affiliation, he, like the Australian High Court quoted earlier (Doyle, 1997), thought it obvious that the state established no religion. He expressed pity for his neighbors across Lake Ontario saying that the United States would do better to support such a system. As indicated by Doyle (1997) previously, such an arrangement is not unique to Ontario. The discussion below gives additional examples.

Many advocates of a mandatory approach to sexuality education, through either legislation or local “opt-out” type programs, cite the relatively high teen pregnancy and STD rates in the United States compared to other developed countries. They often mention Canada, England, France, the Netherlands, and Sweden (e.g. Darroch et al., 2001; DeCarlo et al., 1995; Singh & Darroch, 2000); PPFA sources interviewed for this study also cited these countries frequently. While such studies and individuals holding similar opinions often admit that sexuality education programs have not worked in the United States, they assume, without citing any research establishing a direct link, that sexuality education programs in these other developed countries account for the lower rates of teen pregnancies and STDs (e.g. Darroch et al., 2001; DeCarlo et al., 1995; Dryfoos, 1985; Hoyt & Broom, 2002). Even in the Dryfoos study (1985), a “policy favoring sex education” (p. 7) heads the list of recommendations even though the study recognizes that schools in The Netherlands, the country that “with the exception of Japan must have the lowest teenage pregnancy rate in the world” (p. 4) generally oppose sex education (p. 5). As cited earlier, these studies
completely ignore success factors in countries like Japan and Italy that resist school-based sexuality education, countries with the lowest teen pregnancy rates in the world.

Such unproven assumptions about the efficacy of sexuality education are inexcusable in light of the many variables that may come into play. For example, although no research has examined possible links to their remarkably low teen pregnancy and STD rates, each of the countries cited, with the exception Japan, offers school choice and funds sectarian schools (Doyle, 1997; Lawton, 1984; Organization for Quality Education, 2001; Teese, 1986). Perhaps the reason these countries do so well is because they avoid the political polarization created in the United States over religious differences (cf. Layman, 2001; Layman & Carmines, 1997; Teese, 1986). One can find support for such an idea in the fact that Denmark and The Netherlands, countries that liberally support religious schools, have among the best statistics regarding teen pregnancies and STDs. “According to Danish Ministry of Education” (Doyle, 1997, p. 90):

Today, various kinds of “free” or independent schools exist, all of them subsidized up to 85 percent . . . the principle behind these large subsidies is that, although Denmark has an efficient education system . . . it should be possible for people to choose an alternative kind of education for their children should they wish, whether their reason for this be ideological, political, educational, or religious. (Doyle, 1997, p. 90).

The Netherlands, with among the lowest teen pregnancy and STD rates in the world, serves as an even more striking example. In their evolving public education system, the Dutch “were convinced that religion and education could not be divorced” (Doyle, 1997, p. 90). In 1997:
70 percent of Dutch children attended religious schools with public funds. Indeed, the Dutch Ministry of Education sees its role as primarily one of quality control and benchmarking, using government schools as indicators of cost and quality as they hammer out appropriations for education, most of which go to non-government schools. (Doyle, 1997, p. 90).

Research has not established such an assertion about a link between publicly funding sectarian schools and lower teen pregnancy rates and STDs either, but the fact serves as an example of one of the many variables that might influence why different developed countries vary in the rates of teen pregnancies and STDs and the complexity of the issue.

This research has established a theoretical framework for analyzing strongly opposed belief systems. It has also shown how comprehensive sexuality education and abstinence-only proponents both seek social control through legislation and local policy decisions. Perhaps those who seek to mandate sexuality education in the schools should work to eliminate the rancor generated when those with strongly opposing sexuality education beliefs impose them on others, through legislation or local policy decisions, before comparing the United States with other countries that do not have that problem.

Imagine such a system in the United States. I can hear the objections already. “No public money for religion.” But on what grounds? That equal access to funding regardless of any religious affiliation would establish a religion? St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Elementary near Toronto, along with other examples around the world, proves this fear unfounded. The Australian High Court concurs (Doyle, 1997). That the free exercise of religion would be prohibited for those attending the schools? Hardly. Just as the Danish Ministry of Education has recognized, all would have the freedom to choose which school to attend. Such a system
would resolve the troubling conclusions presented above by providing full freedom of choice with regard to sexuality education without violating the establishment clause; such a system would emphasize the word “free” in the free exercise clause. Some argue that choice will denude our public school system. This study does not examine the potential merits or harms of various school choice programs. The kind of choice offered in many other countries treats sectarian schools as full members of the public system, not somehow different as people tend to view them in the context of charter schools or voucher supported private schools. Recognizing that any major change to public school funding in the United States might cause hardships during a transition, this study simply implies that equal sectarian access to public funding could solve problems associated with sexuality education.

**Conclusion**

This research has provided substantive grounded theories of both PPFA and orthodox Catholic sexuality education beliefs. In addition, it has provided a preliminary theoretical framework within which to understand, explain, and make relevant predictions based upon widely varied sexuality education beliefs. Sensitive listening, understanding, and respecting the tremendous diversity of deeply held beliefs, so prevalent in issues of sexuality, can eliminate the divisive rancor that exists on state and national levels regarding sexuality education, as well as the controversy that still arises in local school districts. When true tolerance for such diversity emerges, educators and policy-makers alike can better serve the curricular best interests of school-aged children and youth.

Much work remains. Further studies of sexuality education beliefs can refine and develop the budding formal theory presented here. As a society, we must address the intolerance of deeply held religious beliefs as they apply to curricular issues that have
developed due to our historical treatment of the “establishment” and “free exercise” clauses of the First Amendment. The conclusions of this study have shown that no eminent threat to public health exists if we consider ending social control in the area of sexuality education and provide instead a climate of choice that respects differing beliefs; both “opt-in” policies and equal sectarian access to public funding provide possible answers that would foster a respectful climate of choice. Perhaps providing such choice will improve public health related to sexuality in the United States. The Netherlands, Sweden, Canada, England, and other countries routinely provide such choice. Perhaps those who promote comprehensive or abstinence-only sexuality education, while condemning their opponents and creating such rancor, enmity, and divisiveness, would do better not to assume that their approach solves public health problems when no firm evidence exists for such a conclusion. Perhaps they would do better to provide a climate of true respect for differing belief systems before seeking to control those who disagree with them by reducing or eliminating choice in the area of sexuality education. Whether pro-choice or pro-life, perhaps they would do better to unite on the issue of supporting full freedom of choice in the area of sexuality education.
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Appendix A: Methods

Glaser and Strauss (1967) developed a methodology called grounded theory generation. Their qualitative technique rests on the belief that theory generation serves as the primary goal for qualitative research. This belief stands in contrast to the view that describing rich detail in social phenomena serves as the primary goal of qualitative research (Reed & Furman, 1992; cf. Geertz, 1973; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). With some additional analysis techniques, explained below, this study follows their methodology (see also Haig, 1995; Kinach, 1995; Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Glaser and Strauss distinguish “substantive” from “formal” grounded theory (1967, ch. 4). This work generates both. First, the study generates substantive grounded theories of sexuality education beliefs for two specific groups: orthodox Catholic and Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) sources. Based upon these two substantive groups, the study sketches the beginnings of a formal grounded theory of sexuality education beliefs. Glaser and Strauss call this methodology “comparative analysis of groups” and comment, “it is still the most powerful method for generating core categories and their properties and formulating a theory that fits and works” (p. 82). While Glaser and Strauss refer to “multiple areas” (p. 82) when making this remark, the methodology applies equally well to widely diverse beliefs regarding the same substantive topic. In this sense, one can easily consider orthodox Catholic and PPFA sexuality education beliefs as “multiple areas.”

While mathematical methods are not necessarily directly applicable to qualitative research, Glaser and Strauss (1967) emphasize the importance of the researcher’s experience in generating theory. My experience includes success in using the method of specialization to solve a variety of problems, not just mathematical, and it occurred to me to use that method in this research. Simply put, one uses the method of specialization to tackle a problem by looking at special cases. Looking at special “extreme cases” of a given problem proves particularly instructive (Pólya, 1973, p. 192). In the context of sexuality education beliefs, one can visualize various beliefs as on a continuum with left and right extremities. The extremes of the continuum define its boundaries. Thus, one may reason that finding and studying these extremes in depth might begin to illuminate the whole spectrum. This study takes such an approach.

Based upon previous research (Selle, 2002), I knew that orthodox Catholic and PPFA sexuality education beliefs, if not at the absolute extremes, lay close to opposite ends of the continuum. In literature addressing issues of sexuality, sources universally present Catholicism as the most “conservative.” Although not mentioned as often by name, PPFA did emerge as a major player in sexuality education, always portrayed as one of the most “liberal” in terms of beliefs about sexuality. Thus, I had two definable groups near the right and left ends of the spectrum. Based upon Glaser and Strauss (1967), seasoned with a little Polya (1954; 1973; 1981; cf. Pólya & Bowden, 1977), I reasoned that studying each group in depth would generate theoretical models applicable to the spectrum of various sexuality education beliefs, understanding that refinement of the models must await additional research.
The specific analysis methodology for advancing from substantive to formal grounded theory relied on use of the two by two matrix (Reed & Furman, 1992). As Reed and Furman point out, Glaser and Strauss did not provide specific methods for advancing to formal theory. Reed and Furman provide an analysis methodology for just such an advance. Once the researcher has identified a “core category” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 40) for the formal theory by using substantive methods on the data from diverse groups, properties of that theory may be subjected to analysis using a matrix. Properties of a category are attributes that can be dimensionalized (cf. Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In this particular study, the two by two matrix, rather than matrices of different sizes, served well because the major categories generally had two key properties. For example, the core category, “truth,” had one metaphysical property whose dimensions ranged from materialism to dualism and one epistemological property whose dimensions ranged from empiricism to rationalism. The four quadrants generated by the matrix served as an excellent analysis tool and format for theory presentation.

**Group, Source, and Site Selections**

I explained the selection of groups in the introduction to this methods section. I chose orthodox Catholics and PPFA because they held disparate beliefs about sexuality education as evidenced by literature included in a previous study (Selle, 2002). In-depth qualitative studies of these two wide-ranging substantive groups held promise for the generation of formal theory.

This study relied on diverse sources including documents, interview transcripts, and observations recorded via field notes. For inclusion in this study, documents had to have direct links to orthodox Catholic or PPFA people or organizations. The same criteria held for
interview respondents. In addition, I observed events sponsored or co-sponsored by orthodox Catholic or PPFA sources, which included as major presenters people directly linked to orthodox Catholicism, PPFA, or PPFA local affiliates.

The orthodox Catholic study drew on 34 primary documents, all included in the reference section of this work. Although the Catholic portion of the study involved fewer total works than the PPFA part, the volume was comparable because many of the Catholic documents were very long. For example, the classic \textit{Summa Theologica} by Thomas Aquinas includes five books generally published in three volumes (cf. Aquinas, 1920). The authoritative \textit{Catechism of the Catholic Church} (\textit{CCC}, 1994) contains 904 pages of small print. The traditional reference \textit{Sources of Catholic Dogma} by Denzinger (1957) contains 811 pages of even smaller print. In addition to great length, these examples show that the study relied on many doctrinal sources. Documents also included the writings of three 20\textsuperscript{th} century popes, papal commissions, priests, and laity who professed and demonstrated orthodoxy in terms of their belief in official Catholic magisterial teachings. I always considered popes orthodox because of the Catholic doctrine of papal infallibility, which says that a pope cannot err when officially teaching on issues of faith and morals (\textit{CCC}, 1994). I did not consider priests, bishops, or laity as orthodox unless they openly declared their orthodoxy, wrote through official magisterial groups like the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), advocated exclusively for obviously orthodox causes as \textit{Priests for Life} does on the issue of abortion, or published in sources that emphasize their orthodoxy.

The PPFA portion of the study drew on 85 primary documents, most of them much shorter in length. While some of the orthodox Catholic documents came via print or
electronic newspaper articles, far more PPFA documents came from this type of source. The PPFA study, however, did contain many books as documents. Books by PPFA presidents and influential leaders including Margaret Sanger, Lester Kirkendall, Dr. Mary Calderone, Dr. Alan Guttmacher, Faye Wattleton, Debra Haffner and current president Gloria Feldt were included in this study and listed in the reference section. The PPFA documents analyzed for this study came from a variety of related sources. Sources included works by PPFA leaders like those just mentioned, although some leaders represented, later in their careers, allied organizations such as the Sex (later Sexuality) Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS), the Alan Guttmacher Institute (AGI), and the Religious Institute on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing (Religious Institute). Document sources also included standard material on the PPFA website, brochures, pamphlets, and booklets published by PPFA or local affiliates, direct links provided on the PPFA website to articles and other information, or evidence of an unmistakable endorsement of the document by a PPFA authority. An example of the latter would be PPFA President Gloria Feldt’s endorsement of the *Body Politics* special edition of the *American Prospect* (see Feldt, 2001).

This study also included two observations of events that included either orthodox Catholic or PPFA sources. The first was held at Gonzaga University on October 14, 2002 and featured orthodox Catholic sexuality speaker and author Christopher West (see, for example, West, 2000). Spokane Falls Community College hosted the second event, cosponsored by Planned Parenthood of the Inland Northwest, on October 24, 2003. That event featured former Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. Judith Billings who now, among other responsibilities, serves on the Board of Directors of Planned Parenthood of Western Washington. Data from these two events included transcribed field
notes, tape recorded and transcribed speeches when I could obtain permission to tape, and electronic copies of speeches and PowerPoint presentations when I could obtain these from the presenters.

Finally, the study also included data from interview sources, both orthodox Catholic and PPFA sources. I located orthodox Catholic sources first by contacting several people who attend Catholic churches in my locale. I did not interview people unless they professed a depth of knowledge about and belief in Catholic magisterial teachings, the source of Catholic orthodoxy. I located additional orthodox Catholics by asking those in my area for referrals. I contacted many of the referral sources via email and conducted interviews both in person and by email. In some cases, interviews began in person and continued by email. In many cases, I conducted entire interviews by email over a period of months. The study included 27 orthodox Catholic interview sources, 20 women and seven men. Through the snowballing effect of referrals, I interviewed orthodox Catholics all over the United States, and even one from England. Interviews varied in length from as little as one session to continuing follow-up sessions lasting as many as seven months.

The detail regarding PPFA sources is very similar. I began with sources I knew and asked for referrals. One notable difference, however, is that PPFA sources tended to be much more cautious in terms of referring me to additional sources. Based upon my experience with these sources, I believe the caution arose from their experiences with threats and violence, a finding I touch on in the PPFA substantive theory presentation. Consequently, I had to dig more for PPFA sources. I did so by finding email contacts via the PPFA website, usually included in articles posted to the site, as well as through diligent follow-up with each referral provided by people I met during the course of the study. I met
these people through scheduling personal interviews at Planned Parenthood clinics in the larger area and contacts provided through the event I observed at Spokane Falls Community College (SFCC). I eventually netted 26 interviews with 22 women and four men. Again, I interviewed people from all over the United States, although I had no international Planned Parenthood sources, and the length of interviews varied just as with orthodox Catholic sources.

The proportion of male and female sources deserves further mention. I have given the numbers for interview sources, overwhelmingly female in both the orthodox Catholic and PPFA studies. For document sources, males form the overwhelming majority in orthodox Catholic sources because the Catholic Magisterium is exclusively male. Males and females tend to author PPFA documents in roughly equal numbers. In the Catholic event I observed at Gonzaga University, some 350 people attended, mostly college students, equally divided between males and females. The PPFA cosponsored event at SFCC, however, included some 70 people, only eight of whom were men. While people hold strong beliefs throughout the continuum, the proportions of males and females interested in making statements regarding issues of sexuality education seem to vary depending on the type of source.

**Data Collection**

Data collection began with very general questions regarding sexuality education beliefs. For example, I would inquire, “Please share your experiences with sexuality education” or “Can you explain how you came to believe as you do about sexuality education.” Of PPFA sources, I would ask, “Can you tell me about your interest in and
experience with Planned Parenthood?” I would inquire similarly with orthodox Catholic sources.

Whenever possible, within the time constraints of this project, I reduced data to an electronic format through either transcribing tape-recorded sources and field notes or collecting data electronically to begin with. I tape-recorded and transcribed all personal interviews verbatim. During the two events I observed, I requested electronic copies of presentations when available. Otherwise, I took field notes and referred to other works authored by the presenters. I searched diligently for e-books and other electronic copies of all document sources included in this study and found them for the majority of works, both orthodox Catholic and PPFA sources. For some sources, where electronic copies did not exist and transcription of lengthy works was not practical, I included notes on the works and selected quotes in the analysis.

Data Analysis

I reduced data to electronic formats diligently in order to apply qualitative research software to the analysis process. Based upon reviews of various software programs, ATLAS.ti (Muhr, 1997) emerged as the best choice for employing grounded theory methodology (e.g. Kelle, 1997; Pandit, 1996). Anselm Strauss (cf. 1967; 1987; 1990) provided a strong endorsement of the software in the forward of the software manual (Muhr, 1997). Kelle (1997) and Pandit (1996) also discuss the efficacy of using qualitative data obtained through electronic databases. Using ATLAS.ti to analyze thousands of pages of qualitative data for this study employing grounded theory methodology proved extremely efficient and effective. I would not have been able to successfully include and analyze such a volume of data so thoroughly without using electronic sources, reducing them to electronic
copies, downloading them into ATLAS.ti, and using the software to apply grounded theory methodology efficiently.

In keeping my questions general and open-ended at first and more targeted later, I followed procedures of grounded theory methodology including open, axial, and selective coding as well as theoretical sampling to saturate emerging categories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). I sought answers to the general questions explained above through researching document sources as well as by directly asking interview sources and noting relevant details during observations. Following the techniques of open coding, I developed scores of categories. I simultaneously began axial coding, which involved analyzing the causal relationships between and within codes as well as the properties and dimensions of specific codes. As research progressed, I saturated categories and developed important emerging categories by use of theoretical sampling and selective coding.

The ATLAS.ti software handled the immense task of analysis at every step. Open coding proceeds quite naturally by use of highlighting and labeling. The software keeps track of all primary documents, quotes, codes, and memos. Each of these four objects can serve as the focus for both axial and selective coding. Use of an innovative “networking” function, complete with operators for determining all standard aspects of axial coding, keeps the analysis moving efficiently. Operators for labeling causal conditions, action/interaction strategies, consequences, as well as properties and dimensions (cf. Strauss & Corbin, 1990), come standard with the ATLAS.ti software. The researcher can define numerous additional relations. For example, to refine axial coding, I was able to define relations like “is context of” and “is intervening condition for.” In addition, when conducting theoretical sampling or
selective coding, intricate search functions allow the researcher to proceed with speed and efficiency completely impossible without the use of a computer. The software stores, manages, and retrieves all categories and relations. In short, use of ATLAS.ti enhances development of grounded theory immensely and makes the analysis task more thorough and efficient.

In the beginning stages of research, analysis began word by word and line by line, producing scores of potential codes. Groups and subgroups of codes emerged through axial coding. Such painstaking analysis continued until further such analysis failed to produce new codes. The analysis then advanced to theoretical sampling to saturate codes. This process included the collection of additional data regarding a particular category, mostly through the addition of documents and by asking interview sources specific questions related to the sampling goal. The process also included use of the various search functions provided in the ATLAS.ti software. For example, when the category “family” emerged in the orthodox Catholic study, I was able to saturate it by using the search function to analyze thousands of pages of documents, interview transcripts, and field notes. The same process applied to all categories as they emerged. Once the fully integrated theory began to take shape, I employed selective coding to fill in gaps in the emerging theory. For example, “rights,” which turned out to be an important category in both substantive studies, initially emerged as a gap in the orthodox Catholic study. Consistent with the techniques of grounded theory generation advocated by Glaser and Strauss, I applied all of these techniques with fluidity, simultaneity, and repetition throughout the analysis process.
Validity Considerations

Glaser and Strauss (1967) discuss “The Credibility of Grounded Theory” (ch. 9). Thus, with grounded theory methodology, Glaser and Strauss frame the concept of “validity” within the ideas of fit, relevance, and workability. They use each of these terms in reference to the data. For example, the final theoretical framework must “fit” the data, have obvious “relevance” to the data, and “work” in terms of the data. The presentation of the grounded theory must deeply involve the reader so that the richness and complexity of the theory come alive. Successfully accomplished then, the validity of grounded theory speaks for itself in terms of fit, relevance, and workability.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) expand on the concept of validity by discussing “Criteria for Judging a Grounded Theory Study” (ch. 14). After comparing and contrasting the concept of validity in terms of quantitative and qualitative methodologies, they proceed to present their criteria in question format. I will make some comments about this study based on their questions.

The first two questions deal with concept (or category) development and relationships between concepts. In all three phases, this study generates many intricately related concepts pertaining to sexuality education beliefs. The concepts are exhaustive and the relationships integrally developed as the study presentation demonstrates. The next question deals with conceptual density. Each of the concepts included throughout this study demonstrates a richness, depth, and complexity. Each concept has well developed subcategories, properties, and dimensions. Especially in light of the emerging formal theory, each has intricate causal and context level linkages that drive various consequences related to belief systems. Again, the richness, depth, and complexity that demonstrate conceptual
density emerge strongly in the study presentation. The next question deals with variability. The two substantive studies show the wide variability in sexuality education beliefs. The emerging formal theory explains and amplifies this tremendous variability in such a way that future research can readily add to and refine the developing theory. The next question deals with the broader conditions that affect the phenomenon under study. Again, the emerging formal theory demonstrates quite effectively the broad conditions regarding truth, the human person, and morality that affect sexuality education beliefs. The wide variability accounted for in the theoretical frameworks, as well as the depth and breadth of the conditions considered, addresses the next question dealing with the significance of the theoretical findings. I address several areas of deep significance to both further study and the educational system in the conclusion of this work. Because sexuality education beliefs arise from the deepest beliefs human beings hold, the significance of a grounded theory of sexuality education beliefs is immense, and the extent of this significance impacts not only sexuality education, but many aspects of public policy.

Maxwell (1996) addresses threats to the validity of qualitative research in three areas: description, interpretation, and theory. Since this study develops theory in the absence of any previously developed theory of sexuality education beliefs, this area does not apply. Turning, then, to the other two, this study ensured validity in terms of description and interpretation by returning to the data sources repeatedly. Interviews averaged about three months with each source. During the research process, I shared the developing theory, often to gain theoretical sampling data, but also to ensure that I was describing and interpreting data accurately and without bias. I shared outlines of my developing presentation, categories and their linkages, and write-ups of full sections with both orthodox Catholic and PPFA
sources respectively. Such a sharing generated much useful new data in addition to helping me ensure the validity of the data description and interpretation. In addition, the use of multiple data sources, including extensive use of documents and interviews, as well as two observations, ensured that the data sources themselves served as internal checks on the accuracy of description and interpretation.

In terms of Glaser and Strauss (1967), these techniques, inspired by Maxwell and used to ensure validity, gave the final presentation an unmistakable fit, relevance, and workability. Rereading the substantive theories in light of the emerging formal theory further confirmed the explanatory power of the theoretical framework precisely because the data so strongly fit, were completely relevant, and left a sense that the emerging theory works extremely well and holds promise as a framework for future studies in addition to guiding educational decision-making and policy development.

Confidentiality and Ethics

I assured the confidentiality of each participant in the interviewing process. I provided each potential participant with written informed consent, either in person or by email. If the source wished to remain anonymous, they provided consent with their signature or via email. Interestingly, in the case of several orthodox Catholics, they would not participate unless I agreed to cite them if I quoted them in my study. They did not want to be anonymous and would not agree to allow me to interview them unless I agreed to disclose their identities. While I did use data they provided in my analysis, I did not quote these particular individuals, so there are no reference citations naming them.

This study met the standards of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Washington State University (WSU), and that body granted approval for the study. Only one interview
source mentioned checking with the IRB to ask questions. The questions this orthodox Catholic asked, relayed in comments generated after her inquiry, provided interesting data. In general, both orthodox Catholic and PPFA sources demonstrated exceptional wariness and skepticism regarding this research and me. Both seemed to want to know “which side I was on.” I endeavored to maintain my neutrality regarding the research and had to work diligently to establish rapport with all sources for the purpose of both gathering data and gaining referrals to additional interview sources.
Appendix B: Understanding the PPFA Network

Key Organizations

This study revealed that the network of key organizations relevant to PPFA sexuality education beliefs is, in itself, complex and intricate. In addition to the direct line of organizations that became PPFA, the network includes as forebears Unitarianism, Universalism, and the merger of these two religions, as well as the American Humanist Association (AHA) because of its roots in Unitarianism and association with PPFA leaders. It also includes as progeny the Sex (later Sexuality) Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS), the Alan Guttmacher Institute (AGI), and the Religious Institute on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing (Religious Institute).

Knowledge of both the forebears and progeny helps in understanding PPFA sexuality education beliefs because it provides background and scope. Through Margaret Sanger, PPFA took its character and shape with strong influences from Humanism, which was also developing at the same time. Humanism, in turn, has its roots in Unitarianism, with which Sanger was also acquainted. The link between Unitarian Universalism, the name of the new organization after the merger of these two religions in 1961, Humanism, and PPFA has remained strong and continues today, as this introduction to key organizations and individuals demonstrates. Key PPFA leaders have identified themselves as humanists historically and this identification continues today with PPFA President Gloria Feldt (e.g. AHA, 2003c). The link to Unitarian Universalism also continues strongly today. The link emerged in this study through Planned Parenthood’s use of and promotion of the Our Whole Lives (OWL) curriculum, produced jointly by the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) and United Church of Christ (UCC). It also emerged through the presence of alliances
between PPFA and UUA clergy seen in both the national clergy advisory board as well as the clergy advisory boards of local affiliates. It emerged again in the joint participation of Planned Parenthood and Unitarian Universalist members and clergy at *The 3 R's at risk: Our right to responsible (accurate) reproductive health information in public schools*, an event observed as a part of this study (see Appendix A). Finally, the link also emerged through Debra Haffner, who served Planned Parenthood and SIECUS prior to becoming a Unitarian Universalist minister and cofounding the Religious Institute (see Debra Haffner below).

**Unitarian Universalism and the Roots of Humanism**

Unitarians and Universalists trace their histories back to the early centuries of Christianity in which opposing views about the nature of Jesus Christ and salvation were debated and eventually reconciled by the Catholic Church (Provost, 1992). The nature of this reconciliation was authoritative and dogmatic: The Church pronounced one side of the debate heresy and the other dogma. From the Catholic point of view, Unitarians and Universalists were and remain heretics (cf. *CCC*, 1994; Denzinger, 1957; Harris, 2002).

Consistent with a deep belief that religious ideas evolve over time, both Unitarians and Universalists have moved beyond their ancient roots (cf. Selth, 1996; Sias, 2000). It is instructive, however, to examine the original meanings of the terms used to name these religions. Unitarianism originally expressed a belief contrary to Trinitarianism. The Catholic Church eventually pronounced Trinitarianism, the belief that one God consisted of three persons and that Jesus Christ was the second person of the Trinity, as dogma. Unitarians held the conflicting belief that God was One and that Jesus Christ was a great man, but devoid of any divine nature (cf. *Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1907, "Arianism"; see also Denzinger, 1957, "Council of Nicea I 325," ¶ 54-56; Provost, 1992).
Universalism also represented the opposite side of a debate that raged in the early centuries of Christianity and throughout the Protestant Reformation. While Universalists argued that a loving God would save all people regardless of their particular beliefs, other early Christians argued that only those who professed belief in Jesus Christ would be saved from eternal damnation with Satan and all the fallen angels in Hell (Provost, 1992). Again, the Catholic Church pronounced the Universalist side of the debate as heresy while establishing the doctrine of salvation through Jesus Christ alone as dogma (Catholic Encyclopedia, 1907; see also Denzinger, 1957, "St. Pius V 1566-1572," ¶ 1011-12; cf. Harris, 2002, "Gnosticism," "Pelagius and Pelagianism").

In 1961 the Unitarian and Universalist churches formally recognized their congruence by merging into the Unitarian Universalist Association [UUA] (Sias, 2000). The Unitarians and Universalists shared first a philosophy of religious tolerance and religious questioning. Later they shared resources such as religious education materials, a joint hymnal, and finally on May 11, 1961, they combined their organizational strength by becoming the Unitarian Universalist Association (Provost, 1992, ¶ last).

Today, the UUA has evolved beyond the original concepts of Unitarianism and Universalism. Whether or not God exists as a Unity or a Trinity is not as important as individual concepts of deism or atheism:

We do not have a defined doctrine of God. Members are free to develop individual concepts of God that are meaningful to them. They are also free to reject the term and concept altogether.
Most of us do not believe in a supernatural, supreme being who can directly intervene in and alter human life or the mechanism of the natural world. Many believe in a spirit of life or a power within themselves, which some choose to call God. (Sias, 2000, pp. 2-3).

Whether or not salvation is universal or specific to those who profess a belief in Jesus Christ is not as important as learning to live together in peace:

Salvation is not a word we use frequently.

We do not believe people are born into a state of sin from which they must be saved in order to avoid spending an eternity suffering in hell.

Since we believe in neither original sin nor hell, we do not feel a need to be saved from either. When we do use the term “salvation” it refers to a sense of personal wholeness or fulfillment, or being at peace with oneself. (Sias, 2000, p. 10, see also, p. 9).

In short, Unitarian Universalism has identified almost completely with Humanism. “Because ours is a very humanistically-oriented religion, most UUs regard themselves as humanists in one sense or another” (p. 6).

It is no surprise that Unitarian Universalists (UUs) regard themselves almost exclusively as humanists when one considers the origins of the American Humanist Association, “The Voice of Humanism Since 1941” (AHA, 2002b). Founded in 1941 with groups in 32 states, the AHA is “the oldest and largest U.S. Humanist association, publisher of The Humanist magazine, and issuer of Humanist Manifesto I, II, and III (AHA, 2002a, "AHA Facts," sidebar). Over half of the signatories of the original 1933 Humanist Manifesto
were prominent Unitarians or Universalists (Burton, 2002; Wilson & Maciocha, 1995). For example, some prominent signatories included:

- Backus (former Minister, First Unitarian Church, Los Angeles), Bragg (Secretary, Western Unitarian Conference), Caldecott (First Unitarian Church, Los Angeles, California), Mondale (Minister, Unitarian Church, Evanston, Illinois), Scott (Minister, Universalist Church, Peoria, Illinois), Wicks (All Souls Unitarian Church, Indianapolis), Wilson (Minister, Third Unitarian Church, Chicago, Illinois). Reese, then Dean of the Abraham Lincoln Center in Chicago, Dietrich, Backus and Caldecott were among the 18 contributors to the 1927 Humanist Sermons, op. cit.

Interestingly, the extraordinarily influential Frederick May Eliot, President of the American Unitarian Association from 1937 to 1958 was also a contributor, contributing “Humanism and the Inner Life.” In his contribution he certainly sings the praises of the “Humanist Faith” and makes it clear he does not expect divine intervention in human affairs but, he steers clear of the militant atheism found in most of the other sermons in the volume. (Burton, 2002, footnote 12).

This sampling shows both the prominence of humanists among Unitarians and Universalists in 1933 as well as the strong influence of these two religions, which predate the humanist movement, on Humanism today.

One can see the absolute identity of Unitarian Universalism with Humanism in the reconciliation of a rift in Unitarianism in the early 20th century. “Between 1918 and about 1937, Unitarianism was critically split between those members who sought to expel the humanists and others who insisted on tolerance and inclusion. The reconcilers eventually won out . . .” (Weldon, 2001, "Twentieth-Century Humanism," ¶ 3). Thus, “reconcilers”
purged Unitarianism of individuals who clung to traditional Unitarian beliefs contrary to those of humanists within that religion. The victory of humanists over the Unitarian traditionalists who sought to expel them sealed the congruence between today’s Humanism and Unitarian Universalism.

On one hand, traditional Unitarianism and Universalism clashed with Catholicism in the ancient history of Christianity because these belief systems opposed dogmas defined in Catholic councils specifically convened to refute the early heresies of Gnosticism, Arianism, and Pelagianism with which Unitarians and Universalists identified (CCC, 1994; cf. Catholic Encyclopedia, 1907, "Gnosticism," "Pelagius and Pelagianism"; Denzinger, 1957; Harris, 2002; Provost, 1992). On the other hand, today’s Unitarian Universalism clashes with Catholicism because it denies Trinitarian theology, either by reference to a Unitarian Deity, agnosticism, or atheism and belief in heaven, hell, purgatory and the necessity of salvation (CCC, 1994; Denzinger, 1957; Sias, 2000). The relevance of all this to PPFA sex education beliefs lies precisely in its strong association with Unitarian Universalism, which has become indistinguishable from Humanism. One can readily see the association of PPFA with this fundamental belief system in the content of official PPFA documents, PPFA affiliated writers, and every leader introduced below who shaped PPFA sex education beliefs.

**Planned Parenthood and its Parents**

Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) took its name at a special meeting on January 29, 1942 when the members of the Birth Control Federation of America (BCFA) voted to change the name of their organization (Margaret Sanger Papers Project [MSPP] 2003; PPFA, 2003j). The members intended to position the growing organization...
more in the mainstream by shifting the focus from the more politicized “family limitation” concept promoted by Sanger to the less controversial concept of “child spacing” (MSPP, 2002a). “The BCFA was established in 1939 through a merger of the American Birth Control League (ABCL) and the Birth Control Clinical Research Bureau (BCCRB) engineered by the management firm of John Price Jones, Inc” (MSPP, 2003, "History," ¶ 1).

Sanger established the ABCL on November 10, 1921 in New York City during the First American Birth Control Conference. She originally intended the ABCL to pursue an agenda of education, political action, and research. However, as research on new contraceptive methods and devices and distribution of contraceptives, became more important to her, Sanger founded the Clinical Research Bureau (CRB) within the ABCL to provide increased focus on the research aspect of the original mission. With her own ambitions changing, Sanger resigned from the ABCL in 1928 after a dispute, changed the name of the CRB to BCCRB, and assumed full charge of that organization until it reunited with the ABCL under the auspices of the BCFA in 1939 (MSPP, 2002a, 2002b, 2003).

The PPFA name change indeed signaled a change in focus and direction. The emphasis on reproductive rights was completely set aside:

In changing its name to PPFA, the Federation signaled its shift away from Sanger’s feminist focus on women’s quest for reproductive freedom. Though she objected to the abandonment of “birth control,” a term she identified in name and spirit as reflective of women’s empowerment, and characterized the organization as complacent and overly cautious, Margaret Sanger did agree to serve as the honorary president of PPFA. She also served on the board of directors and, until the mid-1950s, on the Long Range Planning Committee. Sanger still constituted the primary
link between the PPFA and many of its major financial contributors. However, her work with PPFA focused largely on efforts to develop an oral contraceptive pill (Sanger helped arrange funding for much of the early research on the anovulant pill) and on PPFA’s international work. Not until the mid-1960s did PPFA reassert its primary commitment to championing women’s reproductive rights. (MSPP, 2003, "History," ¶ last).

In 1942, moving away from Sanger’s longstanding feminist perspective, PPFA began a focus on providing a wider range of services and adding affiliates throughout the United States. During the 1950s, PPFA further adjusted its focus to meet the more conservative family-centered population that emerged after World War II. PPFA strengthened its ties with affiliates and, building its reputation as a national health organization, sought recognition as the most reliable contraceptive provider in the country (MSPP, 2003).

Under the leadership of Dr. Alan Guttmacher who assumed the presidency in 1962, PPFA did return to the cause of women’s rights. It also increased its focus on education, redoubled its lobbying efforts, and aggressively distributed the latest contraceptive technology, the pill. The renewed focus on education resulted, at least in part, from the influence of Dr. Mary Calderone, PPFA’s Medical Director from 1953 through 1964 when she resigned due to differences over the role of sex education in PPFA’s mission (Moran, 2000; PPFA, 2003j). PPFA lobbying efforts led to major victories in establishing the right to privacy, access to contraception, and legalizing abortion ("Eisenstadt v. Baird," 1972; "Griswold," 1965; "Poe v. Ullman," 1961; "Roe," 1973). Dr. Guttmacher helped to develop the oral steroid pill for contraception in the late 1950s and, as PPFA President, helped to
increase its use from about 500,000 women in 1960 to about 13 million women worldwide in 1967 (PPFA, 2003j, 1960s).

PPFA grew tremendously during the 1970s amid tumultuous controversy. By establishing Family Planning International Assistance (FPIA), PPFA strengthened its global reach. In a dramatic reversal of the 1916 postal laws that landed Margaret Sanger in jail, the 1972 U.S. Postal Service issued a stamp commemorating family planning. After the 1973 Roe decision, the U.S. Catholic Bishops founded the National Right to Life (NRL) for the purpose of overturning Roe v. Wade and reversing the victories supported and championed by PPFA. The national turmoil caused by the danger of the Dalkon Shield Intrauterine Device (IUD) provoked more controversy. Sterilization became a major method of birth control for U.S. couples, increasing in popularity by over 300% in a decade; 43.1% of couples reported using sterilization. Major lobbying victories resulted in the repeal of parental and spousal consent legislation required for abortion. Congress began to fight reproductive rights advances by passing the “Hyde Amendments” designed to cut federal funding for abortion. The first terrorizing threats and attacks reached PPFA affiliate clinics. Faye Wattleton began her charismatic and influential tenure as PPFA’s President in 1978 (PPFA, 2003j, "1970s").

With the election of Ronald Reagan, the controversy heated up in the 1980s. Reagan was the first U.S. President to support pro-life activists. Congress unsuccessfully pursued a series of “Human Life” laws that would have effectively overturned Roe by granting full human rights from the moment of conception. Congress successfully passed the Adolescent Family Life Act (AFLA), which provided federal funds for “abstinence-only” sex education. The Reagan administration introduced the “Mexico City Policy,” which became known as
the “Global Gag Rule.” This policy denied U.S. funds to foreign organizations that provided any funding for abortion services. Under Wattenberg, PPFA defied the Mexico City Policy and lost federal funds; the policy resulted in a $40 million loss to international family planning efforts. AIDS became a national problem and a household word. The epidemic sparked a host of sex education programs nationwide. Terror escalated as Planned Parenthood facilities fell under arson, bomb, and other violent attacks. France allowed distribution of RU-486, now known as mifepristone, as an alternative to early aspiration abortion; pro-life activists in the U.S. vowed that it would never reach international markets. Planned Parenthood produced *The Facts Speak Louder* in response to *The Silent Scream*, a popular video produced by pro-life activists that focused on the rights of the unborn. In response to Joe Scheidler’s Pro-Life Action Network barricading of abortion clinics, PPFA instituted patient escorts. April 9, 1989 saw the first March for Women’s Equality/Women’s Lives in Washington D.C; hundreds of thousands joined the march (PPFA, 2003j, “1980s”).

In the 1990s, PPFA saw more medical advances as the tumult of controversy and violence continued. The USDA approved the Norplant long-acting hormonal contraceptive. The American Medical Association (AMA) announced support for further research and possible future use of mifepristone. By 1991, 30 states and the District of Columbia offered AIDS education, but only 12 states and the District of Columbia mandated comprehensive sexuality education. April 5, 1992 saw the second march on Washington, now renamed “March for Women’s Lives.” PPFA affiliates became leaders in HIV testing. Newly elected U.S. President Bill Clinton reversed the Mexico City Policy, allowed the import of mifepristone, allowed abortions on U.S. military bases overseas, and lifted the ban on fetal tissue research. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that publishers must delete religious
references in sex education curricula supported by the AFLA. In response to the murder of Dr. David Gunn M.D., an abortion provider in Pensacola, Florida, PPFA launched its Clinic Defense Project. Dr. George Wayne Patterson, M.D., another abortion provider who reported that anti-abortion zealots stalked him, died as the victim of an unsolved murder in Mobile, Alabama. Congress passed the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act, making it a federal offence to interfere with anyone’s access to clinic entrances by use of barricades, force, or threats. The U.S. Supreme Court ("National Organization for Women v. Scheidler," 1994) ruled that the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act could be used against violent anti-abortion protesters. PPFA established its Pro-Choice Religious Network. Murders of PPFA affiliate staff extended to two receptionists in Brookline, Massachusetts. Gloria Feldt took the helm as PPFA President and vowed to set the agenda rather than reacting to political circumstances. Congress debated the partial birth abortion ban. PPFA began lobbying for legislation to require all insurance companies to cover contraceptives. Planned Parenthood clinics across the United States received letters claiming to contain anthrax (PPFA, 2003j, "1990-1996," "1996-1999").

Today, PPFA continues its battles with a conservative administration led by President George Walker Bush. Clinics continue to receive anthrax hoax letters, many signed by “The Army of God,” and terrorist attacks in greatly increased numbers in the wake of the September 11, 2001 attacks by Al Quaedea on the United States (PPFA, 2003j, "2000-present"). Still, Feldt leads PPFA with its vision for the year 2025 and boldly proclaims the PPFA mission:
Mission Statement

A Reason for Being

Planned Parenthood believes in the fundamental right of each individual, throughout the world, to manage his or her fertility, regardless of the individual’s income, marital status, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, national origin, or residence. We believe that respect and value for diversity in all aspects of our organization are essential to our well-being. We believe that reproductive self-determination must be voluntary and preserve the individual’s right to privacy. We further believe that such self-determination will contribute to an enhancement of the quality of life, strong family relationships, and population stability.

Based on these beliefs, and reflecting the diverse communities within which we operate, the mission of Planned Parenthood is: to provide comprehensive reproductive and complementary health care services in settings which preserve and protect the essential privacy and rights of each individual; to advocate public policies which guarantee these rights and ensure access to such services; to provide educational programs which enhance understanding of individual and societal implications of human sexuality; to promote research and the advancement of technology in reproductive health care and encourage understanding of their inherent bioethical, behavioral, and social implications [Adopted 1984; Revised 1995] (PPFA, 1998, "Mission Statement").

PPFA currently leads 126 affiliates that manage 875 health centers around the country in fulfilling this mission (PPFA, 2003a).
PPFA is the oldest, largest, and most respected voluntary reproductive rights and health care organization in the world. The federation has a combined budget of more than $650 million; it has the largest grassroots activist and donor base of any advocacy group focusing on reproductive rights, with millions of active donors; and it serves nearly five million women, men, and youth who receive reproductive health and or education services from Planned Parenthood each year. (PPFA, 2003a, ¶ 12).

**Advancing the PPFA Cause**

**SIECUS**

Mary Steichen Calderon, M.D., M.P.H. would perhaps object to the title of this section, “Advancing the PPFA Cause.” Feeling frustration with PPFA’s light support for sex education at the time, “she was ready to jump” (Moran, 2000, p. 161) from her role as PPFA medical director to the helm of a new Sex (later Sexuality) Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS) that she and others were ready to found. The relationship between PPFA and SIECUS, however, has always been strong.

Dr. Calderone and Lester Kirkendall served as the driving forces behind the new organization. However, other “charter members of SIECUS included Wallace C Fulton, a past president of the National Council on Family Relations; William Genné, director of the Family Life Department of the National Council of Churches; and Clark Vincent, who was chief of the Professional Training Division of the National Institute for Mental Health” (Moran, 2000, p. 161; cf. SIECUS, 1965a).

The original SIECUS Newsletter states the founding purpose, both in the slogan used on the cover and the purpose statement:
To establish man’s sexuality as a health entity: to identify the special characteristics that distinguish it from, yet relate it to, human reproduction; to dignify it by openness of approach, study and scientific research designed to lead towards its understanding and its freedom from exploitation; to give leadership to professionals and to society, to the end that human beings may be aided towards responsible use of the sexual faculty and towards assimilation of sex into their individual life patterns as a creative and re-creative force. (SIECUS, 1965b).

SIECUS has modified their purpose statement over the years. The current statement atop their homepage on the web reads:

The Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS) is a national, nonprofit organization which affirms that sexuality is a natural and healthy part of living. Incorporated in 1964, SIECUS develops, collects, and disseminates information, promotes comprehensive education about sexuality, and advocates the right of individuals to make responsible sexual choices. (SIECUS, 2003b).

The connection between SIECUS and PPFA began with the two driving forces behind SIECUS, Mary Calderone who had served as the medical director of PPFA between 1953 and 1963 (Moran, 2000; PPFA, 2003j) and Lester Kirkendall who devoted his professional life to sexuality education and served on the board of the Oregon State Planned Parenthood (SIECUS, 1970b). The connection remains strong. Many of the PPFA sources interviewed for this study mentioned SIECUS as a resource. The PPFA website provides a link to the SIECUS homepage. SIECUS representatives attended the convocation observed for this study, held at Spokane Falls Community College on October 24, 2003, and left information including the report *Innovative Approaches to Increase Parent-Child*
Communication about Sexuality: Their Impact and Examples from the Field (SIECUS, 2002). As discussed below, the progression of related organizations continues through former SIECUS president, Debra Haffner, who, in the tradition of SIECUS interest in allying religion with its cause, founded the Religious Institute on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing (Religious Institute).

Allan Guttmacher Institute (AGI)

Founded in 1968, the Alan Guttmacher Institute was “originally constituted as a semiautonomous division of PPFA” (Allan Guttmacher Institute, 2003a, ¶ 2). Dr. Guttmacher, who served as PPFA’s president from 1962 until his death in 1974, nurtured the budding research organization, then called the Center for Family Planning Program Development, in its early stages. It was renamed in Dr. Guttmacher’s honor after his death and, while still an affiliate of PPFA, has operated as an independent non-profit corporation since 1977 (Allan Guttmacher Institute, 2003a).

AGI’s mission statement reads as follows:

The Alan Guttmacher Institute (AGI) advances sexual and reproductive health and rights in the United States and worldwide through an interrelated program of social science research, policy analysis and public education to encourage enlightened public debate, promote sound policy and program development, and inform individual decision-making. (Allan Guttmacher Institute, 2003b, ¶ 1).

The full mission statement includes “Values” and “Guiding Principles” (Allan Guttmacher Institute, 2003b). Completely consistent with PPFA’s beliefs, these additional statements reflect a commitment to quality research, collaboration, access to contraception and
abortion, healthy relationships, serving those with the greatest need, and an international perspective.

AGI headquarters in New York and Washington D.C. serve as the base for 61 staff members and 42 board members. Its annual budget of about $9 million draws revenues from many individual contributions as well as grants from private foundations and government agencies like the National Institutes of Health (NIH). AGI publishes the peer-reviewed journals *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health* (formerly *Family Planning Perspectives*) and *International Family Planning Perspectives*, as well as *The Guttmacher Report on Public Policy* and other periodic reports.

**The Religious Institute**

Founded in 2001, about a year after release of the *Religious Declaration on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing* in January of 2000, the Religious Institute on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing (Religious Institute) promotes that declaration (Religious Institute, 2003). More than 2200 people representing at least 35 religious traditions have signed the declaration, which is posted on the website (Religious Institute, 2003) and available for those who want to add their signatures electronically. Unitarian Universalists (UU) and United Church of Christ (UCC) members comprise nearly a third of all signatories and dwarf other religious denominations like Jews, Methodists, and Episcopalians, with more than double the number of endorsements of any one of these groups (cf. P. Hunter, 2000).

With Larry Greenfield, former SIECUS president Debra Haffner founded the Religious Institute about a year after the official release of the declaration. Website information reads as follows:
The Religious Institute on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing is co-directed by Rev. Larry Greenfield, Ph.D. and Debra W. Haffner, MPH, FSAM. Dr. Greenfield and Ms. Haffner are the co-creators of the Religious Declaration on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing and bring together more than sixty years of leadership in religion and sexuality as well as organizational and media expertise.

The connections between Unitarian Universalism, Humanism, and PPFA emerge repeatedly when investigating PPFA beliefs. Because these connections, in light of the theoretical models developed to increase understanding of sexuality education beliefs, help to explain PPFA’s worldview as well as the worldview of many allies, additional references to these connections appear throughout this background material.

**Key Individuals**

**Margaret Sanger**

The first chapter of this study extensively introduces Margaret Sanger. In Chapter One, the influence of “freethinkers” on Sanger’s father and, through him, their influence on young Margaret unfolded. The purpose here is to make clear her connections to two major organizations of freethinkers: Unitarianism and Humanism.

Both Unitarian Universalists and humanists deny the necessity of belief in a traditional creator deity (AHA, 2003a; Bragg, 1933; Flanagan, 2003; Kurtz, 1998; Sias, 2000). Some do believe in a “creator,” but certainly not the traditionally Christian Creator. Sanger makes quite clear her concurrence with this point of view. One telling example is in the masthead of her first publication *The Woman Rebel*, which boldly proclaimed “No Gods, No Masters” (Katz, 2003; Sanger, 1914). The July, 1914 edition carried an article on page eight entitled “No Gods” in which Sanger explained that “man made the gods in his own
image and likeness,” that “the priests and profit-mongers want to destroy womanhood,” and that “mother earth” provides (Katz, 2003, pp. 78-79; Sanger, 1914, July edition, p. 8). That same article began with the following quote from atheist existentialist philosopher Fredrich Nietzsche (cf. Copleston, 1985, vol. VII, ch. XXI):

Alas, brethren, that God whom I created was man’s work and man’s madness, like all gods.

Far too many are born. For the superfluous was the State created. Behold how it devoureth them . . . Aye, it findeth out even you, ye conquerors of the old God. Ye got wearied in battle and now your weariness serveth new idols. (cf. Nietzsche, 1891, chs. 3, 11; Sanger, 1914, July edition, p. 8).

Sanger showed a continuing interest in Nietzsche. For example, during her exile in England, after fleeing the U.S. legal system under the assumed name “Bertha L. Watson,” she attended a lecture about Nietzsche on November 25, 1914 at the Unitarian Church on Hope Street in Liverpool (Katz, 2000; cf. Vineyard, 2003). The lecture profoundly influenced her as can be seen in her journal entries subsequent to the visit (cf. MSPP Electronic Edition, 1999; cf. Vineyard, 2003). These examples show Sanger’s early belief that the God of organized religion was concocted by both Church and State to subjugate humanity in general and woman in particular; they illustrate Sanger’s consistency with both the Unitarian and humanist views that reasoning freethinkers need not accept the traditional idea of God.

I could not find any clear reference from Sanger that she considered herself a Unitarian. Her visit to a Unitarian church in Liverpool, England is weak circumstantial evidence at best. While her denial of the existence of any traditional God squares with the beliefs of Unitarians, it does not constitute evidence that she belonged to the Unitarian
religion. Many Unitarians, however, do claim her (e.g. Sias, 2000). An interview with a 
practicing Unitarian Universalist, conducted as a part of this study, revealed that the church 
she attended had a “Margaret Sanger Room.” Many individual churches, like Mt. Diablo 
Unitarian Universalist Church (MDUUC) in Walnut Creek, California for example, directly 
claim her as one of their own (MDUUC, 2003). Others, however, seem to realize that while 
they “cannot legitimately claim Margaret Sanger as a Unitarian Universalist, her life does 
illustrate several of our Unitarian Universalist principles” (e.g. Hoddy, 1999, ¶ 22). Still 
other Unitarian Universalist sources simply claim her as having connections to Unitarian 
Universalism (e.g. J. E. Johnson, 1999).

The logical conclusion regarding Sanger’s connection to Unitarian Universalists is 
that it is mostly one way. They claim her, but she does not directly claim them. Some 
evidence, however, exists that she was acquainted with the religion and may have felt some 
connection to it. Unitarian Universalists claim her because her beliefs square so well with 
theirs, because she is famous, and because they want to be associated with her. They claim 
er her because of her stronger ties to Humanism, which has deep roots in Unitarianism. Those 
roots in themselves may cause many Unitarian Universalists to claim Sanger because many 
view modern Humanism, especially as advanced by the AHA, as deriving directly from 
Unitarian Universalism.

There can be no dispute that Margaret Sanger considered herself a humanist. She 
accepted the 1957 Humanist of the Year Award (AHA, 2003b). Her beliefs also square 
completely with those espoused in the three editions of the Humanist Manifesto promulgated 
through the American Humanist Association (AHA, 2003a; Bragg, 1933; Kurtz & Wilson, 
1973). The ties to Humanism, then, are two-way. Sanger identified her belief in Humanism
through the content of her writings and by accepting the 1957 award. AHA confirms her identification as a humanist by claiming her in a list of famous humanists (AHA, 2002b).

**Dr. Mary Steichen Calderone**

Debra Haffner, introduced below, wrote an obituary when Dr. Mary Steichen Calderone passed away (Haffner, 1998, p. 3). Her status as a key source in studying PPFA sex education beliefs makes it very fitting to paraphrase her words in introducing Dr. Calderone. Such an introduction follows.

At age 35, Mary Steichen Calderone graduated from the University of Rochester Medical School. At age 49, she began her work as medical director of PPFA. In 1964, at 60 years of age, she co-founded SIECUS and served as its president from 1964 until she retired in 1982 at 78 years of age. Mary Steichen Calderone died on October 24, 1998.

Many people recognize Dr. Calderone as a charismatic and influential pioneer in the field of sexuality education. She often asked audiences:

“What is a four letter word ending in K for intercourse?” After the appropriate shocked pause, she would answer the question herself: “Talk.” She’d then proceed to tell them that how people treat each other is the most important thing in the world. (Haffner, 1998, p. 3).

Dr. Calderone wanted to change the way Americans view sexuality. She considered it necessary to express this vital creative energy, not repress it. She wanted to help people become masters of their sexuality and use it to achieve greater personal fulfillment.

In the obituary, Haffner goes on to describe the controversy that always surrounded Calderone:
Dr. Calderone was celebrated, and she was vilified. She received more than ten honorary doctorates and countless awards. She was the target of a $40 million campaign by the John Birch Society to discredit her. They called her the leader of a “conspiracy to demoralize youth” and an “aging sexual libertine.” In July 1998, I had the pleasure to speak on behalf of Mary at her induction into the National Women’s Hall of Fame. . . . (Haffner, 1998, p. 3).

One of the “countless awards” Calderone received was the 1974 *Humanist of the Year Award* (AHA, 2003b). While her only ties to Unitarian Universalism came indirectly through Humanism, like Sanger, her two-way ties to and belief in Humanism are strong. She wrote and lectured extensively, espousing beliefs always consistent with Humanism.

*Lester Kirkendall*

With Calderone and others, Lester Kirkendall co-founded SIECUS. The SIECUS Report also carried an obituary that serves as an excellent and appropriate introduction to the man. The following introduction both summarizes and quotes that source.

Lester A. Kirkendall died on May 31, 1991 at the age of 87. The obituary quotes Dr. Calderone who said:

Lester Kirkendall’s life was of service to the needs of others and to the quiet development of thoughts, principles, and programs to meet those needs. He was loved by the many who have been warmed by his presence. Kirkendall was widely regarded as a pioneer in the field of sexuality and family life education. ("In memory of a pioneer . . ." 1991, p. 21).

The obituary continues:
As Roger Libby, sexuality educator, said, “Kirkendall was most certainly one of the most original, fearless, and selfless sexologists of this century.” A vibrant humanist, he continued to write and read about sexuality, population explosion, and humanism after his retirement. (“In memory of a pioneer . . .” 1991, p. 21).

Kirkendall received his doctorate from Columbia University in 1935 and began his career as a teacher. His continuing career included roles as both assistant principal and principal of schools spanning kindergarten through 12th grade. For nearly three decades beginning in 1930, Kirkendall “directed, taught, counseled, and consulted at various universities and organizations, including”:


Kirkendall pioneered the college level coursework on human sexuality at Oregon State University (OSU) beginning in the early 1960s. He retired from his post as emeritus professor in 1969. During his time at OSU, Kirkendall worked with many sexologists including deryck calderwood [lower case in original], Roger Libby, Alfred Kinsey, Wardell Pomeroy, and Ira Reiss who commented, “He knew what he wanted and he went after it. He
was a man for all seasons in the early development of sexology in this country” (“In memory of a pioneer . . .” 1991, p. 21).

Kirkendall worked tirelessly to promote a new vision for sexuality. Quoting Roger Libby, the obituary continues:

Kirkendall believed . . . that a responsible approach to sexuality and sexuality education must focus on qualities in relationships, such as honesty, openness, and caring—rather than whether or not a penis and vagina get together. His emphasis on intimate relationships centered on sexual choices and why we do, or do not, choose to experience any sexual act—not just sexual intercourse. He argued that our society is too obsessed with whether or not we engage in sexual acts, and not the consequences of our decisions. For Kirkendall, the morality of a sexual choice focused on the meaning and openness about any sexual act—not on whether or not the people are married or monogamous. He felt that rigid religious edicts are often harmful in that they fail to place the onus of responsibility on each person in the context of what they find to be moral, nonexploitative, affectionate and uplifting. ("In memory of a pioneer . . ." 1991, p. 21).

Kirkendall demonstrated and received honors for his leadership in the field of sexuality and sexuality education through prolific scholarship:

Kirkendall wrote and edited more than 13 books on sexuality and sexuality education, including *Marriage and the Family in the Year 2000* [Author’s note: the year should read 2020, see (Kirkendall & Gravatt, 1984)], *Sex Education and Human Relations* [Author’s note: the title uses the word “as” not “and,” see (Kirkendall, 1950)], and *Premarital Intercourse and Interpersonal Relations*, and more than 300
articles, which appeared in numerous professional journals. He was also associate editor of eight publications, including *Sexology, Journal of Sex Research*, and the *Sexual Digest*. He was the recipient of many awards during his lifetime, including the American Humanist Association’s *Humanist of the Year Award* and the World Congress on Sexuality’s *International Award for Promoting Sexuality Education*.

Like Calderone, his friend and colleague, Kirkendall’s only ties to Unitarian Universalism came indirectly; the memorial article told of his belief in Humanism. In addition to being awarded the honor of Humanist of the Year in 1983, Kirkendall also served on the AHA board of directors (AHA, 2003b; Kumley & McCallister, 1992). A strong supporter of PPFA throughout his life, Kirkendall lectured at many conferences and served on the board of directors of Oregon State Planned Parenthood (Marshall & Donovan, 1991, p. 68; SIECUS, 1965a, 1970b).

*Dr. Alan Guttmacher*

Dr. Allan Guttmacher, like Sanger, Calderone, and Kirkendall, rooted his worldview in Humanism. The strongest link between PPFA and Humanism indeed comes through Guttmacher who signed *Humanist Manifesto II* in 1973 while he served as president of PPFA (Kurtz, 1998; Kurtz & Wilson, 1973). It is again fitting, for purposes of this study, to paraphrase and quote the words of a PPFA source to introduce Dr. Guttmacher. The introduction that follows draws information from the AGI website, which in turn takes much of its material from the memorial article published in *Family Planning Perspectives* (Jaffe, 1974a, 1974b). Jaffe begins with the following quote:

The entry in *Who's Who* is factual, terse:

Later in the article, Jaffe continues:

He assumed increasing leadership of the national Planned Parenthood organization, first as member, then as volunteer chairman of Planned Parenthood’s National Medical Committee and, in 1962, as full-time national President. In the 1960s he
took major responsibility for the work of the International Planned Parenthood Federation, serving as chairman of its Medical Committee and traveling to scores of Asian, African and Latin American nations to lecture to physicians, work with program personnel, talk with ordinary people and meet with heads of state. (Jaffe, 1974b, p. 2).

Dr. Guttmacher worked to ensure access to contraception throughout his affiliation with Planned Parenthood before and after he assumed the presidency in 1962. When he learned that New York City municipal hospitals refused to allow physicians to prescribe contraception, he took action. The skill he exhibited in that successful campaign served him well as he testified many times over the years before congress. He lived to witness national recognition of his work to ensure access to contraception and abortion “by the U.S. Supreme Count in the Griswold and Baird cases on contraception and the Wade and Bolton cases on abortion. . . .” (Jaffe, 1974b, p. 2). Through his signing of Humanist Manifesto II while president of PPFA, through living a life rich in humanistic values, and by leading the organization for more than a decade, Alan Guttmacher truly exemplified PPFA sex education beliefs.

Debra Haffner

The following brief biography appears on the official website of the Religious Institute and, thus, meets with the approval of Debra Haffner herself, a cofounder of the organization:

Debra W. Haffner, MPH, FSAM

Ms. Haffner will be ordained as a Unitarian Universalist minister in May 2003

[Author’s note: Haffner is now a Unitarian Universalist minister as indicated]. She
was the President and CEO of the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States from 1988 through May 2000. During Ms. Haffner’s tenure at SIECUS, she created the National Coalition to Support Sexuality Education; the Commission on Adolescent Sexual Health, and the *Guidelines for Comprehensive Sexuality Education, Kindergarten–Grade Twelve*. Ms. Haffner is the author of two award-winning books for parents in the home and the co-author of a college textbook on human sexuality.

Prior to her position at SIECUS, Ms. Haffner was the Director of Information and Education at the Center for Population Options, the Director of Counseling, Education and Public Affairs at Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington, and the director of a national adolescent health initiative for the U.S. Public Health Service.

A sexuality educator and public health professional for more than twenty-five years, Ms. Haffner has devoted her attention to sexuality and religion since 1996. Ms. Haffner has served as a consultant on sexuality and religion to such organizations as the Unitarian Universalist Association, the Ford Foundation, People for the American Way, the National Council of Churches of Christ, Meadville-Lombard Seminary, Union Theological Seminary, and the Reorganized Church of the Latter Day Saints.

Ms. Haffner has a Masters of Public Health from the Yale School of Medicine and is a Fellow of the Society for Adolescent Medicine. Ms. Haffner was a Research Fellow at the Yale Divinity School in 1996. She teaches courses on sexuality for ministry at Union Theological Seminary and Meadville-Lombard
seminary. In June 2000, the Association of Yale Alumni in Public Health voted her the 2000 Distinguished Service Award.

Ms. Haffner has been married for 20 years and is the mother of two children. (Religious Institute, 2002a).

One can easily see Haffner’s connections to Planned Parenthood, SIECUS, and the Unitarian Universalism in this short biography. In a reversal of the trends seen in key individuals so far, Haffner’s connections to Humanism are only indirect while her connections to Unitarian Universalism are strong. Material above demonstrated the deep roots of Humanism in Unitarianism.

**Faye Wattleton**

Alyce Faye Wattleton introduces herself in her memoir *Life on the Line* (1996). There the reader sees the portrait of a fundamentalist preacher’s daughter who was to rise as the national icon of a woman’s right to choose while she served as PPFA’s president from 1978 to 1992. Born on July 8, 1943 in St. Louis Missouri, Wattleton earned her nursing degree from Ohio State University in 1964. She pursued her master’s degree in maternal and infant care at Columbia University where she became an ardent supporter of women’s rights. Like Nurse Sanger, the trauma of witnessing first hand the consequences of self-induced abortions by poor ignorant women profoundly influenced Nurse Wattleton, who first joined Sanger’s organization as a board member of Planned Parenthood of Miami Valley in Dayton, Ohio in 1968. From there, Wattleton made her meteoric rise to the presidency of the national organization a decade later. After 14 years, the strain of that position caught up to Wattleton, and she set her sights on other goals after resigning her position at PPFA in 1992 (Wattleton, 1986, 1996).
Since her resignation from PPFA, Wattleton has served as host for a never-aired talk
show on women’s issues, a circuit speaker on women’s issues, a board member for many
organizations including Empire Blue Cross, Blue Shield, Estee Lauder, and Bio-Technology
General Corp., and as president for organizations like the Center for Gender Equality and
the Center for the Advancement of Women ("Bio-Technology General . . ." 1997; Brewer,
1997; Green, 2001; Schulte, 2003; Wattleton, 1996). She continues to speak actively for
women’s rights. Her accomplishments include being the first African American president of
PPFA and, in 1978, only the second woman to head that organization, holding 15 honorary
degrees, being inducted into the National Women’s Hall of Fame, and winning awards such
as the Jefferson Award for a Private Citizen, the Margaret Sanger Woman of Valor Award,
and the Humanist of the Year Award (AHA, 2003b; Brewer, 1997; Wattleton, 1986). A
powerfully charismatic and influential woman, Wattleton’s mark in the history of women’s
rights continues.

While Wattleton remains strongly influenced by her mother’s fundamentalist
evangelical preaching for the Church of God, she rejects her childhood religion. Wattleton’s
mother Ozie likened the loss of her daughter to the executive directorship of the Planned
Parenthood of Miami Valley in 1970 as a loss similar to the death of her husband George
that same year (Wattleton, 1996). She considered her daughter’s resignation from the
presidency of PPFA in 1992 as an answer to years of prayers (Green, 2001). Wattleton
describes her changing religious beliefs in Life on the Line but, consistent with Humanism,
replaces them with no other formal religious doctrines or creeds. Wattleton confirmed her
belief in Humanism by accepting the 1986 Humanist of the Year Award (Wattleton, 1986).
In her acceptance speech she affirmed that she, with fellow humanists, shared “a deep
respect for reason and realism, for human life and for human rights”; she reasoned that “as a result” of the fact that PPFA and AHA share “a great deal in common . . . there are many similarities in those who oppose us” (p. 6). Avoiding direct reference to her mother, she spoke instead of Jerry Falwell’s opposition to both PPFA and AHA. She began and ended her acceptance speech with quotes from Margaret Sanger’s 1957 acceptance speech, referring to the honor of having “one more thing in common with a woman who was a sister nurse and the first leader of Planned Parenthood” (p. 5, see also p. 30).

**Gloria Feldt**

Gloria Feldt currently serves as president of PPFA. Like Sanger and Wattleton before her, she leads the organization with vision, charisma, and a zeal for women’s rights expressed through prolific speeches and writings. Chosen in 1996, Feldt followed Pamela Maraldo who, in the wake of the charismatic 14 year leadership of Faye Wattleton that came to an unexpected end, resigned in July of 1995 after losing the confidence of PPFA’s board (Lewin, 1996). Due to rapid changes in the health care industry, Maraldo sought to change PPFA’s vision by expanding its services and focusing on family medicine. Critics believed she moved away from PPFA’s historical advocacy of abortion rights (Lewin, 1996; E. Smith, 1997). Feldt has reestablished PPFA’s leadership in that arena and as a powerful lobby for reproductive rights in general (E. Smith, 1997). Again, it is suitable to let a PPFA source introduce a key leader in PPFA sexuality education beliefs. This introduction draws much of its information from PPFA’s website (PPFA, 2003a).

Feldt has demonstrated the ability to lead with vision and clarity by establishing the vision for 2025 (PPFA, 2003i). “She has set a bold and proactive agenda to advance reproductive rights in the U.S. and globally and to provide reproductive and sexual health
services for all women and men” (PPFA, 2003a, ¶ 2). Seeing herself in the line of PPFA’s most influential and charismatic leaders (cf. E. Smith, 1997), Feldt has modeled her first book *Behind Every Choice Is a Story* (2002) after Margaret Sanger’s *Motherhood in Bondage* (PPFA, 2003c; Sanger, 1928). In many ways, the book seeks to clarify and motivate Feldt’s vision for 2025 by emphasizing not just contraception, including emergency contraception (EC), and abortion, but *access* to these essentials of reproductive freedom. She has supported greater access to contraception specifically through lobbying efforts to pass the Equity in Prescription Insurance and Contraceptive Coverage Act (EPICC), an act, that if eventually passed, will require insurance companies to cover contraception.

Feldt has a history of tenacity. “A teen mother and wife, she raised three children, graduated from college in 12 years, and held down a number of jobs that would lead her to Planned Parenthood” (PPFA, 2003a, ¶ 5). At least in part through her tenacity, 20 states have contraceptive equity laws, and the U.S. Congress has required contraceptive coverage in insurance programs for federal employees. Feldt targets 2005 as the year when the United States will realize universal insurance coverage for contraception. Feldt’s tenacity continues to show in political lobbying efforts. In late October, she announced that, for the first time in its history, PPFA will back a candidate in the 2004 presidential election (Bennett, 2003).

Occasionally, history connects the right leader with the right movement. Margaret Sanger who 87 years ago opened the first family planning clinic in the United States, was such a leader. In Gloria Feldt, the Planned Parenthood Federation of America again has a leader who speaks to the unique times in which she lives. (PPFA, 2003a, ¶ last).
Appendix C: Understanding the Roman Catholic Church

Unlike PPFA sources, orthodox Catholics believe in a divinely revealed absolute and infallible truth. Obedience to the Magisterium, the teaching authority of the Church, defines Roman Catholic “orthodoxy.” Many Catholics attend Mass regularly but do not believe all that their Church teaches. By definition, they are not orthodox. This study, seeking the “conservative extreme” so often attributed to Catholics in the literature, focused on orthodox Catholicism—the totality of Catholic doctrine regarding sexuality education. To understand this doctrine, one must know some basic teachings and structure of the Roman Catholic Church. This appendix introduces the doctrine of infallibility, doctrine concerning sacramental grace, the organizational structure of the Church, with special attention given to bodies cited in this research, and brief information on the two cardinals and three Popes cited.

**Infallibility**

One can find an authoritative summary of the doctrine concerning the infallibility of the Roman Catholic Magisterium in sections 888–892 and 2032–2036 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994). The Church applies the doctrine in a twofold manner. First, the Magisterium, which consists of all the bishops of the world in communion with the Pope (cf. § 100), cannot err when teaching on matters of faith and morals. To clarify, Catholics do not believe that the bishops, acting individually, never make mistakes; instead, they believe that Bishops have the charism of infallibility when they teach together, as in ecumenical councils, and the Pope assents (cf. §§ 883-84). Second, the Pope has the same gift of infallibility, whether teaching through a council or solely on his own authority (§ 891).
Again, the gift is limited to matters of faith and morals, and the Pope must promote the infallible doctrine when exercising his teaching authority. Such a teaching is said to be *ex cathedra*, “from the chair,” (cf. *Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1907, "Ex Cathedra") meaning from the seat of Peter, who, on the basis of Sacred Scripture and Tradition (cf. *CCC*, §§ 80-95, 424, 552, 882; Matthew 16:18), Catholics believe Jesus Christ appointed as the first Pope. As with the bishops acting on their own, Catholics do not believe the Pope is perfect or that he never makes mistakes. They believe that God grants the same gift of infallibility to each Pope, when he teaches authoritatively from the seat of Peter, in the same way that he gave the gift of infallibility to Matthew, for example, when he wrote his Gospel.

Summarizing the foregoing teaching, the *Catechism* says the following regarding the doctrine of infallibility:

The supreme degree of participation in the authority of Christ is ensured by the charism of *infallibility*. This infallibility extends as far as does the deposit of divine Revelation; it also extends to all those elements of doctrine, including morals, without which the saving truths of the faith cannot be preserved, explained, or observed. (*CCC*, § 2035).

The Catechism goes on to explain that the gift of infallibility also extends, through the Magisterium, to Natural Law, a concept very important to this study:

The authority of the Magisterium extends also to the specific precepts of the *Natural Law*, because their observance, demanded by the Creator, is necessary for salvation. In recalling the prescriptions of the Natural Law, the Magisterium of the Church exercises an essential part of its prophetic office of proclaiming to men what they truly are and reminding them of what they should be before God. (*CCC*, § 2036).
Concerning the doctrine of Papal infallibility, Pope Pius IX defined this longstanding teaching of the Church during the first Vatican Council on July 17, 1870:

Therefore, faithfully adhering to the tradition received from the beginning of the Christian faith, to the glory of God our savior, for the exaltation of the Catholic religion and for the salvation of the Christian people, with the approval of the Sacred Council, we teach and define as a divinely revealed dogma that when the Roman Pontiff speaks *ex cathedra*, that is, when, in the exercise of his office as shepherd and teacher of all Christians, in virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine concerning faith or morals to be held by the whole Church, he possesses, by the divine assistance promised to him in blessed Peter, that infallibility which the divine Redeemer willed his Church to enjoy in defining doctrine concerning faith or morals. Therefore, such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are of themselves, and not by the consent of the Church, irreformable. (Pope Pius IX, 1870).

In summary, the Catholic Church teaches that God is Truth (cf. *CCC* § 215-17; John 14:6, 18:37) and that, through Jesus Christ who founded the Church (cf. *CCC*, §§ 813, 874; Matthew 16:18), He reveals Truth via the Holy Spirit through the Magisterium (cf. *CCC* §§ 243, 890, 2625; Matthew 16:19, 18:18; John 20:23; 1 Timothy 3:15). The Church has taught the doctrine of infallibility throughout the centuries (cf. Denzinger, 1957). Pope Pius IX solemnly defined the doctrine of Papal infallibility at the first Vatican Council in 1870 (Pope Pius IX, 1870).

**Sacramental Grace**

Roman Catholics believe God provides special graces through the seven sacraments, which include Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, Eucharist, Matrimony, Holy Orders, and Anointing of the Sick (CCC, 1994, § 1113).

The sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us. The visible rites by which the sacraments are celebrated signify and make present the graces proper to each sacrament. They bear fruit in those who receive them with the required dispositions. (§ 1131).

Thus, like the other individual sacraments, the sacrament of matrimony confers special graces proper to the sacrament.

This grace proper to the sacrament of Matrimony is intended to perfect the couple’s love and to strengthen their indissoluble unity. By this grace they ‘help one another to attain holiness in their married life and in welcoming and educating their children.’” (CCC, 1994, § 1641).

The Catechism summarizes the ideals of marriage and some offenses against the sacrament as follows:

Unity, indissolubility, and openness to fertility are essential to marriage. Polygamy is incompatible with the unity of marriage; divorce separates what God has joined
together; the refusal of fertility turns married life away from its “supreme gift,” the child. . . . (§ 1664).

The graces proper to the sacrament of Matrimony, according to Catholic doctrine, help the married couple live up to the divine ideal, one they could not manage by human strength alone. Instruction about this grace, as well as the offenses against it, must be included in sexuality education according to the Roman Catholic Church (cf. CCC, 1994; Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995).

**Organizational Structure**

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that ultimate authority rests with God. Just as a Davidic King appointed a “prime minister” and imbued him with royal authority (cf. Isaiah 22:22), Jesus appointed Peter as the head of His Church and gave him divine authority on earth (see New American Bible, 1970, note on Matthew 16:19, p. 25 in the New Testament). Thus, the Roman Catholic organizational structure is hierarchical, proceeding from God, through the successors of Peter, the Popes, and to the Magisterium, all the bishops of the world in communion with the Roman Pontiff (CCC, §§ 874-79).

The Church consists of three levels of hierarchy (CCC, 1994, § 886; CIC, 1983, Book II, Part II). The first level consists of the bishops. Among bishops, the bishop of Rome who is the Pope and direct successor of Peter has supreme authority (CCC, 1994, § 882; CIC, 1983, Canon 331). The Pope appoints Cardinals to serve special needs in the Church through the Roman Curia (CIC, 1983, Canon 360). The second level consists of priests who serve under the bishop of a particular diocese. The hierarchy divides the entire Roman Catholic Church into individual dioceses (CIC, 1983, Canon 368) all over the world with a bishop, appointed or confirmed by the Pope (Canon 377), heading each diocese (Canon
Bishops have apostolic power in the Church to confer the Sacrament of Holy Orders on a man and make him a priest (CCC, 1994, §§ 1562, 1576). The third level consists of deacons who serve local priests. Some go on to become priests by receiving full Holy Orders while others remain lifelong deacons (CCC, 1994, §§ 1554, 1569-71; Catholic Encyclopedia, 1907; CIC, 1983).

The Roman Curia consists of nine departments (CIC, 1983, Canon 360). Two of them deserve special mention here because from them came key documents relevant to sexuality education. The first is the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), which produced Donum Vitae (Ratzinger, 1987). The second is the Pontifical Council for the Family (PCF), which produced The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality (1995). These two departments of the Curia are introduced below.

**Pontifical Council for the Family**

The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality: Guidelines for Education within the Family (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995) is the most authoritative statement given by the Church to the faithful regarding sexuality education. While promoting Catholic Doctrine regarding chastity as the only licit means of sexuality education, the document also cautions parents about harmful sexuality education programs including comprehensive type programs and abstinence-only programs that give an incomplete picture of human sexuality outside the context of the faith. Without directly naming Planned Parenthood, PCF condemns every aspect of the type of sexuality education it promotes. The lengthy document provides the most current statement of orthodox Catholic sexuality education beliefs available from the Magisterium.
The following information provides a sketch of the purview of the Pontifical Council for the Family, which Pope John Paul II founded in 1981:

The Council is responsible for the promotion of the pastoral ministry and apostolate to the family, through the application of the teachings and guidelines of the ecclesiastical Magisterium, to help Christian families fulfill their educational and apostolic mission.

It also promotes and coordinates pastoral efforts related to the issue of responsible procreation, and encourages, sustains and coordinates initiatives in defense of human life in all stages of its existence, from conception to natural death.

Also in relation to the pastoral care of the family and the defense of life, the following themes fall within the Council’s sphere: theology and catechesis of the family; conjugal and family spirituality; the rights of the family and the child; formation of the laity for the pastoral care of the family; marriage preparation courses.

Other questions that it deals with are: sex education, demographics, contraception and abortion; sterilization, ethical and pastoral problems related to AIDS and other problems of bioethics; legislation regarding marriage, the family, family policies and the protection of human life. (Pontifical Council for the Family, 2003).

**Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith**

CDF produced *Donum Vitae: Instruction on respect for human life in its origin and on the dignity of procreation: Replies to certain questions of the day* (Ratzinger, 1987).

“Donum Vitae” translates as “the gift of life” and has great relevance to sexuality education
beliefs because of its implications regarding “the dignity of procreation” and the role abortion plays in conflicting beliefs about sexuality. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger heads the CDF, perhaps the most influential of all departments in the Roman Curia. He wrote Donum Vitae and published it with the approval of Pope John Paul II and under his order in 1987. The Vatican profiles this important department of the Curia as follows:

Founded in 1542 by Pope Paul III with the Constitution “Licet ab initio,” the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith was originally called the Sacred Congregation of the Universal Inquisition as its duty was to defend the Church from heresy. It is the oldest of the Curia’s nine congregations. . . .

Pope St. Pius X in 1908 changed the name to the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office. It received its current name in 1965 with Pope Paul VI. Today, according to Article 48 of the Apostolic Constitution on the Roman Curia, “Pastor Bonus”, promulgated by the Holy Father John Paul II on June 28, 1988, “the duty proper to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith is to promote and safeguard the doctrine on the faith and morals throughout the Catholic world: for this reason everything which in any way touches such matter falls within its competence.” (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 2003).

The broad latitude of this important curial congregation explains its immense influence and relevance to sexuality education, one area of both faith and morals for Roman Catholics.

**Key Individuals**

**Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger**

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger holds perhaps the most influential position in the Roman Curia. This position alone makes him important to this study. However, he is additionally
important because of his role as President of the Commission for the Preparation of the
*Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994), the most frequently cited Catholic document in
this study, and in writing *Donum Vitae* (1987), an important document to orthodox Catholic
sexuality beliefs. The following information converts biographical notes taken from the
Holy See Press Office (Holy See, 2003) to a more narrative form. Material added is set apart
in brackets.

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Prefect of Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith,
President of the Pontifical Biblical Commission and International Theological
Commission, Dean of the College of Cardinals, was born on 16 April 1927 in Marktl
am Inn, Germany. He was ordained a priest on 29 June 1951.

His father, a police officer, came from a traditional family of farmers from
Lower Baviera. He spent his adolescent years in Traunstein and was called into the
auxiliary anti-aircraft service in the last months of World War II. From 1946 to 1951,
the year in which he was ordained a priest and began to teach, he studied philosophy
and theology at the University of Munich and at the higher school in Freising. In
1953 he obtained a doctorate in theology with a thesis entitled: “The People and
House of God in St. Augustine’s doctrine of the Church.” Four years later, he
qualified as a university teacher. He then taught dogma and fundamental theology at
the higher school of philosophy and theology of Freising, then in Bonn from 1959 to
1969, Münster from 1963 to 1966, Tubinga from 1966 to 1969. From 1969, he was a
professor of dogmatic theology and of the history of dogma at the University of
Regensburg and Vice President of the same university.
Already in 1962 he was well known when, at the age of 35, he became a consultor at Vatican Council II, of the Archbishop of Cologne, Cardinal Joseph Frings. Among his numerous publications, a particular post belongs to the “Introduction to Christianity,” a collection of university lessons on the profession of apostolic faith, published in 1968; *Dogma and Revelation*, an anthology of essays, sermons and reflections dedicated to the pastoral ministry, published in 1973.

In March 1977, Paul VI elected him Archbishop of Munich and Freising and on 28 May 1977 he was consecrated, the first diocesan priest after 80 years to take over the pastoral ministry of this large Bavarian diocese.

[He was] created and proclaimed Cardinal by Paul VI in the consistory of 27 June 1977. . . .

On 25 November 1981 he was nominated by John Paul II Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith; President of the Biblical Commission and of the Pontifical International Theological Commission. [He served as] Relator of the 5th General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (1980) [and] President Delegate to the 6th Synodal Assembly (1983).

[He was] elected Vice Dean of the College of Cardinals [on] 6 November 1998. On 30 November 2002, the Holy Father approved . . . [his] election, by the order of cardinal bishops, as Dean of the College of Cardinals.

[He served as] President of the Commission for the Preparation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and after 6 years of work (1986-92) he presented the New Catechism to the Holy Father. . . .
[He was named] Laurea honoris causa in jurisprudence from the Libera Università Maria Santissima Assunta, 10 November 1999 [and] honorary member of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, 13 November 2000.

[His] Curial Membership [includes]:

- Secretariat of State (second section)
- Oriental Churches, Divine Worship and Sacraments, Bishops, Evangelization of Peoples, Catholic Education (congregations)
- Christian Unity, Culture (councils)
- Latin America, Ecclesia Dei (commissions)

(Holy See, 2003).

Cardinal Alfonso López Trujillo is vitally important to this study because of his presidency of the Pontifical Council for the Family. This Council wrote the most authoritative statement to date regarding orthodox Catholic sexuality education beliefs, The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995). Because of his powerful role, he influenced this document greatly. The following biographical notes come from the Holy See Press Office (Holy See, 2003). Again, bracketed text is added to produce more narrative form.

Cardinal Alfonso López Trujillo, President of the Pontifical Council for the Family, Archbishop emeritus of Medellín (Colombia), was born on 8 November 1935 in Villahermosa, diocese of Ibagué (now the diocese of Líbano-Honda), Colombia. Having moved to Bogotá when he was a young boy, he was already a university student when he attended the local archdiocesan major seminary. He
continued his studies in Rome and obtained his doctorate in philosophy from the Angelicum, also taking also courses in theology and sociology and also studying Marxism. After his ordination as priest on 13 November 1960, he continued his studies in Rome for another two years. He returned to Bogotá and taught philosophy for four years at the local major seminary. In 1968, he was pastoral coordinator and was in charge of a special course on the encyclical *Popularum progressio* of Paul VI that was to be given in all the principal centers in Colombia. That same year [he] was an expert at the second general conference of Latin American Bishops held in Medellín. After the Eucharistic Congress he organized the new pastoral department of the archdiocese of Bogotá and from 1970-1972 he was Vicar General of the archdiocese. On 25 February 1971 he was appointed by Paul VI titular archbishop of Boseta and Auxiliary of Bogotá and was ordained on 25 March 1971.

He then left the office of Auxiliary to dedicate himself to the General Secretariat of CELAM (Latin American Episcopal Conference) of which he was elected general secretary on 22 November 1972 and then reconfirmed on 1 November 1974. . . . on 22 May 1978 he was nominated Coadjutor Archbishop of Medellín, becoming Archbishop on 2 June 1979. As general secretary of CELAM he worked intensely in preparing and the carrying out the third general conference of the Latin American Bishops held in Puebla at the beginning of 1979 and in which John Paul II also participated.

Thereafter, he was elected president of CELAM until 1984. He participated in numerous assemblies of the Synod of Bishops held in the Vatican.

He was president of the Colombian Bishops’ Conference.
created and proclaimed Cardinal by John Paul II in the consistory of 2 February 1983. . . . [He was] promoted to the order of cardinal bishops on 17 November 2001, suburbicarian see of Frascati.

[He was] nominated president of the Pontifical Council for the Family on 8 November 1990 and since 9 January 1991 he . . . [has been] Archbishop emeritus of Medellín.

[His] curial membership [includes]:

- Doctrine of the Faith, Causes of Saints, Bishops, Evangelization of Peoples (congregations)


Pope Pius XI: 1922-1939

His encyclical Casti Connubii (1930), which goes by the English title On Christian Marriage, makes Pope Pius XI important to this study. This encyclical caused perhaps as big a stir in 1930 as Humanae Vitae did in 1968. Declaring continence during a wife’s fertile period a licit means of family limitation, it certainly caused a stir in the birth control movement (cf. Engelman, 2002), prompting a full response from Margaret Sanger (Sanger, 1932; cf. “Birth Control Advances: A Reply to the Pope” [quoted in Marshall & Donovan, 1991, p. 136]). Known as Achille Ratti before his election to the papacy on February 6, 1922, Pope Pius XI was born in 1857 at Desio, Italy. The following profile is provide by Catholic Community Forum (Jones, 2003b):

Son of a silk manufacturer. Studied in Milan and at the Gregorian University of Rome. Ordained in 1879. Taught in the Milan seminary. Appointed one of the college of doctors of the Ambrosian Library, Milan in 1888, and won fame for his
studies in paleography. Chief librarian in 1907. Vice prefect of the Vatican Library under Pope Pius X. Papal legate to Poland in 1918 under Pope Benedict XV; put the Church on good terms with the Polish government, and made some inroads with the Bolsheviks in Russia. Papal nuncio to Poland in 1919. Archbishop of Milan in 1921. Cardinal. Pope.

Pius’s pontificate, like his pre-papal career, was marked by great diplomatic activity, often aided by Eugenio Pacelli (later Pope Pius XII). He openly opposed the youth activities of Fascist governments, and he finally published the papal letter *Non abbiamo bisogno* in 1931; it showed one could not be both Fascist and Catholic. Relations between Mussolini and the Holy See deteriorated.

Hitler signed a concordat with the Church in 1933, but never paid it any attention after the ceremony. Nazis continually meddled with Church activities, persecuted clergy, and tried to convert German Christians to the new faith in Nazism. Pius denounced the government and Nazi theory in *Mit brennender Sorge* in 1937. Soon after, he issued the analysis *On Atheistic Communism*, denounced persecutions in Russia, Mexico, and Spain, and was on unusually good terms with England, Holland, and France.

Pius spoke out against nationalism, racism, anti-Semitism, and totalitarianism, and for human dignity. He established the new feast of Christ the King to recall the rights of religion in the state. He thought little of laissez-faire capitalism, and urged social reform in the 1931 encyclical *Quadragesimo anno*. He called for greater participation by the laity, a movement he called Catholic Action. He supported missionary work, but wanted to integrate Christianity with native
cultures instead of making them European. To protect Eastern rite Catholics from Latin influence, he augmented their congregation, established a commission to study their canon law, and exhorted Western Catholics to embrace their brothers of the various Eastern rites. Pius loved technology, and sought ways for it to benefit the Church. He established Vatican radio, and modernized the Vatican Library. He reconstituted the Pontifical Academy of the Sciences in 1936 with a large international membership. (Jones, 2003b).

**Pope Paul VI: 1963-1978**

His writing of *Humanae Vitae* (1968), which translates as “Human Life,” makes Pope Paul VI important to this study. However, his less well-known work *Gravissimum educationis* (1965), which translates as “Gravity of Education,” also contributes to his relevance here. The following biographical information quotes the Vatican website (Vatican, 2003a).

Giovanni Battista Enrico Antonio Maria Montini was born on September 26, 1897 at Concesio (Lombardy) of a wealthy family of the upper class. His father was a non-practicing lawyer turned editor and a courageous promoter of social action. Giovanni was a frail but intelligent child who received his early education from the Jesuits near his home in Brescia. Even after entering the seminary (1916) he was allowed to live at home because of his health. After his ordination in 1920 he was sent to Rome to study at the Gregorian University and the University of Rome, but in 1922 he transferred to the Accademia dei Nobili Ecclesiastici to study diplomacy continuing his canon law studies at the Gregorian. In 1923 he was sent to Warsaw as attache of the nunciature but was recalled to Rome (1924), because of the effect of the severe
Polish winters on his health, and assigned to the office of the Secretariat of State where he remained for the next thirty years. Besides teaching at the Accademia dei Nobili Ecclesiastici he was named chaplain to the Federation of Italian Catholic University Students (FUCI), an assignment that was to have a decisive effect on his relations with the founders of the post-war Christian Democratic Party.

In 1937 he was named substitute for ordinary affairs under Cardinal Pacelli, the secretary of state, and he accompanied him to Budapest (1938) for the International Eucharistic Congress. On Pacelli’s election as Pius XII in 1939, Montini was reconfirmed in his position under the new secretary of state, Cardinal Luigi Maglione. When the latter died in 1944, Montini continued to discharge his office directly under the pope. During World War II he was responsible for organizing the extensive relief work and the care of political refugees.

In the secret consistory of 1952 Pope Pius XII announced that he had intended to raise Montini and Domenico Tardini to the Sacred College but that they had both asked to be dispensed from accepting. Instead he conferred on both of them the title of prosecretary of state. The following year Montini was appointed Archbishop of Milan but still without the title of cardinal. He took possession of his new See on January 5, 1955 and soon made himself known as the “archbishop of the workers.” He revitalized the entire diocese, preached the social message of the Gospel, worked to win back the laboring class, promoted Catholic education at every level, and supported the Catholic press. His impact upon the city at this time was so great that it attracted world-wide attention. At the conclave of 1958 his name was frequently mentioned, and at Pope John’s first consistory in December of that year
he was one of 23 prelates raised to the cardinalate with his name leading the list. His response to the call for a Council was immediate and even before it met he was identified as a strong advocate of the principle of collegiality. He was appointed to the Central Preparatory Commission for Vatican II and also to the Technical-Organizational Commission.

On the death of Pope John XXIII, Montini was elected June 21, 1963 to succeed him. In his first message to the world, he committed himself to a continuation of the work begun by John XXIII. Throughout his pontificate the tension between papal primacy and the collegiality of the episcopacy was a source of conflict. On September 14, 1965 he announced the establishment of the Synod of Bishops called for by the Council fathers, but some issues that seemed suitable for discussion by the synod were reserved to himself. Celibacy, removed from the debate of the fourth session of the Council, was made the subject of an encyclical, June 24, 1967; the regulation of birth was treated in *Humanae vitae* July 24, 1968, his last encyclical. The controversies over these two pronouncements tended to overshadow the last years of his pontificate.

Pope Paul had an unaccountably poor press and his public image suffered by comparison with his outgoing and jovial predecessor. Those who knew him best, however, describe him as a brilliant man, deeply spiritual, humble, reserved and gentle, a man of “infinite courtesy.” He was one of the most traveled popes in history and the first to visit five continents. His remarkable corpus of thought must be searched out in his many addresses and letters as well as in his major pronouncements. His successful conclusion of Vatican II has left its mark on the
history of the Church, but history will also record his rigorous reform of the Roman curia, his well-received address to the UN in 1965, his encyclical *Populorum progressio* (1967), his second great social letter *Octogesima adveniens* (1971)—the first to show an awareness of many problems that have only recently been brought to light—and his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi*, his last major pronouncement which also touched on the central question of the just conception of liberation and salvation.

Pope Paul VI, the pilgrim pope, died on August 6, 1978, the feast of the Transfiguration. He asked that his funeral be simple with no catafalque and no monument over his grave. (Vatican, 2003a).

**Pope John Paul II**

“John Paul’s contributions to the Church’s teachings on sex and marriage are so vast that over two-thirds of what the Catholic Church has ever said on these subjects has come from his pontificate” (West, 2000, p. 14). This statement captures the enormity of Pope John Paul II’s importance to a study about orthodox Catholic sexuality education beliefs. This study cites five works of his voluminous writings (see References). Because he wrote so much after his election as Pope, another important work, *Love and Responsibility* (Wojtyla, 1981), is not cited in the main body of this study. The biographical information quoted below comes from the Vatican website (Vatican, 2003b).

Karol Józef Wojtyła, known as John Paul II since his October 1978 election to the papacy, was born in Wadowice, a small city 50 kilometers from Crakow, on May 18, 1920. He was the second of two sons born to Karol Wojtyła and Emilia...
Kaczorowska. His mother died in 1929. His eldest brother Edmund, a doctor, died in 1932 and his father, a non-commissioned army officer died in 1941.

He made his First Holy Communion at age 9 and was confirmed at 18. Upon graduation from Marcin Wadowita high school in Wadowice, he enrolled in Cracow’s Jagiellonian University in 1938 and in a school for drama.

The Nazi occupation forces closed the university in 1939 and young Karol had to work in a quarry (1940-1944) and then in the Solvay chemical factory to earn his living and to avoid being deported to Germany.

In 1942, aware of his call to the priesthood, he began courses in the clandestine seminary of Cracow, run by Cardinal Adam Stefan Sapieha, archbishop of Cracow. At the same time, Karol Wojtyla was one of the pioneers of the “Rhapsodic Theatre,” also clandestine.

After the Second World War, he continued his studies in the major seminary of Cracow, once it had re-opened, and in the faculty of theology of the Jagiellonian University, until his priestly ordination in Cracow on November 1, 1946.

Soon after, Cardinal Sapieha sent him to Rome where he worked under the guidance of the French Dominican, Garrigou-Lagrange. He finished his doctorate in theology in 1948 with a thesis on the topic of faith in the works of St. John of the Cross. At that time, during his vacations, he exercised his pastoral ministry among the Polish immigrants of France, Belgium and Holland.

In 1948 he returned to Poland and was vicar of various parishes in Cracow as well as chaplain for the university students until 1951, when he took up again his studies on philosophy and theology. In 1953 he defended a thesis on “evaluation of
the possibility of founding a Catholic ethic on the ethical system of Max Scheler” at Lublin Catholic University. Later he became professor of moral theology and social ethics in the major seminary of Cracow and in the Faculty of Theology of Lublin.

On July 4, 1958, he was appointed Auxiliary Bishop of Cracow by Pope Pius XII, and was consecrated September 28, 1958, in Wawel Cathedral, Cracow, by Archbishop Baziak.

On January 13, 1964, he was nominated Archbishop of Cracow by Pope Paul VI, who made him a cardinal June 26, 1967.

Besides taking part in Vatican Council II with an important contribution to the elaboration of the Constitution Gaudium et spes, Cardinal Wojtyla participated in all the assemblies of the Synod of Bishops.

Since the start of his Pontificate on October 16, 1978, Pope John Paul II has completed 102 pastoral visits outside of Italy and 143 within Italy. As Bishop of Rome he has visited 301 of the 334 parishes.

His principal documents include 14 encyclicals, 15 apostolic exhortations, 11 apostolic constitutions and 42 apostolic letters. The Pope has also published three books: Crossing the Threshold of Hope (October 1994); Gift and Mystery: On the 50th Anniversary of My Priestly Ordination (November 1996) and Roman Tryptych-Meditations, a book of poems (March 2003).

John Paul II has presided at 143 beatification ceremonies (1,320 Blesseds proclaimed) and 50 canonization ceremonies (476 Saints) during his pontificate. He has held 9 consistories in which he created 232 (1 in pectore) cardinals. He has also convened six plenary meetings of the College of Cardinals.

No other Pope has encountered so many individuals like John Paul II: to date, more than 17,350,000 pilgrims have participated in the General Audiences held on Wednesdays (more than 1,000). Such figure is without counting all other special audiences and religious ceremonies held (more than 8 million pilgrims during the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 alone) and the millions of faithful met during pastoral visits made in Italy and throughout the world. It must also be remembered the numerous government personalities encountered during 38 official visits and in the 700 audiences and meetings held with Heads of State, and even the 231 audiences and meetings with Prime Ministers. (Vatican, 2003b).