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A NEW RELIGION

An Analysis of Planned Parenthood Federation of America's Annual Report (2000-2001)

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"Taking Charge of Today, Choosing Our Tomorrow"—the latest in a series of catchy phrases used as a theme for Planned Parenthood Federation of America's (PPFA) annual report. One can always count on PPFA to use a euphemistic, pleasant-sounding idiom to mask its true agenda. After all, potential donors may feel a little uneasy reading "there is no freedom for women without abortion on demand and that includes sex selection and partial birth abortions" on the cover of its report. Yet that is exactly what PPFA is saying behind such carefully selected words.

At Whose Expense?

In a speech at Harvard Law School in January 2002, Gloria Feldt, president of PPFA, reiterated the habitually quoted Margaret Sanger when saying, "Almost a century ago, Margaret Sanger, the founder of what was to become PP [Planned Parenthood], proclaimed, 'No woman can call herself free till she can own and control her own body. No woman,' she said, 'can call herself free till she can choose consciously for herself when she will or will not become a mother.'"

Feldt failed to acknowledge that this so-called conscious choice (for a woman to decide whether or not to carry a baby to term) in many instances involves the denial of any future choices for the little female growing in her womb. A woman who chooses to abort her unborn child may—at the time—believe that she is taking charge and choosing her tomorrow, but sooner or later she will realize that her choice resulted in no tomorrow for her child and *her* tomorrow may be filled with regret.

Increasing Strength, Extending Reach

Power is all about control and influence and PPFA wants more. Its stated external goals impose its own brand of immorality on the entire world. PPFA asserts

that it will become an even more powerful empire by achieving its internal goals, which include the creation of new strategies, increasing its funding, acquiring new skills, and attracting additional staff, volunteers, and experts.

One of the strategies successfully utilized by Planned Parenthood to spread its dogmas and doctrines is the Internet. The *2000-2001 Annual Report* claims that plannedparenthood.org received more than 650,000 visits per month and now ranks seventh in the world among "health" websites. PPFA reports that its teenwire.com site logs 300,000 visits per month with more than 400 personal inquiries every week.

PPFA launches other websites as needed. When John Ashcroft was nominated to be U.S. attorney general, PPFA created RoEvBush.com (now SaveRoe.com) in an effort to block confirmation. Even though PPFA failed, it claims that the website was a "great success" because "42 senators voted against confirmation, and the new administration was put on notice about the strength of our movement and our determination to fight any antichoice Supreme Court nomination to the end." As usual, PPFA claims victory—even when it loses.

SaveRoe.com warns visitors that the Supreme Court is just one vote away from overturning *Roe v. Wade*. (This is simply inaccurate, but telling the truth would not alarm and motivate its supporters.) People visiting the site are encouraged to take action by using any or all of six available options: 1) telling elected representatives to support *Roe v. Wade* (visitors provide their name and address and PPFA sends a message to their elected representatives and adds their personal data to PPFA's mailing list); 2) sending postcards which are provided on the site; 3) signing a petition; 4) writing letters to the editor of major newspapers (talking points and e-mail addresses are

provided); 5) sharing personal stories; and, 6) donating to PPFA to “continue the fight.”

By its incompleteness and lack of clarity about the *Roe* and *Doe v. Bolton* decisions, a visitor to SaveRoe.com is given the impression that states may ban some abortions: “At the point of fetal viability (capacity for sustained survival outside the uterus), the state has a compelling interest in protecting potential life and may ban abortion, except when necessary to preserve the woman’s life or health.”

The description of *Doe v. Bolton*, which follows the previous statement, totally ignores the main point of the ruling. Released by the Supreme Court on the same day as *Roe v. Wade*, its *Doe v. Bolton* decision defined the term “health,” which is used in *Roe*, as “all factors—physical, emotional, psychological, familial, and the woman’s age—relevant to the well being of the patient.” Of course, it is in the best interest of PPFA officials not to inform the average person that they are leading the fight to preserve the so-called “woman’s right” to have an abortion at any time during her pregnancy—for any or no reason. Instead of telling the truth, PPFA implies that second and third trimester abortions are done only for a serious medical reason.

Another PPFA website, covermypills.org, was created for the specific purpose of imposing upon insurance companies its dogma that prescription birth control should be covered. To date, 17 states have acquiesced and are now requiring insurance companies to provide coverage for prescription birth control. This is surely in line with Planned Parenthood’s apparent opinion that fertility is a “disease” that should be “treated.”

Prominent Voices

An additional strategy PPFA utilizes to spread its tenets is to make use of high profile individuals in the news and entertainment industries who embrace “Planned Parenthoodism.” It is a sad commentary on society today, but the media elite does have a powerful influence on the beliefs and actions of many individuals, especially the young.

Moral judgments may be made on the basis of what is perceived as general acceptance of certain ideas and behavior seen repeatedly in magazines, movies, television, and so forth. PPFA uses this phenomenon to its advantage by carefully selecting and making the most of promotions and endorsements by the so-called elite followers of its doctrines. In its 2000-2001 report, PPFA brags about the more than “300 high-profile

leaders in the arts and entertainment industry” who are members of its Board of Advocates. Those mentioned in the latest report include: Blythe Danner, Cynthia Nixon, Stanley Tucci, Heather Tom, Eve Ensler, Joan Osborne, William H. Macy, Felicity Huffman, Julianne Moore, Ashley Judd, Lucy Liu, Kathleen Turner, Betty Buckley, Elayne Boosler, Richard North Patterson, Sarah Jessica Parker, Whoopi Goldberg, Phyllis Diller, Shawn Colvin, Sharon Gless, Mia Farrow, Sarah Weddington, and Julia Stiles.

Mary J. Blige sang at the 2002 Super Bowl. With 72,000 in attendance at the Superdome in New Orleans, Louisiana, and another 800 million television viewers around the world, Super Bowl entertainers, according to *USA Today*, consider the event “a marketing bonanza.” One can bet that Planned Parenthood sees it that way, too.

Notably absent from specific mention in the *Annual Report* is Board of Advocates member Paula Poundstone, who last year was charged with child abuse. She later pled no contest to a lesser charge.

Kathleen Turner, who has served as PPFA’s Board of Advocates chairman since 1995, received the group’s highest honor—the Margaret Sanger Award. Those who received 2001 “Maggie Awards” (for “exceptional media coverage” of “reproductive health issues”) were: “The Queen Latifah Show,” *The Los Angeles Times*, *Dallas Morning News*, The Feminist Majority Foundation (for its website), the Hispanic Radio Network, “General Hospital” (ABC television drama), “Third Watch” (NBC television drama), *Glamour* magazine, “The Contender” (motion picture), columnist Patt Morrison, singer Joan Osborne, and the novel *Protect and Defend*.

Planned Parenthood ads appeared in 69 editions of national magazines, including *George*, *Heart & Soul*, *Latin Girl*, *New Yorker*, *Self*, *Teen Voices*, and *Vanity Fair*. Ads for emergency contraception (featuring Sarah McLachlan, Pink, Dice Raw, and Beverly Peel) were placed in *Rolling Stone*, *Latina*, *Essence*, *Vibe*, and *Jane*. It is not surprising that several of these magazines target minorities.

Raspberry or Honeydew?

As announced in a news release in April 2001, and in its 2000-2001 *Annual Report*, Planned Parenthood has reintroduced its own line of condoms. They are available in red, blue, and green, as well as raspberry or honeydew flavors.

What message is Planned Parenthood sending to children by offering flavored condoms? It is just another example of promoting oral sex. In Planned Parenthood's distorted view, oral sex is an acceptable activity for those choosing "abstinence."

So Much Money

Financial reports for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2001, show that PPFA's total revenue was \$672,600,000.00, up from \$627,200,000.00 in the previous reporting period. PPFA had expenses of nearly \$629,000,000.00. Its total liabilities and net assets were listed at \$750,300,000.00.

Private contributions (including corporate and foundation support) made up 28 percent of PPFA's revenue.

Clinic income accounted for 36 percent. Government grants generated 30 percent of PPFA's budget, and the Alan Guttmacher Institute and "other" accounted for six percent.

Actions Speak Louder

Planned Parenthood officials repeatedly imply that more comprehensive sex education and birth control use will reduce the number of abortions. PPFA claims to reach millions of individuals each year with its "educational programs" and "services that prevent unintended pregnancy." Its unduplicated customer base rose 5.6 percent for the 2000-2001 reporting period.

The number of female "reversible contraception" customers went up 3.6 percent. The number of male "reversible contraception" customers also increased by 27.6 percent.

Based on Planned Parenthood's theory and with all these increased percentages, one would logically expect the number of abortions they committed in 2000 would be lower. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, along with PPFA's own affiliate, the Alan Guttmacher Institute, report that the number of abortions committed in the United States is declining. Yet the number of abortions committed at Planned Parenthood facilities rose 7.8 percent—from 182,792 in 1999 to 197,070 in 2000.

PPFA leaders argue that if emergency contraception were "made available" to all females of childbearing age, the number of surgical abortions would be reduced "by more than half." The number of "emergency

contraception kits" distributed by Planned Parenthood went up a staggering 275 percent—from 112,807 in to 310,000.

Let's see, Planned Parenthood increased its customer base, "educated" millions of individuals about pregnancy prevention, sold emergency contraception kits to 310,000 women, and provided 1,921,857 men and women with "reversible contraception," and yet its abortion numbers continue to increase. It does not take a statistician to recognize that Planned Parenthood's programs are a dismal failure—unless, of course, they have no actual intention of trying to reduce the number of abortions. It is no surprise that the number of prenatal clients went from 18,878 in 1999 down to an even more scant 17,700 in 2000—a drop of 6.2 percent. Similarly, adoption referrals fell from 2,999 in 1999 to 2,486 in 2000.

Vision for 2025

PPFA's annual report conveys an almost religious—albeit New Age—tenor. PPFA uses its annual report to launch its "Vision for 2025," which is accompanied by a new logo encompassing a yellow sun superimposed on the slogan above the famous nested "Ps" of "Planned Parenthood."

Planned Parenthood's leaders claim they want to make a distinction between what it does versus what it believes. PPFA calls its new vision "audacious, inspiring, and inclusive." In reality, with the exception of a few curiously capitalized words and vague phrases, there is nothing new about PPFA's "Vision for 2025." Three rudiments are listed as the "blueprint for creating the future of choice":

- a Promise that embodies the overall spirit of what we wish to create;
- a statement of Beliefs that amplifies the language of the Promise; and
- a set of Goals that makes the vision concrete.

Planned Parenthood envisions a world where people are "free to make life's most profound choices about childbearing and relationships as they see fit." The "Promise" is "to create the will, the technology, and the enduring political and legal structures to make this vision a reality." While there is nothing new here, it sounds increasingly like PPFA is viewing itself as a deity of sorts—referencing what it will "create," how it will "transform the world," how it has the "hope for

humanity,” and how its “success will influence the future for every woman, man, and child on the planet, fulfilling the Planned Parenthood Promise to the world.”

Apparently in earnest when referring to its vision as “audacious,” PPFA actually *promises* to achieve the following goals by 2025:

- ensure that sexuality is understood as an essential, lifelong aspect of being human and that it is celebrated with respect, openness, and mutuality;
- ensure access to reproductive and sexual health care for all;
- secure passage of laws and policies, including state and federal constitutional amendments that guarantee reproductive freedom for all;
- ensure worldwide implementation of a human rights and well-being agenda as currently expressed in the Cairo Agreement, with the U.S. fulfilling its financial commitment and implementing those principles in the U.S.; and
- be a significant catalyst for the development and universal dissemination of new reproductive technologies.

Gloria Feldt sums it up when she says that the “beautifully simple mission of Planned Parenthood” is “creating a world in which choice will prevail.” A more accurate translation is a world in which abortion will prevail. How very sad that one’s mission in life is to ensure that women will have the so-called right to destroy the lives of their progeny before they are even born. If only PPFA and its legions could see that what women really want and need when facing untimely pregnancies is practical and emotional support—not the deaths of their unborn children.

To What End?

Claiming that “the pursuit of personal liberty” was the “hallmark” of the Twentieth Century, Planned Parenthood boasts of its leadership role in that regard and describes its founder, Margaret Sanger, as “one of the most influential shapers” of the century. This is the same Margaret Sanger who, according to Planned Parenthood-approved biographer Ellen Chesler, supported “compulsory sterilization statues” for certain groups of people, “committed birth control to the

creation of ‘a race of thoroughbreds,’” wrote about birth control making “men and women into gods and goddesses,” and “defended assassination of industrial or political tyrants.”

According to Chesler, Sanger once described herself as “no fit person for love or home or children or friends or anything which needs attention or consideration.” Sanger refused to promise to obey laws that she did not “respect.” Chesler also admits that Sanger “invented” incidents, “willfully distorted information,” and used “flagrant dishonesty.” Most telling is when Chesler said “the truth was that Margaret had little capacity and no real desire to sustain a permanent intimacy with one man...” And this is from a pro-Planned Parenthood writer.

Sanger is the woman that PPFA proudly claims to have been one of the most influential shapers of the Twentieth Century. PPFA officials insist that lives have been *improved* as a result of their pursuit of so-called personal autonomy that includes total sexual freedom, abortion on demand, and a rejection of traditional Judeo-Christian morality. Sanger would surely be proud.

The views on sexuality and “personal liberty” espoused by Margaret Sanger and the group she founded became widely accepted. Consequently, we have witnessed an increase in non-marital sex and the number and kinds of sexually transmitted diseases, the acceptance and promotion of sexual perversions, abortion on demand for any or no reason at anytime during pregnancy, an increase in the abandonment of newborns, an increase in infertility and reproductive cancers in women, and a significant erosion of the traditional family.

Armed with the truth we must step up our efforts in challenging Planned Parenthoodism. With kindness and clarity we must do whatever it takes to legally limit its influence and expose its agenda.

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