

ORIGINAL

ADDRESS

BY

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PRESENTED TO THE NATIONAL RELIGIOUS BROADCASTERS

WASHINGTON, D.C.

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(GREETINGS TO HOSTS, GUESTS, FRIENDS, ETC.)

I'M PLEASED TO COME BEFORE YOU ONCE AGAIN TO RENEW AN OLD AND VALUED FRIENDSHIP AND TO SHARE MY THOUGHTS WITH YOU.

YOU AND I HAVE HAD MANY SERIOUS MOMENTS TOGETHER OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS. WE HAVE, FOR EXAMPLE, CONFRONTED TOGETHER THE PROFOUND MORAL AND ETHICAL QUESTIONS RAISED BY "BABY DOE."

YOU WERE UNDERSTANDING THEN...AND YOU SUPPORTED ME.

AND TOGETHER...WE WERE RIGHT.

WE CONFRONTED TOGETHER THE ISSUE OF PORNOGRAPHY IN AMERICAN LIFE. WE DARED TO SPEAK AGAINST THE HARM THAT SUCH TRASH VISITS UPON THE COMMUNITY AND UPON THE FAMILY.

AGAIN, WHEN OTHERS STEPPED BACK...YOU STEPPED FORWARD.

YOU UNDERSTOOD THE ISSUE...AND YOU SUPPORTED ME.

AND TOGETHER...WE WERE RIGHT.

EVER SINCE THE PRESIDENT MADE ME THE COUNTRY'S SURGEON GENERAL,
I'VE BEEN NO STRANGER TO CONTROVERSY.

THROUGHOUT THIS TIME, HOWEVER, YOUR ASSOCIATION HAS BEEN A
SUPPORT AND A COMFORT.

AND TODAY, I NEED THAT SUPPORT AND THAT COMFORT ONCE MORE.

THE NEW ISSUE WE FACE...TOGETHER...IS THE ISSUE OF AIDS. WHAT IS IT? AND WHAT SHOULD WE DO ABOUT IT?

SO MUCH HAS BEEN WRITTEN AND SAID ABOUT AIDS THAT I WON'T TAKE THE TIME TO GO OVER IT ALL AGAIN.

INSTEAD, LET ME EMPHASIZE JUST A FEW KEY POINTS FROM MY OWN PERSPECTIVE AS YOUR SURGEON GENERAL.

AIDS IS A MYSTERIOUS, CONTAGIOUS DISEASE THAT IS SPREADING. THE NUMBER OF VICTIMS IS DOUBLING IN LITTLE MORE THAN A YEAR. AS OF A YEAR AGO, FOR EXAMPLE, WE HAD HAD A TOTAL OF 16,000 CASES OF AIDS REPORTED TO THE AUTHORITIES SINCE THE FIRST REPORTS WERE MADE IN JUNE OF 1981.

TODAY THAT OVERALL TOTAL IS 30,000. OVER HALF OF THOSE VICTIMS HAVE DIED OF THE DISEASE. AND THE REST APPARENTLY WILL.

BY THIS TIME NEXT YEAR WE WILL HAVE ADDED OVER 23,000 NEW CASES OF AIDS. AND BY THE END OF 1990 MY COLLEAGUES IN THE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE PREDICT THAT A QUARTER OF A MILLION PEOPLE WILL HAVE CONTRACTED AIDS.

MAKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT IT. AIDS IS SPREADING AMONG MORE AMERICANS ...AND IT IS KILLING MORE AMERICANS.

AFTER LOOKING AT ALL THE INFORMATION WE NOW HAVE, MY BOSS, DR. OTIS R. BOWEN, THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, LIKENED THE SPREADING AIDS SITUATION TO THE ARRIVAL AND SPREAD OF SMALLPOX AND THE BUBONIC PLAGUE IN EUROPE SEVERAL CENTURIES AGO.

AND THERE ARE, UNFORTUNATELY, MANY SIMILARITIES. LIKE THOSE HELPLESS EUROPEANS, WE ALSO DO NOT HAVE A CURE FOR THIS SPREADING, LETHAL DISEASE. I'M SURE YOU'VE READ ABOUT THIS OR THAT DRUG BEING TESTED ON AIDS PATIENTS, AND THE MEDIA HAVE GIVEN MUCH COVERAGE TO ONE DRUG, A.Z.T., THAT SEEMS TO PROLONG THE LIVES OF SOME AIDS VICTIMS DYING OF PNEUMOCYSTIS CARINII PNEUMONIA.

BUT I'M AFRAID THAT'S ALL IT DOES...PROLONG SOME LIVES, NOT SAVE THEM.

PEOPLE ALWAYS ASK, "DR. KOOP, WHEN WILL WE HAVE AN EFFECTIVE VACCINE AVAILABLE?" AND I HAVE TO TELL THEM THAT I DON'T SEE ONE IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. WE'RE STILL IN THE VERY FIRST STAGES OF VACCINE DEVELOPMENT, A PROCESS THAT TAKES YEARS.

AND I HAVE TO REMIND PEOPLE THAT WE CAN'T HAVE A TRULY EFFECTIVE VACCINE UNTIL WE KNOW EXACTLY WHAT WE'RE FIGHTING...AND THAT'S SOMETHING WE STILL DON'T KNOW.

THE AIDS VIRUS ITSELF IS STILL A MYSTERY.

WE DO, HOWEVER, KNOW HOW IT GETS PASSED FROM PERSON TO PERSON. IT IS PASSED EITHER IN BLOOD OR IN SEMEN.

THIS TRAIT EXPLAINS, FOR EXAMPLE, WHY AIDS HAS BEEN SO PREVALENT AMONG HOMOSEXUAL AND BISEXUAL MEN AND AMONG DRUG ABUSERS WHO BORROW INTRAVENOUS NEEDLES FROM OTHER ADDICTS WHO HAVE AIDS.

BUT LATELY WE'VE BEEN SEEING A RISE IN THE REPORTS OF AIDS OCCURRING AMONG HETEROSEXUAL MEN AND WOMEN WHO ARE NOT I.V. DRUG ABUSERS. IN FACT, THEIR HETEROSEXUAL ACTIVITY ITSELF SEEMS TO BE THEIR ONLY COMMON RISK FACTOR.

AS OF LAST WEEK, ABOUT 4 PERCENT OF ALL AIDS REPORTS INVOLVED HETEROSEXUAL MEN AND WOMEN.

ON THE FACE OF IT, 4 PERCENT IS NOT MUCH. HOWEVER, WE SEEM TO BE LOOKING AT A SHARPLY RISING CURVE.

WHILE THE OVERALL NUMBERS OF AIDS CASES WILL PROBABLY INCREASE ABOUT 9-FOLD OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, THE NUMBER OF AIDS CASES INVOLVING HETEROSEXUALS WILL INCREASE ABOUT 20-FOLD. AND THAT'S SIGNIFICANT, I THINK YOU'LL AGREE.

UNTIL RECENTLY, WE'VE BEEN BEAMING VIRTUALLY ALL OUR INFORMATION AND EDUCATION EFFORTS AT HOMOSEXUAL AND BISEXUAL MEN AND DRUG ABUSERS. THEY SEEMED TO BE THE ONES WHOSE LIVES WERE AT MOST RISK AND, THEREFORE, THE INFORMATION WAS LITERALLY LIFE-SAVING FOR SOME OF THEM.

I'VE BEEN DISAPPOINTED -- TO SAY THE LEAST -- AT THE FACT THAT SO MANY OF MY FELLOW CITIZENS ENGAGE WILLINGLY AND KNOWINGLY IN SEXUAL AND DRUG-TAKING PRACTICES THAT RISK THEIR OWN LIVES AND THE LIVES OF OTHERS.

BUT MY DISAPPOINTMENT IS HARDLY THE ISSUE HERE. AS THE SURGEON GENERAL OF THE U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE, IT'S MY JOB TO WAGE ALL-OUT WAR AGAINST DISEASE...AND NOT AGAINST PEOPLE.

I BELIEVE I AM A MORAL PERSON. BUT I'M NOT A MORAL PERSON BECAUSE I AM A DOCTOR. THAT'S BACKWARDS.

I BECAME A DOCTOR BECAUSE I AM A MORAL PERSON. MY PERSONAL DEDICATION TO HEALING AND TO CARING FOR OTHERS LED ME TO MEDICINE AND, JUST A FEW YEARS AGO, LED ME TO ACCEPT THE PRESIDENT'S INVITATION TO BE THE COUNTRY'S SURGEON GENERAL.

I HAVE BEEN TESTED BY "BABY DOE" AND BY ORGAN TRANSPLANTS AND BY FAMILY VIOLENCE AND BY THE DISEASES OF THE AGING...BY A DOZEN OR MORE ISSUES IN WHICH PERSONAL ETHICS AND MORALITY CAN BECOME ENTWINED WITH MATTERS AFFECTING THE PUBLIC HEALTH. I BELIEVE I'VE COME THROUGH THOSE ISSUES, HAVING SERVED MY PRESIDENT AND MY COUNTRY WELL.

BUT THEY WERE JUST TRAINING-GROUNDS FOR AIDS.

NOW, ONCE AGAIN, THE COUNTRY IS CONFRONTED BY A HEALTH MATTER THAT IS LIFE-THREATENING. AND...ONCE AGAIN...I'VE BEEN ASKED TO PLAY A LEADERSHIP ROLE. IN THAT ROLE, I MUST SPEAK TO MY FELLOW AMERICANS PRIMARILY AS A HEALTH OFFICER.

AND WITH THIS ISSUE OF AIDS, I MUST...YES, ONCE AGAIN...COME DOWN ON THE SIDE OF DOING WHATEVER I CAN TO SAVE HUMAN LIFE. AND I ASK EVERY AMERICAN...I ASK EACH ONE OF YOU HERE THIS AFTERNOON...TO JOIN ME IN THIS FUNDAMENTALLY MORAL CRUSADE AGAINST A BRUTAL, HUMILIATING, AND FATAL DISEASE.

WHAT CAN WE DO? WE'RE NOT ALL SCIENTISTS AND BRILLIANT RESEARCHERS. SO, WHAT CAN WE REALLY DO?

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING WE CAN DO IS TO TELL THE AMERICAN PEOPLE THE FACTS ABOUT AIDS AND WHAT THEY CAN DO TO PROTECT THEMSELVES FROM IT AND TO PREVENT IT FROM SPREADING ANY FURTHER.

I HOPE YOU ALL READ MY REPORT ON AIDS. IF YOU HAVEN'T, PLEASE GET OUT A PENCIL AND TAKE DOWN THIS ADDRESS FOR YOUR COPY.

AIDS...POST OFFICE BOX 14252...WASHINGTON, D.C....20044

OR PICK UP THE PHONE AND CALL AREA CODE 301...443-0292.

LET ME REPEAT THAT FOR YOU:

AIDS...POST OFFICE BOX 14252...WASHINGTON, D.C....20044

OR CALL AREA CODE 301...443-0292.

IT'S IMPORTANT THAT YOU READ IT. I PUT DOWN IN THAT REPORT, IN PLAIN ENGLISH, THE NATURE OF THE THREAT WE ARE FACING AND JUST WHAT EACH OF US MUST DO TO ESCAPE ITS LETHAL GRASP.

TOTAL ABSTINENCE FROM ALL SEXUAL RELATIONS IS ONE ANSWER, BUT IT IS TOTALLY UNREALISTIC. AND IN ANY CASE, I'M NOT READY TO GIVE UP ON THE HUMAN RACE QUITE YET...AND I'M AFRAID THAT'S THE LOGICAL END OF SUCH ADVICE.

YES, IF YOU'RE YOUNG AND YOU HAVEN'T YET ACHIEVED A MUTUALLY FAITHFUL, MONOGAMOUS RELATIONSHIP -- WHAT THIS AUDIENCE CALLS "MARRIAGE" -- THEN YOU SHOULD BY ALL MEANS TAKE THE BEST POSSIBLE PRECAUTIONS AGAINST DISEASE BY ABSTAINING. PERIOD. THAT'S MY ADVICE TO YOUNGSTERS AND I DON'T THINK THERE'S ANY BETTER ADVICE YOU CAN GIVE.

IF YOU'RE AN ADULT AND HAVE A FAITHFUL AND LOVING PARTNER -- AND YOU ARE ONE YOURSELF -- THEN SEXUALITY IS A PART OF THAT LOVING RELATIONSHIP AND THERE IS NO NEED FOR ABSTINENCE.

BUT PEOPLE DO GROW UP AND BECOME ADULTS...AND MANY ADULTS, FOR WHATEVER REASONS, DO NOT FIND A FULFILLING AND FAITHFUL, MONOGAMOUS RELATIONSHIP.

THAT'S TOO BAD...BUT I DON'T WANT THEM TO DIE BECAUSE OF IT.

IF THEY'RE GOING TO HAVE SEXUAL RELATIONS WITH FIRST SOMEONE AND THEN ANOTHER ONE, I MAY NOT FEEL VERY GOOD ABOUT THAT, BUT OF FAR MORE PUBLIC HEALTH CONSEQUENCE IS THE FACT THAT THEY SHOULD CARRY ON THAT LIFESTYLE IN THE MOST RESPONSIBLE MANNER POSSIBLE.

THE MORAL "BOTTOM LINE" FOR ME -- AND I'M SURE IT IS FOR YOU AS WELL -- IS THAT I HOPE THEY LIVE AND I MUST DO WHATEVER I CAN TO HELP THEM LIVE.

AND RIGHT NOW, WITHOUT A VACCINE AND WITHOUT MUCH ELSE TO GO ON, I, AS A PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIAL, CAN ONLY ADVISE THE USE OF A CONDOM FROM START TO FINISH.

WILL THIS PROVIDE 100 PERCENT PERFECT PROTECTION? NO, AND I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING HERE ON EARTH THAT DOES.

BUT OF THE VERY FEW THINGS AVAILABLE RIGHT NOW, THE CONDOM IS THE BEST WE'VE GOT.

THIS, THEN, IS THE THREE-PART MESSAGE I'VE BEEN RELAYING TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE SINCE OCTOBER 22:

FIRST, IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING...DON'T DO IT.
ABSTAIN.

SECOND, YOUR BEST POSSIBLE DEFENSE AGAINST THIS DISEASE -- AND
AGAINST A GREAT DEAL MORE IN THIS WORLD -- IS A FAITHFUL, MONOGA-
MOUS RELATIONSHIP. IF YOU'VE GOT IT...KEEP IT.

AND THIRD, IF YOU'RE AN ADULT WHO UNDERSTANDS YOUR OWN SEXUALITY
BUT YOU JUST HAVEN'T FOUND THAT MAGICAL MONOGAMOUS PARTNER YET,
THEN PLEASE BE CAREFUL AND, AMONG OTHER THINGS, USE A CONDOM FROM
START TO FINISH.

LET ME AGAIN EMPHASIZE THAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT A DISEASE THAT NOW THREATENS EVERYBODY...EVERYWHERE.

IT IS NO LONGER PRIMARILY A DISEASE ATTACKING THE HOMOSEXUAL COMMUNITIES OF SAN FRANCISCO, LOS ANGELES, AND NEW YORK CITY.

NOT ANY MORE.

NOW, OTHER CITIES AND STATES ARE SHOWING A RISE IN CASES, TOO. THE SAME CITIES, SMALL AND LARGE, IN WHICH YOU BROADCAST YOUR MESSAGES OF DEVOTION EVERY DAY.

HOUSTON HAD 345 CASES LAST YEAR...

DALLAS HAD 208...

ATLANTA HAD 185...

BOSTON HAD 155 LAST YEAR, ALSO...

COLORADO REPORTED 167 NEW CASES...

OHIO HAD 173...

AND ARKANSAS HAD 40 NEW CASES LAST YEAR.

ALL 50 STATES, THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, PUERTO RICO, GUAM, THE TRUST TERRITORIES...ALL HAVE BEEN TOUCHED BY AIDS.

WE COULD ALREADY SEE THIS DEVELOPMENT OCCURRING, WHEN PRESIDENT REAGAN ASKED ME -- BACK IN FEBRUARY OF 1986 -- TO PULL TOGETHER EVERYTHING WE KNEW ABOUT AIDS AND PUT IT IN THAT PLAIN-ENGLISH REPORT TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE...THE ONE I MENTIONED A MOMENT AGO.

I MET WITH INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS FROM ACROSS THE SPECTRUM OF SOCIETY...

GROUPS LIKE THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION AND THE NATIONAL P.T.A....

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMISSION OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION...

THE SYNAGOGUE COUNCIL OF AMERICA AND THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS...

I TALKED WITH THE NATIONAL COALITION OF BLACK AND LESBIAN GAYS AND THE WASHINGTON BUSINESS GROUP ON HEALTH.

I MET WITH THE REPRESENTATIVES OF LOCAL, COUNTY, AND STATE AND TERRITORIAL HEALTH OFFICIALS, ALSO...26 GROUPS IN ALL.

THEY WERE ALL EXTRAORDINARILY CANDID. AND EACH ONE ALSO PLEDGED TO HELP GET MY REPORT INTO THE HANDS OF EVERY AMERICAN.

AFTER 8 MONTHS OF LISTENING AND WRITING, I DELIVERED MY REPORT TO THE CABINET AND TO THE PRESIDENT. IT WAS ACCEPTED...AND I RELEASED IT ON OCTOBER 22, 1986.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I WANT TO ASSURE YOU THAT AT NO TIME DID ANYONE SUGGEST A LITTLE CHANGE HERE OR A LITTLE CHANGE THERE. THE FINAL REPORT I RELEASED WAS THE EXACT SAME REPORT THAT I PERSONALLY WROTE BETWEEN FEBRUARY AND SEPTEMBER OF LAST YEAR.

AND I CAN FURTHER ASSURE YOU THAT SINCE THAT TIME I HAVE HAD NO MISGIVINGS ABOUT ANYTHING IN THAT REPORT.

IT'S TRUE. AND IT STANDS.

BUT, AS I SAY, NOTHING AND NOBODY IS PERFECT. SO, IF I HAD TO DO IT OVER AGAIN, I'D PROBABLY BE JUST A LITTLE BIT CLEARER ON PAGE 5. ON THAT PAGE OF THE REPORT I WROTE THAT "EDUCATION ABOUT AIDS SHOULD START IN EARLY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND AT HOME..." AND SO ON.

YOU CAN'T TEACH A CHILD ANYTHING ABOUT AIDS UNLESS HE OR SHE HAS SOME BASIC SEXUAL EDUCATION. SO CLEARLY, EDUCATION ABOUT HUMAN SEXUALITY SHOULD COME FIRST AND THUS PROVIDE THE NECESSARY CONTEXT FOR THE SPECIFIC MATERIAL ABOUT AIDS THAT SHOULD COME ALONG LATER.

IN GENERAL MY 32-PAGE REPORT HAS HAD OVERWHELMING APPROVAL AND ACCEPTANCE. BUT IT DOES CONTAIN 92 WORDS ON SEX EDUCATION. AND THOSE 92 WORDS BECAME THE FOCAL POINT OF THE MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE REPORT... AND OF MUCH BICKERING AND CRITICISM, TOO.

ODDLY ENOUGH, MY MOST VOCAL CRITICS HAVE BEEN OF A VERY CONSERVATIVE PERSUASION -- AS AM I.

BUT THESE CRITICS HAVE PRESENTED THEIR OWN WORST POSSIBLE INTERPRETATIONS OF THE REPORT AND THEN THEY'VE HELD ME UP AS THE ONE RESPONSIBLE FOR THESE WORST-CASE SCENARIOS.

HOWEVER, I'VE BEEN ATTACKING SEX EDUCATION CURRICULA THAT JUST TEACH TECHNIQUE AND DON'T MENTION RESPONSIBILITY OR MORALITY...AND I TOOK THAT POSITION BEFORE SOME OF MY CRITICS KNEW THERE WAS SUCH A THING AS SEX.

WHEN YOU SPEAK OF SEX EDUCATION, YOU OUGHT TO KEEP A FEW THINGS IN MIND. FOR EXAMPLE...

* WE HAVE ONLY A FEW YEARS OF GRACE TO HELP A YOUNG CHILD UNDERSTAND HIS OR HER SEXUALITY BEFORE THE ONSET OF PUBERTY.

* ALSO, A PARENT SHOULD HANDLE THIS EDUCATION OF THE CHILD, BUT EXPERIENCE HAS SHOWN THAT A PARENT CAN NEVER BE THE EXCLUSIVE EDUCATOR. THE BEST EDUCATOR...THE EDUCATOR OF CHOICE...YES, OF COURSE. BUT THE EXCLUSIVE EDUCATOR, I DOUBT THAT.

I WISH WE COULD SAY THAT PARENTS WHO WANT TO CAN BE IN TOTAL CONTROL OF A CHILD'S SEX EDUCATION. BUT WE KNOW THAT CHILDREN DO LEARN ABOUT SEX FROM MANY UNSTRUCTURED AND UNPLANNED EXPERIENCES, INCLUDING THE VIEWING OF MOVIES AND TELEVISION AND FRIENDSHIPS WITH OTHER CHILDREN.

SOME RESEARCH WAS RECENTLY DONE ON THIS MATTER BY MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY. THE RESEARCHERS FOUND, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT A LARGE NUMBER OF 9TH- AND 10TH-GRADE GIRLS WATCH BETWEEN 1 AND 2 HOURS OF SOAP OPERAS EVERY DAY AFTER SCHOOL.

AND WHAT ARE THEY VIEWING? THE RESEARCHERS REPORT THAT, AMONG OTHER THINGS, SEXUAL INTERCOURSE BETWEEN UNMARRIED PARTNERS IS SHOWN OR DISCUSSED ON MID-DAY SOAP OPERAS ON AN AVERAGE OF 1.56 TIMES AN HOUR.

IN THE EVENING, A LARGER NUMBER OF 9TH- AND 10TH-GRADE GIRLS AND BOYS WATCH 3 TO 4 HOURS OF TELEVISION. ON THOSE PRIME-TIME EVENING SHOWS, ACTS OF UNMARRIED INTERCOURSE ARE SHOWN OR DISCUSSED ON AN AVERAGE OF ONCE AN HOUR.

THE SAME RESEARCHERS ALSO FOUND THAT OVER 60 TO 70 PERCENT OF THOSE 9TH- AND 10TH-GRADERS SAW THE TOP 5 "R"-RATED FILMS, IN WHICH SEXUAL INTERCOURSE BETWEEN UNMARRIED PARTNERS OCCURRED ON THE AVERAGE OF 8 TIMES PER FILM. IN THE WORST FILMS, IT OCCURRED 15 TIMES.

AMERICA'S CHILDREN DON'T LIVE IN A VACUUM, AND, THEREFORE, WE ALL MUST WORK TOGETHER -- PARENTS, EDUCATORS, AND RELIGIOUS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS -- TO HELP OUR CHILDREN GROW UP AND COPE WITH THE REAL WORLD OF PLEASURE AND DANGER.

* SOMETHING ELSE WE NEED TO KEEP IN MIND, IN THIS MATTER OF SEX EDUCATION.

WHEN A CHILD COMES HOME FROM SCHOOL AND TALKS ABOUT SOME CONTROVERSIAL IDEA THAT WAS PRESENTED, MOST PARENTS DON'T PANIC...EVEN THOSE PARENTS WHO HAVE STRONG FEELINGS ON THE MATTER.

NO. THOSE PARENTS SIT DOWN AND PASS ON TO THEIR CHILDREN -- IN POSITIVE TERMS -- WHAT THEIR FEELINGS AND THEIR STANDARDS ON THE MATTER MAY BE.

WHY CAN'T PARENTS ACT THE SAME WAY WHEN THEIR CHILDREN RAISE QUESTIONS ABOUT SEX?

I THINK THEY SHOULD. BUT "SHOULD" AND "COULD" ARE TWO DIFFERENT MATTERS.

MANY PARENTS ARE SIMPLY NOT COMFORTABLE ENOUGH WITH THEIR OWN SEXUALITY TO TALK ABOUT IT FREELY EVEN WITH A SPOUSE. AND THEY CONVEY THAT SAME DISCOMFORT TO THEIR CHILDREN, RIGHT AT THE TIME WHEN THE CHILDREN NEED STRONG PARENTAL GUIDANCE...OR SOME POSITIVE DIALOGUE ON THE MATTER...OR SIMPLY SOME HONEST AND COMPLETE ANSWERS TO THEIR QUESTIONS.

A CHILD WILL SENSE THIS DISCOMFORT AND WILL BACK AWAY FROM THE SUBJECT...AND AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PARENTS WILL BE LOST.

SEX EDUCATION -- WHICH I'D RATHER CALL "HEALTH AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT" -- CAN PROBABLY BE TAUGHT BEGINNING IN KINDERGARTEN AND FIRST GRADE. AND HERE I'M SPEAKING OF A CURRICULUM THAT ANSWERS THE COMMON, EVERYDAY QUESTIONS RAISED BY YOUNG CHILDREN, QUESTIONS SUCH AS "WHERE DO BABIES COME FROM?"

THIS KIND OF EDUCATION CAN AND SHOULD BE NON-THREATENING...IT CAN TEACH GOOD VALUES...IT CAN HELP DEVELOP THE CHILD'S OWN SENSE OF PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY...AND IT CAN STRENGTHEN THE CONCEPT OF "THE FAMILY."

THIS KIND OF SEX EDUCATION SHOULD UNFOLD ACCORDING TO THE DEVELOPMENTAL AGE OF CHILDREN AND TO THEIR DIFFERENT LEVELS OF AWARENESS AND CURIOSITY. I DON'T SEE ANY REASON TO CLING TO A RIGID SCHEDULE BASED ON CHRONOLOGICAL AGE.

IF THE CURRICULUM IS WELL-PLANNED AND THOUGHTFULLY CARRIED OUT, THEN IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO BRING TO THE ATTENTION OF THE CHILDREN THE FACTS ABOUT SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASE -- AND AIDS IN PARTICULAR -- ALONG ABOUT THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL YEARS...THE YEARS OF EARLY ADOLESCENCE.

SOME UNINFORMED, INACCURATE, AND LESS-THAN-HONEST CRITICS OF MY POSITION BELIEVE THAT WHAT I'VE JUST SAID IS TANTAMOUNT TO THE MOST HEINOUS OF ACTIVITIES. THEY SAY IT MEANS, FOR EXAMPLE, AND I'M QUOTING NOW...

"...SPONSORING HOMOSEXUALLY-ORIENTED CURRICULA..."

"...TEACHING BUGGERY IN THE 3RD GRADE..."

OR "...PROVIDING CONDOMS TO 8-YEAR-OLDS..."

ISN'T THAT AWFUL STUFF? OF COURSE IT IS.

AND THEY CHARGE THAT, BY ADVOCATING A STRONG, HONEST, AND FAMILY-CENTERED APPROACH TO SEX EDUCATION IN ORDER TO SAVE THE LIVES OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE, I HAVE THEREFORE "DEPARTED THE FAITH" -- WHATEVER THAT MEANS -- OR I'VE "GONE OVER TO THE OTHER SIDE" -- WHEREVER THAT IS.

THIS IS A PERSONAL MATTER, SO LET ME GET PERSONAL, FOR A MOMENT.

AS YOU KNOW, I'VE CARRIED A LOT OF WATER FOR POLITICAL CONSERVATIVES...AND SOME OF THEM HAVE TURNED OUT TO BE FAIR-WEATHER FRIENDS.

AND TO THAT MEMBER OF THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT WHO WROTE THAT THE NOISE I HEAR IS FRANCIS SCHAEFFER ROLLING OVER IN HIS GRAVE...I SAY THAT THE NOISE I HEAR IS MORE LIKELY HIS APPLAUSE.

YOU, AS CHRISTIANS, WILL CONTINUE TO BE TESTED BY TREMENDOUS QUESTIONS THAT ARISE FROM THE TURMOIL OF CURRENT EVENTS. THESE QUESTIONS MAKE YOU EXAMINE AND RE-EXAMINE WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU STAND FOR.

THIS IS NOT AN AGE FOR THE FAINT OF HEART...OR OF SOUL.

ONE OF THOSE QUESTIONS INVOLVES HOMOSEXUALITY. YOU CAN'T AVOID IT, IF YOU'RE GOING TO DISCUSS AIDS.

IF YOU REGARD HOMOSEXUAL BEHAVIOR AS SIN, PLEASE REMEMBER THAT ONE OF YOUR FUNDAMENTAL TEACHINGS HAS BEEN TO "SEPARATE THE SIN FROM THE SINNER."

YOU MAY HATE THE SIN...BUT YOU ARE TO LOVE THE SINNER.

AND LET ME REPEAT AGAIN THE CRUX OF OUR BATTLE...IT IS A BATTLE AGAINST A DISEASE, NOT AGAINST PEOPLE.

AND HERE'S ANOTHER QUESTION THAT CAN TEST YOU. YOU WILL HEAR A LOT ABOUT "SAFE SEX" AND HOW THIS OR THAT TECHNIQUE IS A WAY OF CONTAINING THE AIDS EPIDEMIC.

BUT THE SAFEST APPROACH TO SEXUALITY FOR ADULTS IS TO CHOOSE EITHER ABSTINENCE OR FAITHFUL MONOGAMY. IN THE ABSENCE OF SUCH A CHOICE, THEN AN INDIVIDUAL MUST BE WARNED TO USE THE PROTECTION OF A CONDOM -- FROM START TO FINISH -- IN SEXUAL INTERCOURSE.

AND THERE'S A THIRD QUESTION THAT WE MUST FACE.

A LARGE NUMBER OF TRULY INNOCENT PEOPLE ARE BEING INFECTED BY THE AIDS VIRUS AND THEY ARE GOING TO DIE. WHO ARE THEY? THEY ARE...

THE WIVES OF BISEXUAL MEN...

THEY ARE THE SPOUSES OF I.V. DRUG USERS...

THEY'RE THE WIVES AND HUSBANDS OF PROMISCUOUS SPOUSES.

AND I'M AFRAID WE MUST ALSO COUNT THE BABIES BORN TO I.V. DRUG USERS OR OTHERWISE INFECTED MOTHERS. THEY ARE BEING ABANDONED AND ARE DYING ALONE IN HOSPITAL NURSERIES.

THEY ARE THE MOST INNOCENT VICTIMS OF ALL.

I'VE GONE INTO SOME DETAIL HERE BECAUSE I KNOW YOU ARE GENUINELY CONCERNED ABOUT THESE MATTERS. BUT I HOPE I HAVE GIVEN YOU SOME NEW FOOD FOR THOUGHT.

I HOPE THAT, WHEN YOU NEXT HEAR THE TERM "SEX EDUCATION," YOU WON'T JUST JUMP TO THE CONCLUSION THAT IT MEANS SOME CRACK-BRAINED CURRICULUM THAT HAS GOTTEN OFF THE TRACK. AND I HOPE YOU WON'T CONSIDER IT TO BE A CURRICULUM THAT -- BY DEFINITION -- CAN ONLY TEACH TECHNIQUE WITHOUT MENTIONING RESPONSIBILITY OR MORALITY.

NOT SO. THINK INSTEAD, IF YOU WILL, ABOUT SOME OF THE THINGS I'VE MENTIONED HERE THIS AFTERNOON.

AND LASTLY, WHEN AIDS INTRUDES ON SOME ASPECT OF YOUR OWN LIVES, PLEASE REMEMBER THAT THE SICK AND THE DYING REQUIRE OUR CARE AND OUR COMPASSION, NO MATTER HOW THE ILLNESS WAS CONTRACTED.

NOW, YOU'VE BEEN A VERY GOOD AND PATIENT AUDIENCE AND I WILL CLOSE MY REMARKS WITH A LITTLE PERSONAL RECOLLECTION.

A FEW YEARS AGO, FRANCIS SCHAEFFER AND I WERE TOURING THE COUNTRY, SPEAKING OUT AGAINST ABORTION, AND PRESENTING OUR FILM, "WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE HUMAN RACE."

I CAN TELL YOU THAT WE WERE FREQUENTLY VERY DISCOURAGED BY THE RESPONSE OF MANY EVANGELICALS. THEY DREW THEIR SKIRTS ABOUT THEM AND SHUNNED THE ISSUE OF ABORTION.

IN DUE TIME THEY'VE COME AROUND AND HAVE BECOME ACTIVISTS IN THE PRO-LIFE MOVEMENT.

MY PLEA TO YOU TODAY IS NOT TO REPEAT THAT SLICE OF HISTORY. I ASK THAT YOU, WHO BEST UNDERSTAND THE COMPASSION OF CHRIST, SHOW YOUR LOVE AND CONCERN FOR THE VICTIMS OF THIS TERRIBLE DISEASE AND GIVE YOUR SUPPORT TO EFFORTS TO EDUCATE OUR YOUNG PEOPLE.

EDUCATION...EDUCATION...EDUCATION. RIGHT NOW, THAT'S OUR ONLY WEAPON AGAINST THIS DREADFUL DISEASE. WITH YOUR HELP, IT CAN ALSO BE THE STRONGEST WEAPON WE HAVE.

ALL OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE ARE NOW AT HIGH RISK. HOW THEY LIVE OUT THEIR SEXUALITY OVER A LONG PERIOD OF TIME WILL DETERMINE WHETHER OUR SOCIETY CAN SURVIVE THIS DEVASTATING DISEASE...OR NOT.

WE MUST HELP THEM...AND WE MUST HELP OURSELVES.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT IN THE YEARS AHEAD, AS IN THE YEARS PAST...AND GOD BLESS EACH ONE OF YOU.

THANK YOU.

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