

AlbertMohler.com

Sexualizing the Young: How America Treats Young Women

A culture demonstrates its true character through its treatment of the young and impressionable. Every society sends signals about its moral expectation, and young people are bombarded with messages from competing mentors, models, and influencers. Consider—if you have sufficient nerve—the signals being sent to young people today.

Wednesday, February 4, 2004

A culture demonstrates its true character through its treatment of the young and impressionable. Every society sends signals about its moral expectation, and young people are bombarded with messages from competing mentors, models, and influencers. Consider—if you have sufficient nerve—the signals being sent to young people today.

With this in mind, a key indicator of America's moral health is seen in the messages now broadcast to teenage girls and young women. A report in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette brings this to mind as Bob Hoover, the paper's book editor announces that novels for teenage girls are now growing in popularity as the stories get sexier and more explicit. As Hoover explains, "Books that look like adult ones, and sound like them, too, are the route publishers are following these days to attract teenage readers."

Hoover's article considers the "Young Adult" market, the segment of the publishing industry directed towards pre-teens and young teenagers. By all accounts, that segment of the publishing world has seen lean times of late. Nevertheless, Amy Kellaman, head of the children's book department at Pittsburgh's Carnegie Library reports, "It's come back in a big way. It's always been hard to attract teen readers, but there seems to be more interest."

Craig Walker of Scholastic Books, notes, "Early teens, especially, are sticking with reading after they get into high school. I think its that little baby boom of a few years ago that's brought us more readers."

Well, no wonder. It seems the publishers have decided to deliver erotic themes to the teenage market. That enticement has attracted a significant readership—and it deserves our serious attention.

Walker's company is the American publisher of the "Harry Potter" series, and Scholastic Books has recently released a series intended for teenage girls entitled "Three Girls in the City." Of course, the title of that series is intended to draw an immediate tie to television's "Sex and the City," a series that featured promiscuous grown women living out unreal lifestyles of sexual excess. Even as "Sex and the City" was declared to herald a new day in liberated female libido, "Three Girls in the City" is far more sexually explicit than literature intended for girls in the past.

As Walker explains, "It's about living in New York after 9/11 and what life is like there now. Years ago, fiction for teens was never about contemporary events, but now kids are very aware of the present. They watch reality TV, cable TV news. They know what's going on."

He went on to explain that books for teens "are sexier now, like the 'Gossip Girls' of The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants."

Stephanie Zvirin, book editor for the youth segment of Book List, explains that adult authors such as Isabell Allende and Francine Prose are now writing for the young adult segment, having established their reputations writing books for adults.

Along with this article, the Post-Gazette offered excerpts from four recent books published for the young adult market.

These selections indicate that the books focus on two main themes—adolescent male crudity and female adolescent anatomy.

Another signal of our society's new approach to girls and young women is seen in a recent "On Health" column published in U.S. News and World Report. The article is written by Bernadine Healy, the controversial former director of the National Institutes of Health. In "What 'Girls' Should Know," Healy promotes use of the "morning-after pill," an emergency birth-control method that involves taking a high dose of oral contraceptive just hours after sex. Of course, the use of the word "contraceptive" in this case is nothing less than deceptive. By all accounts, conception will have already taken place, and the pill will function in this case to prevent the embryo's successful implantation in the womb.

Healy is an evangelist of sorts for the morning-after pill. Even as the Food and Drug Administration [FDA] considers making the pill available on an over-the-counter basis, Healy argues that this should be "an easy call." As she argues, "After all, we're talking about simply a higher dose of a birth control pill taken as soon as possible after intercourse. It has been used worldwide since the 1970s. Though something of a medical secret in this country, many doctors have for years offered this option discretely to women in the know, and it's routinely given to rape victims."

Healy makes a deft attempt to make this a matter of culture rather than morality. "We can blame the sexual revolution, women's lib, the Internet, or a society that grooves on Sex and the City for creating women's morning-after dilemma. But that will not help the individual woman waking up to a broken condom, a missed birth control pill, or a totally unplanned sexual encounter. Even abstinence has its contraceptive failures."

Bernadine Healy is a medical doctor, a former director of the National Institutes of Health, and a former president of the American Red Cross. Does she honestly believe that sexual abstinence "has its contraceptive failures?" What can she possibly mean by this? We can only assume that Dr. Healy's definition of abstinence is something very different from what the rest of us mean by the term.

Healy does not hide the morning-after pill's operation. She explains that implantation in the womb occurs almost six days after the egg is released and sex may take place. As she explains, "A pulse of high-dose progestin (that's what the morning-after pill is) will in a matter of hours slow sperm down, suppress ovulation, and make the uterus hostile to egg implantation."

Healy presents herself as a medical advisor, but she overplays her hand and reveals her real agenda. She criticizes "right-to-life critics" but dismisses ethical concerns without so much as an argument. She denies that "making female contraceptives as accessible as aspirin or hairspray promotes promiscuity." According to Healy, such concerns merely smack of "our Victorian past, in which fear of pregnancy was seen as a needed deterrent to women's loose living."

When Healy turns to promote Margaret Sanger as the heroine of her story, her true agenda is made clear. Margaret Sanger was the founder of Planned Parenthood, but the real story is far more interesting than Healy would reveal. Sanger was not only an early proponent of free sex and abortion, she was also a radical thinker who promoted the theory of eugenics—a system of racial superiority through genetic control. Sanger's motto, "more children from the fit, less from the unfit," was really about limiting births among minorities.

In calling for the morning-after pill to be available to young women, Healy suggests that Margaret Sanger will have her "sweet revenge." Healy concludes her argument by asserting, "The morning-after pill is an old medical secret for today's women in today's world. Its an option that every 'girl' should have if you only imagine that you were in her shoes."

Finally, the morning-after pill is not the only technology into which young girls are being indoctrinated. NARAL Pro-Choice America, one of the nation's most ardent pro-abortion organizations, has just launched a new program addressed to teenage girls. "Generation Pro-Choice" is designed to involve adolescent girls in the movement to protect the legal status of abortion and to buy into the worldview of the Culture of Death. According to the "Generation Pro-Choice" web site, "If you support access to birth control, sex education and abortion, and you've never lived in a time when abortion was illegal—then congratulations, you are Generation Pro-Choice, and we need your help getting other young people involved in the fight to protect the right to privacy and a woman's right to choose—or else quite frankly, we're gonna lose it."

The Generation Pro-Choice program represents the desperation of the abortion-rights movement. For the last decade and more, young Americans have been turning increasingly pro-life. As Suzanne Eller, author of “Real Issues, Real Teens: What Every Parent Needs to Know” (due out in June) told WORLD Magazine: “This generation is bearing the fruit of ‘freedom’ that adults have been espousing. These are the teens who see their friends who’ve had abortions dealing with the reality of abortion. They are the ones who have experienced...sex with multiple partners, STDs, depression, and are now fighting back and asking hard questions, like, ‘You said that having sex without boundaries and abortion is no big deal. Then why do I feel like this?’”

All this should be sufficient proof that we are in a battle for the hearts and minds of our young people, and especially young girls in this case. The church had better get informed and get busy—for there is no time to lose.

Content Copyright © 2002-2010, R. Albert Mohler, Jr.