



"It may readily be conceived that by thus attempting to make one sex equal to the other, both are degraded, and from so preposterous a medley of the works of nature nothing could ever result but weak men and disorderly women."

—Alexis de Tocqueville

**16-Mar-12**

## **Christianity's 'War on Women'?**

Kathleen Sebelius, U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services, announced on January 20, 2012, that, as part of preventive health services for women, all health plans must provide no-cost coverage—including deductibles and co-payments—for all contraceptives and sterilization procedures approved by the Food and Drug Administration. Her announcement ignited an immediate furor from conservatives and Catholic groups complaining that this regulation—part of Obamacare—impinged on their first amendment right to religious freedom.

Besides the fact that it is against Catholic teaching, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops argued that contraception is not basic healthcare but "an elective intervention that stops the healthy functioning of healthy women's reproductive systems." Conservative commentators railed that requiring taxpayers to fund contraception is essentially forcing citizens to pay other people to have sex.

Not long thereafter, the Obama administration granted religious institutions an exception: An employee of such an institution that does not provide reproductive healthcare can seek it directly from the insurance company at no additional cost. On March 1, the Democrat-controlled Senate rejected 51-48 a proposed amendment to the healthcare law extending this exception more broadly.

The absurdity of the contraception mandate was revealed on February 16, when Sandra Fluke, a Georgetown University Law Center graduate student, was asked to speak before the House Democratic Steering and Policy Committee (not a formal Congressional hearing). She argued that religious institutions, even those with moral objections, should provide free contraception in their health insurance. She claimed that birth control could cost \$1,000 per year (or as she specifically said, \$3,000 over three years), stating that four out of ten of the university's female students suffered financial hardship because the student health insurance plan does not cover it. Many low-income students must go without contraceptives, she averred, because the women's free health clinics cannot meet the need.

Critics like Rush Limbaugh pummeled Fluke on the air, highlighting the ridiculous nature of her claims, especially the cost of contraception. As Cathy Cleaver Ruse, a Georgetown Law graduate, wrote in an [opinion piece](#) in *The Wall Street Journal*:

But an employee at a Target pharmacy near the university told the *Weekly Standard* last week that one month's worth of generic oral contraceptives is \$9 per month. 'That's the price without insurance,' the employee said. (It's also \$9 per month at Wal-Mart.)

. . . Should Ms. Fluke give up a cup or two of coffee at Starbucks each month to pay for her birth control, or should Georgetown give up its religion? Even a first-year law student should know where the Constitution comes down on that.

Limbaugh ran afoul of the media after he used terms to describe Fluke that he later regretted saying and apologized for. However, his outburst was enough to alter the angle of the debate. Jesse Ferguson, spokesperson for the

Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, complained, "Rush Limbaugh has come to Republicans' defense in their war on women." Fluke herself opined in a statement on March 1, expanding the field of those attacking "all women":

Unfortunately, numerous commentators have gone far beyond the acceptable bounds of civil discourse. No woman deserves to be disrespected in this manner. This language is an attack on all women, and has been used throughout history to silence our voices. The millions of American women who have and will continue to speak out in support of women's health care and access to contraception prove that we will not be silenced.

That same day, *The Washington Post* ran a guest editorial by Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite titled "All about Eve: The Christian roots of the GOP's war on women." She writes:

This attack on women is, and I am grieved to say it, driven by a particular Christian theological perspective that denigrates women and holds them responsible for [sin](#), particularly sexual sin.

GOP politics today is, in fact, all about Eve.

The GOP war on women will continue precisely because of the conservative Christian theology that drives wedge politics in a campaign season has a fundamental contempt for women and their equal dignity and worth.

We in the church of [God](#) realize that it is not all Eve's fault. in [I Timothy 2:14](#) Paul clearly writes that Eve sinned because she was deceived and implies that Adam sinned willingly (see [Genesis 3:6](#)). Further, the apostle states in [Romans 5:12](#) that "through one *man* sin entered [the world](#)," and he repeats this in verses 15, 17, 18, and 19, naming Adam as the sinner. Thus, a "Christian" theology that puts women down for "Original Sin" is not based on biblical teaching.

The Bible consistently teaches that it is the man's responsibility to set the moral tone in his marriage and family, which Adam failed to do. This

morality in relationships begins even before marriage. A young man looking for a wife must be scrupulous in his courting of a young woman, keeping the [seventh commandment](#) firmly in mind ([Exodus 20:14](#)).

And this brings us back to the controversy over the contraception mandate. Americans are embroiled in this argument because of promiscuity—illicit premarital sex by both men and women. The sexual revolution has borne more bitter fruit, this time endangering one of the fundamental freedoms granted to citizens by the Bill of Rights: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." It has become evident that a large segment of the American population values their sexual freedom more highly than their religious freedom—to the detriment of those of us who do not.

[Jeremiah 13:26-27](#) confirms this as a sign of the end, as God promises destruction: "Therefore I will uncover your skirts over your face, that your shame may appear. I have seen your adulteries and your lustful neighings, the lewdness of your harlotry, your abominations on the hills in the fields. Woe to you, O Jerusalem! Will you still not be made clean?"

Unfortunately, at this point, national [repentance](#) seems unlikely. Is it not ironic that, in a country that values freedom so much, a kind of liberty—libertinism—could be so instrumental in bringing it down?

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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## From the Archives: Featured Sermon

### [The Seventh Commandment: Adultery](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

Adultery in all its manifestations has become a seething snake pit, with the incessant attack on the marriage institution threatening to destroy our culture. In the prophecy of Amos characterizing modern Israel's national sins, faithlessness and sexual immorality loom the most prominent. The Israelitish peoples are so faithless they cannot keep their word or their covenants on

macro and micro levels, metaphorically described as a prostitute chasing after lovers. The spirit of harlotry (faithlessness and deceit) permeates the entire culture of modern Israel. Whoredom, deceit, and idolatry takes away the heart, becoming incrementally addictive like wine or strong spirits, making people abject slaves, destroying discretion and understanding. Pleasing the self becomes more important than pleasing God. Israel has trouble being faithful to anything — mate, boss, government, contracts, let alone God Almighty. Reliability, faithfulness, consistency, and dependability have seriously deteriorated in modern Israel. The most common deterrents to adultery fail to incorporate yielding to God's Law. We need to make sure that faithlessness and deterioration of morals do not occur in the Israel of God.

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## **From the Archives: Featured Article**

### **[The Writing of Prostitutes](#)**

by Martin G. Collins

What is pornography? Is nudity wrong? Discover the attitudes behind pornography and why Christians must strive for purity. This article also includes the insets, 'Government Research and Conclusions on Pornography' and 'Modesty in Clothing.'

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