

Article 6

Women Under Oppressive Regimes: Women and Religious Fundamentalisms

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RELIGION IS ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL FORCES IN THE WORLD.

It profoundly influences our worldview, and gives meaning to our life experiences. At its best, religion captures the imagination and inspires persons of good faith to work for justice. At its worst, extreme interpretations of religious teaching foster fear and breed irrational hatred as the world witnessed on September 11, 2001.

Religious fundamentalism is a reaction to people's worst fears of modernization. As women continue to gain human and civil rights, this fear is increasingly directed at controlling women. One manifestation is an attempt to control women's sexual and reproductive lives. Although the core principles and values of most religions uphold women's human and reproductive rights, these universal rights are becoming more and more difficult to express, assist and defend due to fundamentalist pressures.

Today, Afghanistan remains in a difficult state of transition, still recovering from five years of the fundamentalist Taliban regime, which had occupied 95 percent of the country until late 1991. There are signs that women are faring better under the new government. However, the situation of women under the Taliban will always serve as a stark example of how a religious fundamentalist regime deliberately violated women's human rights—including their right to health care—to maintain authority and control. The future government of Afghanistan, if it is to be a just one, must repudiate the Taliban's abuse of women, and must guarantee women decision-making power in the government and in their personal and family lives, especially in regards to their health and human rights.

Understanding Fundamentalisms

When we talk about fundamentalism, especially the political aspects of fundamentalism, it is important to remember that the roots of fundamentalist political behavior are found in patriarchal interpretations of religious beliefs and values. Fundamentalists claim to be upholding orthodoxy (right belief) or orthopraxis (right behavior).ⁱ They believe that they are protecting and preserving religious culture, traditions, and established ways of life from

The plight of women living under the Taliban regime in Afghanistan has brought greater public awareness of the effects of religious extremism on women's health and rights. Frances Kissling and Serra Sippel offer insight into the agendas of religious fundamentalism vis a vis women's sexual and reproductive rights, as well as guidance for those attempting to intervene on behalf of women living under such regimes.

secular erosion. In spite of their dedication to “the old way,” fundamentalists do this by crafting new methods of control, formulating new ideologies, and adopting the latest political processes and organizational structures for advancing their beliefs in the public domain,ⁱⁱ thereby making these religious movements quintessentially political.

The attempt of fundamentalist religious movements to control the reproductive lives of women stems from the structures of dominance that we find in most of the major world religions. This is particularly problematic for women because when fundamentalists act politically to block women’s access to reproductive health (RH) services, state and government officials—who more often than not are men who were educated within patriarchal religious traditions—are more likely to accept the fundamentalist perspective as representative of their tradition. Progressive perspectives, on the other hand, are seen as “new” and less legitimate. Policymakers frequently are able to accept the fundamentalist agenda against women because it is familiar and if they are men—the likely case—it preserves male privileges.

Obstacles Fundamentalisms Present for Access to Reproductive Health

The degree to which fundamentalisms attempt to control the sexual and reproductive lives of women varies. For example, in Pakistan many women are killed by male relatives when they are suspected of “immoral activities.” These so-called “honor killings”—a gross misinterpretation of Islam—are intended to recover family honor and tend to be covered up by families and the government, making it difficult to determine how many women are actually killed. In the U.S., Christian religious fundamentalists have employed terrorism to prevent women from having abortions: clinics that provide abortions have been bombed, some doctors who provide legal abortions and other clinic workers have been assassinated, and packages falsely claiming to contain Anthrax have been sent to hundreds of abortion providers as well as reproductive rights advocacy groups in the country. In Nepal, due to pressure from conservative Hindu religious groups, who while very small in number have great political influence,ⁱⁱⁱ the government had long imposed one of the most severely restrictive abortion laws in the world. Although due to international pressure, the law has recently been liberalized, Nepalese law until late 1991 had made absolutely no exceptions for abortion, and as a result, hundreds of women have served prison terms—including victims of rape and incest who had sought abortions. “*Nepal’s brutal abortion law is now history, but the fate of those women imprisoned for abortion is unclear,*” said Melissa Upreti, staff attorney for the Center for Reproductive Law and Policy. “*Women’s equality under the law requires the government to take action to end this great injustice of imprisoning women for abortion,*” added Upreti.^{iv} And although there is a law condemning dowry deaths in India, the

Hindu fundamentalist leaders are apathetic to this continuing problem. In Ghana, according to the trokosi tradition, priests enslave virgin girls as a way of appeasing the gods for crimes committed by relatives.^v These are examples of oppressive—and brutal—policies upheld in the name of religion.

The Cases of the Taliban and the Holy See

The Taliban in Afghanistan and the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church provide examples of how two very different degrees of religious fundamentalisms present obstacles to women in need of RH services. The example of the Roman Catholic Church's Holy See presented below exposes how fundamentalist efforts against RH and rights extend their power beyond their adherents. The Taliban example illustrates how difficult it is to reach women living under a particularly severe fundamentalist regime. Both examples illustrate that women's RH needs are the most susceptible to harm from fundamentalisms and also that meaningful dialogue on religion and reproductive health is imperative for women to gain and maintain their reproductive rights.

The Holy See

The Roman Catholic Church is usually not considered part of a fundamentalist movement. But its governing body, the Holy See, does exhibit such tactics in its church-state relations and the manner in which it presents its views in political processes that address women's RH and rights. The official position of the Roman Catholic Church on RH matters, as restated in Pope John Paul II's 1995 encyclical, *Evangelium Vitae*, asserts that contraception, sterilization, abortion and fertility treatments are attacks against life and are morally unacceptable. This includes the use of condoms for the prevention of HIV and AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

In recent years, the Roman Catholic hierarchy has crafted new tactics for preserving traditional family roles—particularly that of women and motherhood—and attempting to impose its position on RH and rights on non-Catholics as well as Catholics. In 1994 at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo, Egypt, the Holy See (which enjoys voting privileges at United Nations [UN] conferences due to Vatican City's nation status) joined forces with other fundamentalist movements to oppose all women's reproductive rights. Asserting that the conference's draft recommendations promoted promiscuity, abortion, homosexual unions, and that it also imposed birth control on poorer nations, the Holy See aligned itself with the Islamic states of Iran and Libya, who shared the Holy See's views. In 1995, at the Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW) in Beijing, the Holy See issued official reservations to the entire chapter of the Platform for Action regarding women and health (Chapter 4, Section C) for similar reasons.^{vi}

In addition to these efforts to curtail women’s reproductive rights at the global level, the conservative hierarchy of the Catholic Church has substantial influence at the national level through the work of local bishops and priests. In countries with predominantly Catholic populations, such as Mexico and Poland, high level officials of the Catholic church assert their views on women by lobbying successfully for highly restrictive abortion laws and limited access to contraception.

As a result of the pervasive power of the Church hierarchy, it is not only Catholic women whose access to RH services is at risk. The reproductive rights of non-Catholic women throughout the world are threatened because the Holy See continuously pressures government delegations at UN conferences, as well as national and local governments at home, to limit—and in some cases eliminate—RH services.

The Taliban

Unlike the Holy See, the Taliban regime in Afghanistan was more an extremist militia than a religion. The Taliban, whose name derives from a term referring to Islamic students, claim to follow an imposed, but pure, fundamentalist Islamic theology. However, its harsh treatment of women, which many consider “gender apartheid,” has no basis in Islam. When it seized control in 1996, the Taliban imposed strict edicts that had serious health consequences for Afghan women: women, except those working in the health professions, were forbidden to work outside the home, attend school, or leave their homes unless accompanied by a close male relative. In public women had to wear a *burqa*,^{vii} which covers them head to foot, and where women were present in houses or other buildings in public view, the windows had to be painted so they could not look out or others look in.^{viii}

According to a 1999 report by the Special Rapporteur of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, there is only one maternity hospital in the entire country of Afghanistan. As a result, Afghan women of childbearing age constitute the most vulnerable group of women.^{ix} Two years later, the Special Rapporteur reported that each day in Afghanistan 45 women were dying of pregnancy-related causes and there were over 16,000 maternal deaths each year. Trained health workers attended only about 15 percent of deliveries and more than 90 percent of births took place at home.^x In the post-Taliban period, the situation remains grim but the government is cooperating with foreign aid workers to improve maternal health.

Earlier, pregnant women in need of medical care were not only underserved, but also vulnerable to the Taliban’s extreme brutality. Women who had to leave their homes to go to the hospital but were unaccompanied by a male relative were frequently attacked and beaten by Taliban guards. They ordered the women not to enter the streets again under threat of dire penalties.^{xi}

Culturally, family planning was a sensitive issue in Afghanistan and was discussed mainly in terms of safe motherhood. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) provided funds for safe motherhood projects in Afghanistan that included family planning, but due to the Taliban's oppressive regime, there were few of these projects. In addition to the above-mentioned policies—which also prohibited male doctors from seeing women patients—the ongoing civil war and lack of financial and human resources, made it almost impossible for Afghan women to access RH services.

In addition, trafficking of women and girls, forced prostitution and non-consensual marriage were on the rise in Afghanistan and increased the need for STD/HIV testing—a service virtually unavailable. Afghan women in refugee camps in neighboring Pakistan (which had recognized the Taliban regime prior to joining the U.S.-led anti-terrorism coalition) remain vulnerable to rape and therefore are in constant need of RH care. But their needs are largely unmet in spite of recent efforts to mount relief efforts.

Overcoming Fundamentalisms

Responding to religious movements evokes a wealth of mixed emotions. No one wants to be disrespectful of one's own or other religions, and it is important to uphold and defend universal religious freedom. Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that every person has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. How then does one appropriately respond to fundamentalist religious movements?

First of all, we must remember that no religion is monolithic (i.e., without diversity). In each religion there are liberating and constraining tendencies; there are patriarchal tendencies, and there are those that are woman-centered. There is no religious reason why governments and states should support and encourage the fundamentalist tendencies in religion over liberating tendencies. When it comes to women's RH, the Holy See and the Taliban have not advanced a theology. These are issues of power and control and the differences must be brought to public attention. Effective and appropriate tools to bring these issues to light include public and policymaker education, religious and political dialogue, media exposure, promulgation of feminist religious history—and religious education and ordination of women.

Public and Policymaker Education

Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and most of Judaism and Christianity hold basic teachings of the equality between women and men. Most also understand the use of contraception as a moral good. Prominent religious leaders have asserted that in some circumstances, abortion is permissible. To counter fundamentalisms, NGOs—both secular and religious—should

step up efforts to inform each other, the public and policymakers about religious doctrines and assertions that uphold women’s human and reproductive rights. In turn, it is perfectly appropriate—and fair-minded—for policymakers to listen, learn about, and consider these more tolerant faith perspectives which support RH and rights while also being confronted with rigid fundamentalist perspectives.

Religious and Political Dialogue

We need to listen to those who disagree with us, and vice-versa. Care must be taken to address religion with respect and to treat it as a positive force in society. Too often, NGOs disregard religion as a generic fundamentalist movement with no redeeming qualities, and therefore do not see a need to address religious matters or join forces with religious groups who support reproductive rights. This not only undermines the efforts of religious NGOs who work within established religions to counter fundamentalist agendas against women, but it also relinquishes religious influence to fundamentalists like the Holy See.

The importance of dialogue as a strategy in combating fundamentalist movements that threaten women’s reproductive health is exemplified by the NGO Forum at the UN’s Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, where NGOs gathered to discuss religious fundamentalisms and reproductive rights, among other issues. These successful discussions illustrate that open and respectful dialogue is imperative. And dialogue among NGOs, and between NGOs and policymakers, NGOs and practitioners, and practitioners and policymakers, is crucial because they are major “players” with significant experience and wisdom on the issues.

Media Exposure

Media exposure is a crucial and precious resource in the struggle to combat fundamentalisms. A concerted media campaign is the quickest way to bring injustices to light. NGOs must publicly dissent from the agenda of fundamentalist regimes, and put forward their own positions. In recent years, at various UN conferences, the Holy See has strategically positioned itself as the religious voice to shape—and at times dominate—debate over women’s RH and rights. Holy See opposition to women’s reproductive rights has generated a great deal of media attention, providing exposure not only of their viewpoint but also that of groups trying to advance women’s health and rights. It is axiomatic that whoever controls the agenda can best determine the outcome. Clearly, it is in the interest of NGOs in the RH field to work not only with government delegations, but also with the media to put forward an agenda that advances RH and rights with respect to religion.

Feminist Religious History

There is a rich feminist history within the world's religions. Theologians and religious and biblical scholars have recovered sacred texts and traditions that lift up women's rights. Catholic feminist theologian Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza has edited a two-volume feminist biblical commentary, *Searching the Scriptures*, in which she provides a forum where the different voices and discourses on feminist biblical interpretation can be heard. *After Patriarchy: Feminist Transformations of the World Religions* is a collection of works by Christian, Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Jewish and Native American feminist theologians, who explore core texts and teachings that promote women's equality. Sisters in Islam, a group of Muslim women in Malaysia, has returned to the Qur'an to study Allah's actual words. As a result of their research and studies, they have published women-centered interpretations of the Qur'an. Such projects should be supported and used as resources to counter fundamentalisms.

Religious Education and Ordination of Women

Increasing numbers of women are enrolling in seminaries and theology programs—some in hopes of ordination, and others to seek different forms of ministry. Religious education and ordination of women is a crucial aspect of overcoming the fundamentalisms that harm women. Through reading and interpreting sacred texts, religious teachings and laws, women will gain the necessary tools to develop well-formulated and sound religious arguments for women's reproductive and sexual rights, and to engage in theological dialogue with adversaries.

Some Successful Interventions

People are talking about and confronting fundamentalisms very openly at the global level, so there is great hope for the future. As mentioned above, NGOs came together at the Cairo and Beijing conferences to discuss and, in many crucial areas, defeat fundamentalisms. This exemplifies what needs to happen—we must be intrepid in our continuing dialogue about how religious fundamentalist movements attempt to control human reproductive capacities and how their strengths may be breached. Successful efforts to counter fundamentalisms can be measured by the outcomes of such dialogue, global conferences, national successes and international solidarity movements.

Educational Materials

Since Beijing, there have been numerous projects, publications and articles that address fundamentalisms. For example, Women Against Fundamentalism (WAF) issued WAF

Journal No. 7, which addresses the Beijing conference, fundamentalism and reproductive rights. *Reproductive Health Matters* dedicated an entire issue to fundamentalisms and women's reproductive rights (Number 8, November 1996). In May 1998, the International Rule of Law Center at the George Washington University Law School organized a conference on religious fundamentalisms and the human rights of women. As a result, a collection of articles based on the conference was published as a book entitled *Religious Fundamentalisms and the Human Rights of Women* (Howland 1999).

Beijing +5: The five-year Review of the Fourth World Conference on Women

In June 2000, the Twenty-third Special Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted by consensus the document, "Further Actions and Initiatives to Implement the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action." Even though there was a significant amount of fundamentalist pressure during negotiations, for the first time in an international document so-called "honor crimes" and forced marriage were addressed. The final document lists among actions to be taken at the national level:

...That governments develop, adopt and fully implement laws and other measures as appropriate, such as policies and educational programmes, to eradicate harmful customary or traditional practices including female genital mutilation, early and forced marriage, and so-called honour crimes...^{xii}

This is a success and good news for women everywhere who suffer from the attempts of fundamentalist groups to control their sexual and reproductive lives.

National Success Stories: Bolivia and Nepal

In late spring of 2000, a 12-year-old girl in Cochabamba, Bolivia, who was raped and impregnated by her stepfather, was granted a legal abortion—only the second legal abortion in Bolivia. The judge granted the abortion to be performed in Cochabamba; however, doctors at the hospital refused the judge's order because of moral and religious beliefs. *Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir en Bolivia* (Catholics for the Right to Decide) and other national women's rights organizations petitioned the judge to grant permission for another hospital to perform the abortion. The judge eventually permitted the girl to have the abortion in La Paz, and consequently, the Catholic Church in Bolivia threatened excommunication for the judge, the girl's family and members of *Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir*.^{xiii}

In September 1999, Min Min Lam, a 14-year-old girl incarcerated for having an abortion in Nepal, was released thanks to efforts of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) and the Family Planning Association of Nepal (FPAN). At the age of

13, Min Min was raped by a relative, became pregnant, and had an abortion. Because abortion was illegal in Nepal at the time, she was given a 20-year prison sentence. The rapist was charged, but was soon released. IPPF sent a Mercy Petition to Nepal's King, His Majesty King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev, successfully requesting that he grant Min Min amnesty.^{xiv} IPPF and FPAN worked incessantly to change Nepal's abortion law and in October 2001, Nepal's House of Representatives voted for the first time in favor of partially legalizing abortion. In March 2002, the bill was passed by the Upper House of Parliament and the National Assembly, and then sent to King Gyanendra for his official approval.^{xv}

International Solidarity

Solidarity among groups and individuals is an effective strategy to overcome fundamentalisms. In response to fundamentalist efforts to impede the ICPD Programme of Action, members of the international, inter-religious group **Religion Counts**^{xvi} met in Rome to draft and issue the *Rome Statement on the International Conference on Population and Development* (January 5, 1999). The statement articulates inter-religious support for ethical approaches to population and development issues, and specifically demonstrates their solidarity with groundbreaking agreements made at the 1994 ICPD. Similarly, **Catholic Voices**, an initiative of Catholics for a Free Choice, issued *Catholics and Cairo: A Common Language*, which offers Catholic support for the ICPD Programme of Action.^{xvii}

Dr. Riffat Hassan, a feminist theologian and professor of religious studies at the University of Louisville, has been engaged for twenty-five years in research on the position and rights of women according to normative Islam. Since 1990, she has been translating her findings into on-the-ground Muslim women's empowerment projects. In February 1999, Dr. Hassan appeared on ABC's "Nightline" program about "honor-killings" of girls and women in Pakistan. Dr. Hassan clarified that such crimes are not sanctioned under Islam, but are the result of patriarchal interpretations of Islam. As a result of the program, Dr. Hassan received a large amount of correspondence from women and men who were outraged by the violence against women in Pakistan. Consequently, Dr. Hassan took the initiative of setting up the **International Network for the Rights of Female Victims of Violence in Pakistan** (INRFVVP). The network seeks to create worldwide awareness of the degree and nature of violence against girls and women in Pakistan.

Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML) is a network of women whose lives are shaped or governed by laws drawn from interpretations of the Qur'an and tied to local traditions. WLUML was founded in 1984 at the "Tribunal on Reproductive Rights" in Amsterdam. Today, WLUML provides information to women and women's groups in Muslim countries and communities, and disseminates information received from them.

The group facilitates interaction between women from Muslim countries and communities and progressive and feminist groups at-large.

Equality Now is an international human rights organization dedicated to the civil, political, economic and social rights of girls and women. Equality Now addresses issues such as reproductive rights, rape, trafficking, female genital mutilation (FGM) and gender discrimination. Its publication *Awaken* is a forum for information and discussion to promote a better understanding and more effective strategies for the eradication of FGM. Equality Now is active in a campaign against the anti-abortion laws in Nepal that have led to high maternal mortality rates, and that impose strict prison sentences on women who undergo abortions.

Sakyadhita is the International Association of Buddhist Women, founded in Bodhgaya, India. Sakyadhita works to create a communications network for Buddhist women throughout the world, to encourage and help educate women as teachers of Buddhadharma, to provide improved facilities for women to study and practice the teachings, and to help establish the Bhikshuni Sangha (a community of fully ordained Buddhist nuns) where it does not currently exist. Similarly, **Women's Ordination Worldwide** is an international network promoting the ordination of Roman Catholic women to a "renewed priestly ministry" in a democratic church.

Recommendations

There are currently two campaigns that focus on prominent religious fundamentalist movements: The "**See Change**" Campaign seeks to change the status of the Holy See at the United Nations, and the **Stop Gender Apartheid Campaign** seeks to end human rights abuses against women and girls in Afghanistan. These campaigns are significant parts of the struggle against fundamentalist efforts to control women's reproductive rights. Sympathetic activists, policymakers and practitioners should obtain information on these campaigns and become active.^{xviii}

To activists:

- Build coalitions among secular and religious NGOs that work on issues of women's RH and rights and together develop strategies to counter religious fundamentalist efforts to block access to RH services.
- Work with progressive theologians and scholars within institutional religions who support and promote RH and rights in order to become better equipped to address religious opposition to reproductive rights.

- If your NGO has consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the UN, attend UN conferences that address issues of women’s rights or population and development and use these conferences as forum to collaborate with other NGOs to counter religious fundamentalist attacks on women’s reproductive rights.
- Communicate with the media to alert governments, religious institutions and society in general to issues of RH and religion.
- Produce and publicize research and scholarship on religious threats to women’s reproductive rights that is accurate and credible.
- Document cases of successful opposition to religious fundamentalists’ attempts to restrict women’s RH and rights; these cases provide models and encouragement to others.

To policymakers:

- In evaluating public policy positions on sexuality and reproductive rights, whether a religious group or any other group suggests the policy, use the following criteria.^{xix}
 1. Whom does this group claim to represent, and does that constituency agree with the group’s position?
 2. Does this group present accurate and valid facts?
 3. Do the policy suggestions of this group respect the rights of all within society and serve the common good? Are the policy suggestions respectful of other religions, of pluralism, and of tolerance?
 4. Will the policy position work?
- Assign government officials and NGO representatives to delegations at the UN who have an understanding of the threat of fundamentalisms to reproductive rights.
- Condemn in the strongest terms fundamentalist movements and regimes that oppress women.

To practitioners:

- Become informed about progressive religious perspectives on contraception use, sexuality, abortion, and fertility treatments, and share that information with colleagues and those you serve.
- Train other practitioners and technical assistants to assist women who experience conflict between their religious faiths and their RH needs.
- Develop and foster contacts with religious leaders who support women’s reproductive rights to whom you can refer those in need of spiritual direction when making decisions about their RH.

Endnotes

- ⁱ Gabriel A. Almond, Emmanuel Sivan, and R. Scott Appleby, eds., “Fundamentalism: Genus and Species,” in *Fundamentalisms Comprehended*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 402.
- ⁱⁱ *Ibid.*, 402.
- ⁱⁱⁱ “Nepal: Fighting to Change a Harsh Abortion Law,” International Planned Parenthood Federation website, www.ippf.org/regions/sar/rl/issue3/change.html, August 17, 1999.
- ^{iv} In October 2001, Nepal’s House of Representatives voted for the first time in favor of partially legalizing abortion. The bill then was passed in March 2002 by the Upper House of Parliament, the National Assembly. After being signed by the king, it will become law. See the Center for Reproductive Law and Policy’s (CRLP) 2002 report, “Abortion in Nepal: Women Imprisoned.” To order, email: press@crlp.org.
- ^v Equality Now, “Slavery in Ghana: The *Trokosi* Tradition,” *Women’s Action* 14.1, March 1988.
- ^{vi} Mary Ann Glendon, “Reservations and Statements of Interpretation of the Holy See,” (statement by the head of the delegation of the Holy See at the concluding session of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, P.R. of China, September 15, 1995).
- ^{vii} The *burqa* is a shroud that covers women from head to toe, with only a piece of mesh to see and breathe through.
- ^{viii} Zohra Rasekh, MPH, et. al., “Women’s Health and Human Rights in Afghanistan,” *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 280 (August 5, 1998): 449-455.
- ^{ix} United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Interim report on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, prepared by Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights Kamal Hossein, September 30, 1999.
- ^x United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Question of the Violation of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms in any Part of the World, Report on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, submitted by Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights, Kamal Hossein March 9, 2001.
- ^{xi} Zieba Shorish-Shamley, Ph.D., “The Plight of Women and Health Care in Afghanistan,” Women’s Alliance for Peace and Human Rights Website (www.angelfire.com/on/wapha/health.html).
- ^{xii} Twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: Gender, equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century,” *Further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing declaration and the Platform for Action*, 10 June 2000, 103.d.
- ^{xiii} Tegan Culler, “Paper Justice,” *Conscience* 21, no. 2 (Summer 2000), 16-17.
- ^{xiv} “Min Min’s Story,” *IPPF Annual Report*, 1999.
- ^{xv} “Nepal parliament votes to partially legalise abortion,” Agence France Press, October 10, 2001.
- ^{xvi} Religion Counts is an independent, international inter-religious group of scholars, experts, and leaders convened by the Park Ridge Center for the Study of Health, Faith, and Ethics and Catholics for a Free Choice.
- ^{xvii} Catholic Voices is a forum that provides space for progressive Catholic leaders to reflect, research, and participate in national and international discourse on women’s human rights, sexuality and reproductive health.
- ^{xviii} For information on The “See Change” Campaign visit the Website at www.seechange.org. For the Stop Agenda Apartheid Campaign, visit www.feminist.org.
- ^{xix} For a developed explanation of these criteria see *The Vatican and Politics of Reproductive Health*, by Frances Kissling, (Catholics for a Free Choice, 1997).

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