PS1 for 2-12-87#WILLIAM BENNETT SPEAKS OUT ON SEX

Secretary of Education William Bennett has just dealt a mortal blow to the Sexual Revolution. Of course, he couldn't end it completely, but his January 30 statement on AIDS, made jointly with Surgeon General Everett Koop, marks the end of the era of official approval of a promiscuous lifestyle for schoolchildren.

Amid the melee of confusion and controversy, panic and paranoia, about AIDS, Secretary Bennett sounded a certain trumpet. He said, ""Young people must be told the truth -- that the best way to avoid AIDS is to refrain from sexual activity until as adults they are ready to establish a mutually faithful monogamous relationship.''

Is he just moralizing to a generation that doesn't want to hear any sermons? The Secretary pointed out that, ""with regard to AIDS, science and morality teach the same lesson.'' Those who reject morality are also rejecting the scientific evidence about AIDS that abstinence is the way to go if you want to remain healthy.

Only a week earlier, Secretary Bennett addressed the National School Boards Association on the subject of sex education, and he spelled out his views in more detail. His views are full of common sense, but they are contrary to the prevailing pedagogy of public school teaching about sex.

Some 70 percent of all high school seniors have taken sex education. That figure is up from 60 percent in 1976.

The increase in the percentage of public school children who are forced to take sex education (""forced'' is, indeed, the accurate word) correlates directly with the increase in sexual problems in that age group. We have witnessed an appalling rise in the number of children who engage in fornication, who get pregnant, and who have abortions.

Whether sex education is the cause of those problems may be difficult to prove. But it is clear that sex education did not prevent them and did nothing to diminish them. By any measure, classroom sex ed is a colossal failure.

The dominant ideology of the sex education given to nearly all public school

children could be called ""Planned Parenthood-style contraceptive education.'' This is the ideology that sex education consists of detailed instruction in how to use contraceptives and how to be tolerant of any kind of sexual activity, in or out of marriage, with the same or the opposite sex.

So, in sex education classes, no authority figure tells children to avoid that which is unhealthy. Instead, children are taught to role play sexual situations, to interact with equally uninformed peers, to improvise dialogue for problem situations, and to discuss open-ended options.

Secretary Bennett pointed out that this kind of teaching ""does not teach.'' It's an abdication of responsibility. Children are taught that choosing your ""option'' and being ""comfortable'' with your decision is the sum and substance of responsible sexuality. Bennett asks, has ""comfort alone now become our moral compass''?

Planned Parenthood gets about $30 million a year of federal taxpayers' money to dispense birth control devices and information from its 750 clinics nationwide, and has been on the federal gravy train since 1970. About 47 Planned Parenthood clinics perform abortions. In some public schools, Planned Parenthood employees actually teach the courses.

The promoters of the Sexual Revolution will try to ridicule Secretary Bennett as though he were out of touch. But he's not the one out of step; his critics are. A recent national poll concluded that 70 percent of adults surveyed think sex education programs should teach moral values, and about the same percentage believe the programs should urge students not to have sexual intercourse.

Secretary Bennett also quoted a teen services program at Atlanta's Grady Memorial Hospital which found that, of the girls under age 16 it surveyed, nine out of ten wanted to learn how to say ""no.'' They had been cheated because no one taught them how.

One common argument given against teaching children abstinence is that we can never determine whose values to put into the sex education curriculum, and

anyway, we should not indoctrinate the young with a particular set of beliefs. Those excuses are plainly dishonest.

Public school sex ed courses do, in fact, indoctrinate children with values -- the Planned Parenthood contraceptive values. That value system ranks ""being comfortable'' as the ultimate personal goal.

In his recent remarks, Secretary Bennett brought up one more point which is seldom discussed. ""It is crucial,'' he said, ""that sex education teachers offer examples of good character'' because children learn more from example than from words. When sex education is taught in the public schools, parents have a right to demand that the teacher's own sexual life be above reproach.