PS1 for 1/29/87#TEACH ABSTINENCE, NOT PROMISCUITY

A couple of years ago, the gruesome bete noire of TV scare specials was the Bomb. That threat has faded. CBS's January 1987 primetime program about a family torn apart because the mother became an anti-nuclear activist, ""My Dissident Mom,'' was out of touch with reality. Worry about dying under the Bomb has been overtaken by worry about dying from AIDS.

If you watch, listen, or read the media, it's hard to avoid hearing about sex problems every day. Television newscasts, newspapers, talk shows, and primetime specials seem to be obsessed with the subject.

The Scylla and Charybdis of sex are now AIDS and teenage pregnancies. During most of 1986, two separate lines of thought and remedies were urged as the way to deal with these problems.

(1) AIDS is spreading rapidly. It isn't just a homosexual disease; it's a terrible problem for all of us. We ALL need to spend much more money for research to find a cure, and for hospital care for the afflicted.

(2) Teenagers are having babies out of wedlock at an alarming rate. We ALL need to spend more money to put sex clinics in the public schools, and for in-school medical care for the children and their babies.

In 1987, media hysteria about these problems has both accelerated and fused. Now, we are offered the same plan of action to address both problems: (1) getting everybody to carry and use condoms all the time (never leave home without them, like your driver's license), and (2) public school instruction in what they call ""safe sex.''

The television talk shows on this subject border on the ridiculous. The condom advocates get so tangled up in their arguments that they talk about ""contraceptives'' as a barrier to AIDS; whereas avoiding conception is not a problem for most of those at risk for AIDS, and AIDS is not an imminent problem for most teenagers at risk for pregnancy.

Schoolchildren should be taught that the only ""safe'' sex is to practice abstinence until marriage and fidelity after marriage, and expect your future

spouse to do likewise. Courses and teachers that instruct otherwise are betraying the confidence that parents and the public have put in them.

Television talk shows repeatedly air the line that teaching abstinence won't work, that teenagers are sexually active anyway and there is no way to stop them, so we should give them contraceptives. This means telling them that fornication among children is okay, but having babies is wrong.

Teaching abstinence hasn't been tried. For the last 20 years, the public schools have been teaching that fornication with contraceptives is acceptable and ""responsible.'' This type of teaching has had disastrous results: more promiscuity, more pregnancies, more disease, more divorce, and more mixed-up children.

Furthermore, it's not true that most teenagers are sexually active. A new study made at Ohio State University shows that only 47 percent of girls at age 18 have had sexual intercourse -- which means that 53 percent have not. The same study found that, at age 15, only 7 percent of girls have had sexual intercourse.

Two powerful and influential groups are bitterly hostile to teaching abstinence: those who are emotionally committed to the Sexual Liberation lifestyle and those who are financially committed to that lifestyle.

The famous Lichter-Rothman survey of the national media elite, published in (BF)Public Opinion(end BF) magazine in 1982, showed that big media are strong supporters of sexual permissiveness: 54 percent believe that adultery is not wrong; 76 percent believe that homosexuality is not wrong; and 90 percent agree that abortion should be legal.

Ortho Pharmaceutical Corporation is an example of the commercial interest in promiscuity. This contraceptive manufacturer just sent its own sex education kits to 3,000 public schools -- quite an ingenious marketing scheme to develop teenage customers for Ortho's products.

The advocates of Sexual Liberation like to think that their own permissive attitudes and colleagues are typical, and that their mores are the norm, but

they are out of step with reality. They may live in a world where divorce, adultery, abortion and homosexuality are acceptable behavior, but that isn't heartland America. According to the latest available U.S. Census Bureau figures, 77.5 percent of all married couples living together have NEVER been divorced.

The time has come for the American public to demand that the public schools teach children to say NO to fornication, as well as NO to drugs, and NO to alcohol. Those are all illegal for children, anyway. Any other instruction in the public schools about these three subjects is tantamount to leading children down the primrose path of behavior that is unhealthy, emotionally traumatic, financially costly, illegal, and possibly fatal.