BROKEN

God's Message in a Bottle

"Choose life so that you and your children will live..."

— Deuteronomy 30:19

Gail Koop



BROKEN LAND God's Message in a Bottle

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This book is dedicated to my husband, Jerry, whose unwavering support is behind every word.

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Prologue: 1975

I was on the way to "end my pregnancy." At least that's how I thought of it at the time.

As I leaned forward to give the taxi driver the clinic's address, the safety pin holding my skirt together popped and stuck me in the side. I flinched at the momentary prick, unaware of the visceral pain I was to experience in about an hour.

Refastening the pin, I leaned back into the worn leather seat and a button on my blouse gave way. Although just ten weeks pregnant, my body had already begun preparing to nurture the life I was about to snuff out. Except back then, I didn't think it was a life.

It was 1975, just two years after the Roe vs. Wade decision made abortion legal. The ruling also established that what was inside of me was not a "person," convincing women in my situation—young, pregnant, unmarried—that a "fetus" or an "embryo" wasn't a baby. It was just a blob of tissue that could be eradicated by a surgical procedure that would take about twenty minutes and cost about two hundred dollars. But if what was inside of me wasn't living, why had my body changed so much?

The driver pulled up to the walkway of the brick building. I don't remember its name, but it was something innocuous like, "Women's Medical Center." I paid and tipped the driver, then reached into my purse to make sure BROKEN LAND PROLOGUE: 1975

the wad of twenty-dollar bills given to me by a friend the day before was easily accessible.

I checked in with the receptionist, who sat behind a glass partition. A clipboard was on the counter in front of her, which she began eyeing to find my name. I spotted it before she did, even though I was reading upside down. I had become adept at viewing things upside down, which is why I didn't think I was about to do anything wrong. I removed the bills from my purse and slid them through the small opening in the glass above the counter. Payment was required up front.

A woman in a white smock, who I assumed was a nurse, escorted me into a small, windowless room. It had an armless chair, a stool with a pile of neatly folded gowns, and a steel table with stirrups, just like what you'd find in any gynecologist's office. She told me to undress from the waist down, put on one of the gowns, and then to sit on the table and wait for the doctor. She said she'd be returning with him in a few minutes.

She left the room and I did what she said. As I sat on the table, the cold steel sent a shivering thought into my mind: was I doing the right thing? Even though I had been convinced that there was no other choice, when the door opened, the thought echoed. A masked doctor, accompanied by the nurse, now also wearing a mask, wheeled in a machine and positioned it next to my left leg.

The nurse instructed me to lie back and place my feet in the stirrups, which I did. After the doctor plugged in the machine, he stood between my splayed legs and told me what was going to happen. In a very business-like manner, he said that he was going to insert a speculum into my vagina, just like when I'm having a pap smear, and inject something to help numb the area. Then he would insert a plastic tube, which was attached to the machine, which would enable the procedure. He also told me that once the procedure started I would feel something like menstrual cramps. What he didn't tell me was that the tube had a knife-like tip that would shred the baby inside of me to pieces, which would be suctioned through the tube into a bottle that would be thrown away.

I heard the click of a switch, then a roaring noise. As the nurse took my hand, I felt the tube snake its way to my womb. And then the siege began. My insides were torn apart, tugged and pulled in every direction as the whir of the machine drowned out my cries. And it didn't feel like menstrual cramps at all. Those happen when a woman's body sheds material that has naturally built up during the month to prepare for a pregnancy that didn't happen. What was occurring here was the dismembering of the child that had attached itself, as it was meant to, to that material. The pain was unlike any I had ever experienced. Then again, I had never had a part of my body removed before.

On the taxi ride back to my apartment, I felt no relief, no gleeful anticipation of my clothes fitting once again. What I did feel was an unexplained sadness over the thick pad and warm flow between my legs. When I got home, I fell onto my platform bed crying, feeling so alone, so remorseful. Even with all the pro-abortion indoctrination and cultural excitement over the newly won Roe vs. Wade decision, in my heart I knew I had done something very wrong.

But how did I know that? And why? What I had just done was not only legal; it was encouraged, even celebrated. What I didn't understand then was that just because something is legal, just because it is encouraged or celebrated, doesn't mean that it is moral. And even though, at twenty-four, I didn't know the Moral Giver, there was something deep within me that echoed His "yes and no, right and wrong..." (Romans 2:15). Yet, like footprints washed by the tide, that horrific experience would become a grainy memory. And I would once again find myself on another cold steel table.

Why do we do that? Why do we innately know right from wrong, yet continue to do wrong? And what will happen if we don't stop?

It took decades of doing the wrong things before I found the answers to those questions. And I'm grateful to be able to share them with you through the pages that follow.



Then and Now

That was me-High heels, tight dress, Corporate climbing With all the rest.

Sunglassed, smoking, Strutting Madison, Lunching on Sabretts, Trysting at the Radisson.

Ann Taylor suits, Corner office, walnut desk, My god my boss--Who would have guessed

A freight train of time Would flatten it all, Or three decades later Those memories would pall

At the now of You And the now of me, At who You are And who, in You, I can be.



Introduction

"This is a trustworthy saying, and everyone should accept it: 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners'—and I am the worst of them all. But God had mercy on me so that Christ Jesus could use me as a prime example of his great patience with even the worst sinners. Then others will realize that they, too, can believe in him and receive eternal life" (1 Timothy 1: 15-16 NLT).

Picture someone prostrate on the floor. That was my spiritual position as I wrote this book.

In addition to having had two abortions, I've used drugs and struggled with alcoholism all of my adult life. I've even woken up with strange men in my bed because I was too drunk the night before to care. So moral apostasy is the last thing I ever dreamed I'd write about.

But when I was several chapters into a memoir (about how a secular Jewish girl became a born-again Christian), I was abruptly redirected by just that—a dream.

I'm now in my sixties, and I've been dreaming all my life. Many people say they don't remember their dreams, but I always have. They've been like movies, clear and entertaining. In fact, there was a rent-poor time in my twenties when I looked forward to going to sleep because I couldn't afford to go to the movies.

From the time I was a young girl I've loved to write, and have kept journals on and off throughout my life. But I didn't begin journaling my dreams on a regular basis until I became a Christian at 53. Before that, my dreams were wild and crazy, as most are, with the usual scenarios of flying, being chased, or appearing in public nude or scantily clad. But after I had completely surrendered my heart to Jesus Christ, my dreams began to change.

I started to dream about and have visions of Scripture references. I dreamed about things and situations in people's lives that subsequently happened. And I had dreams that began to reflect the moral decay in our culture. Only I didn't realize that's what they were about, until the dream that birthed this book.

It was a dream that removed any doubt as to whether God was speaking, a dream that revealed what Jesus meant when He said to His disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (Matthew 16:24 TNIV). Because this book, and the message it contains, is my cross.

But before I tell you about that dream, it's important for you to know what led up to it, as well as a little about me, so that hopefully and prayerfully you will see that it is God's Spirit, not mine, directing this. What follows is "about me" only in that sense.

Part One SSF

About Me

"It's not about you."

The purpose of your life is far greater than your own personal fulfillment, your peace of mind, or even your happiness. It's far greater than your family, your career, or even your wildest dreams and ambitions. If you want to know why you were placed on this planet, you must begin with God. You were born *by* his purpose and *for* his purpose.

-Rick Warren The Purpose Driven Life¹



8



Roots

I am of all That went before, Not just the seed My mother bore.

I am of psalmists, Prophets and kings, Of a land that groans To once again sing.

I am of DNA So skillfully carved Fifty years of drought Have left me starved

For the living water
From which I came,
For whom I now thirst—
The Name above all names.

I am of Christ,
A person anew,
Seeded in salvation—
Forever a Jew.



Chapter One

Discovering My Roots

"He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups" (Ephesians 2:15 NLT).

In the natural world, who we become is defined by genetics and life experiences, particularly those from childhood. As we age we tend to see in ourselves the very traits we disliked in our parents, and sometimes live out our lives trying to change or overcome them. But once God gets hold of us, as He did with me, we come to understand that the particular sperm and egg that came together to create us was part of a preordained plan. "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb...My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place...All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be" (Psalm 139:13, 15-16).

My father, David Fishgold, was a second-generation Russian Jew. As a child, the only time I remember him using the name of Jesus Christ was when he was mad or frustrated. He'd often say he didn't believe in organized religion, referring to that, as Karl Marx did, as "an opiate for the people." He believed that religion was an ideological tool used to legitimize and defend the interests



I was walking outside. A woman came running to me, saying that there were children in the house across the street who were either in trouble/danger, or doing something they shouldn't be. Think she was afraid to do anything about it. I asked, "Did you tell anyone about it?" But she hadn't. So I went across the street to the house. It was a small, gray cedar shake house, Cape Cod-looking. It had a big banner across the front, under the roof, with the words: "AMERICAN HOUSE" in red letters. I opened the door. It was disgusting. Children/young adults. Sloppy, naked and dirty. Sitting around drinking. Some were obviously drunk. I didn't say anything, just looked. Then someone said, "She's seen us! Now we have to get her!" Like to make sure I wouldn't tell anyone. I knew they were going to come after me, maybe try to kill me. I got really scared and ran from the house and called 911.



Chapter Nine

Becoming Godless

"They have set up their detestable idols in the house that bears my Name and have defiled it" (Jeremiah 7:30).

"In God We Trust" has been the official motto of the United States of America since 1956.⁵³ But today God is saying, "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me" (Matthew 15:8 quoting Isaiah 29:13). Isaiah and Jesus could have been addressing the 2012 Democratic Convention.

Aside from professing Catholics like Caroline Kennedy speaking in favor of abortion (a.k.a. "reproductive rights"), a controversy erupted at the convention after the news media reported that the word "God," which had been included in the previous year's platform, had been removed from 2012's. After much clamor and a vote that was clearly not decisive, the word was added back. The democratic platform, upon which the then current President (Obama) stood, attempted to say, "There is no God." The Bible tells us only fools say that: "The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God'" (Psalm 14:1).

So what happens when this statement starts to make its way into the national conversation? The same thing that Paul warned the Corinthians: "Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough?" (1 Corinthians 5:6).

In Chapter Seven, I quoted Tom Ascol referring to the "official actions of our nation" and Ravi Zacharias to the "repudiation of values" that have led to our downward moral spiral. A spiral that breeds disturbed young men who murder and has bottomed out at 57 million dead Americans. Besides abortion on demand, below are other "official actions" and "repudiation of values," more "yeast," if you will, and their unintended but inevitable consequences.

In 1962 the United States Supreme Court prohibited the saying of this simple non-denominational prayer in public schools: "Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence upon Thee, and we beg Thy blessing upon us, our teachers, and our country."

In 1963 the Supreme Court banned Bible teaching in public schools.

In 1980 the Supreme Court ordered the public schools to remove the Ten Commandments from student view.

Since those laws were enacted, the following statistics show their effect:

SAT scores	down	10%
Teen suicide	up	450%
Child abuse	up	2300%
Illegal drugs	up	6000%
Criminal arrests of teens 14-17	up	150%
Divorce	up	350%
Birth to unmarried girls under 20	up	150%. ⁵⁴

The Bible says, "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows" (Galatians 6:7-8). Let's take a look at the morality of our nation today, and see how this truth has played itself out.

Friends With Benefits

"They exchanged the truth of God for a lie..." (Romans 1:25).

The 2011 film, "Friends with Benefits," was a huge hit with young people. The plot revolves around a young woman and man who meet in New York City and naively believe adding sex to their friendship will not lead to complications. Over time, they begin to develop deep mutual feelings for each other, only to deny it each time they are together.

In other words, adding sex did lead to "complications." In my case, it led to pregnancy and abortion. In the movie, the "complications" were emotional attachment and falling in love. Why? Because God created sex to be enjoyed within the context of —yes—emotional attachment and falling in love, but under the umbrella of marriage. Which is what was missing in this movie. And what is missing in millions of relationships today.

Having sex means becoming as physically close as you can possibly get to another human being. If you are a woman, the man is, literally, inside of you. If you are a man, you are, literally, inside of the woman. That is what God means when he says, "For this reason a man will leave

his father and mother and be united to his wife, **and they** will become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24, emphasis mine). This is a clear establishment of the Biblical definition of marriage.

To believe it's okay to have sex in a casual way, like shaking hands, is a lie that has disguised itself as truth. It is a lie I believed as a young woman, a lie that millions believe today, a lie that keeps abortion clinics and pharmaceutical houses profitable. It is the lie that has brought us to our moral debt ceiling, invading our culture, deceiving our children and breeding headlines like the following, taken from the Good Morning America website.

Oral Sex Is the New Goodnight Kiss

"Are they ashamed of their loathsome conduct? No, they have no shame at all; they do not even know how to blush" (Jeremiah 8:12).

In the documentary from Canadian filmmaker Sharlene Azam, "Oral Sex Is the New Goodnight Kiss," girls as young as 11 years old talk about having sex, going to sex parties and—in some extreme situations—crossing into prostitution by exchanging sexual favors for money, clothes or even homework and then still arriving home in time for dinner with the family. "Five minutes and I got \$100," one girl said. "If I'm going to sleep with them, anyway, because they're good-looking, might as well get paid for it, right?" Another girl talked about being offered \$20 to take off her shirt or \$100 to do a striptease on a table at a party. "The

prettiest girls from the most successful families [are the most at risk]. We're not talking about marginalized girls," Azam said. "[Parents] don't want to know because they really don't know what to do. I mean, you might be prepared to learn that, at age 12, your daughter has had sex, but what are you supposed to do when your daughter has traded her virginity for \$1,000 or a new bag?⁵⁵

As the mother of a daughter and the grandmother of three girls, this was hard for me to read. But this is where the "Friends with Benefits"—the "there is no God" mindset leads.

We Don't Want Boundaries

"I have the right to do anything,' you say—but not everything is beneficial. 'I have the right to do anything'—but not everything is constructive" (1 Corinthians 10:23 TNIV).

People—maybe even you—dismiss or laugh off the concept of "original sin." But when we strive to become our own god, when we say, "She's the boss" about the pregnant woman, as abortion rights activists do,⁵⁶ we're doing exactly what the Bible says Adam and Eve did.

In the Garden of Eden, God "... made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the Garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil ... and the LORD GOD commanded the

man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die" (Genesis 2:9, 16-17).

God told Adam (who told Eve) that they were free to eat fruit from any tree in the garden, except for one, and what would happen if he/they disobeyed. But the serpent came along and questioned God's instruction, asking Eve, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'" (Genesis 3:1). Eve then corrected him, pointing out the direction about just the one tree, and that if she ate from it she would die. But the serpent told her that she wouldn't die, that God knew that if she ate it, she would be like God, knowing good and evil. So she examined the fruit, it looked like it would taste good and make her smart, so she ate it. And then gave some to Adam. "Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves" (Genesis 3:7).

Before Adam and Eve ate the fruit, they thought nothing of being naked. It was perfectly natural for them. But after they did what God told them not to do, they felt shame, and tried to cover it up. That is what conscience is. Feeling bad or ashamed about doing something we're not supposed to do. It is what I felt after my abortion. It is innate and God-given. And it is what, as a nation, we need to reclaim.

God did not tell Adam and Eve they couldn't eat fruit from any of the trees—just one tree. He established a boundary. Similarly, God is not telling us we cannot have sex—He created sex. If you think God is a prude, listen to this, from Song of Songs, where Solomon is talking to his wife: "How beautiful you are and how pleasing, O love with your delights! Your stature is like that of the palm, and your breasts like clusters of fruit ... I will climb the palm tree; I will take hold if its fruit. May your breasts be like the clusters of the vine, the fragrance of your breath like apples, and your mouth like the best wine" (7:6-9).

God is saying we can have all the sex we want, only within the boundary of Biblical marriage: "This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one." (Genesis 2:24 NLT). Because if we have sex outside of that boundary, as I did, we will get pregnant, have abortions, get STDs, and the list goes on and on. But the devil comes along and says, "Did God really say that you cannot have sex? Those things will surely not happen to you." But like Eve, we see that a man or a woman or a situation is "pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom" (Genesis 3:6 TNIV) or for making us feel good, or for making money or gaining popularity. And we have reached the point where we continue to not only eat the forbidden fruit, but to glorify it.

Parading Our Sins

"...they parade their sin like Sodom; they do not hide it. Woe to them!" (Isaiah 3:9 TNIV).

Unfortunately, there are many modern-day examples of Isaiah's depiction of human depravity. Two that come to mind are Miley Cyrus' performance at the VMA awards in August 2013, and the 2013 Oscar-nominated movie, "Wolf of Wall Street."

From 2006 to 2011, Miley Cyrus, the then teen-aged daughter of country singer Billy Ray Cyrus, either won or was nominated for both the Teen Choice Awards and Nickelodeon Kids' Choice Awards for her role in the Disney television series, "Hannah Montana." According to Wikipedia, The Teen Choice Awards are voted on by viewers aged 13 to 19. The Nickelodeon Kids' Choice Awards are voted on by even younger viewers.

At the 2013 MTV Video Music Awards, Miley Cyrus (then 20 years old) pranced across the stage practically naked. Her hair was fixed into two knot-like horns atop her head and her tongue swirled in nonstop reptilian motion. Using an oversized foam hand and her performance partner, Robin Thicke, as props, this idol to thousands—if not millions—of little girls, simulated every imaginable sexual act.

We even have a word now to describe what she was doing: "twerking." Defined by Urbandictionary.com, it is

"the rhythmic gyrating of the lower fleshy extremities in a lascivious manner with the intent to elicit sexual arousal or laughter in ones intended audience." How many thousands of those teen and preteen fans who voted for Miley's performance as Hannah Montana just a few years before do you think were watching that performance? And as if her exposition wasn't bad enough, Miley was singing her then new single, "We Can't Stop," a song celebrating a house party and recreational drug use. Here are some of the lyrics and descriptions of the song, found on Wikipedia:

It's our party, we can do what we want/ It's our party, we can say what we want/ It's our party, we can love who we want/ We can kiss who we want/ We can live how we want. ⁵⁷

Do we really want our children twerking to these lyrics in the shower?

The song also makes several references to recreational drug use, including "dancing with molly", using a slang term for ecstasy, and "trying to get a line [of cocaine] in the bathroom". After initial confusion whether the former lyric was "dancing with molly" or "dancing with Miley," Cyrus clarified that she was referring to ecstasy, commenting that "if you're aged ten it's 'Miley', if you know what I'm talking about then you know. I just wanted it to be played on the radio and they've already had to edit it so much.⁵⁸

The "Wolf of Wall Street" is another example of how the prophet Isaiah's exposition applies today. This Oscarnominated movie depicts the life of Jordan Belfort, a self-made Wall Street swindler. Besides using the F-word over 500 times, below is a sampling of what is in this movie:

> Crude jokes involving bodily functions and various sexual acts are present throughout, and the number of graphic sex scenes in Wolf of Wall Street are well into the double digits. The majority of these sequences feature graphic nudity (including more fully nude women with breasts and lower regions exposed to count, male rear nudity, etc.) and very realistic portrayals of sex of all kindsoral and anal relations included. Sex with prostitutes and with multiple partners at the same time is regularly shown in the film, and illegal drugs often make their way into sexual situations as well with Jordan sniffing cocaine off a prostitute's bare behind in one scene and another woman's breasts later on. A woman walks into an orgy of gay men who are all naked and engaging in various homosexual acts. A man is also shown masturbating at an office party (his erect penis is briefly shown). While Jordan is fully naked, he gives himself an enema with a candle.59

This review was from Crosswalk.com, an online Christian site. They titled their review, "Man's Depravity Knows No Bounds," and they inexorably bash this film: Taking self-indulgence to an entirely new level (and no, that's not a compliment), what remains is a soulless, revolting and wildly unfocused celebration of excess where nobody wins by watching...But more than anything, what's missing from The Wolf of Wall Street is a conscience, a crack of light in this dismal affair. If you're going to justify showing such deplorable behavior, you'd better have a compelling reason for it. Unfortunately, Scorsese seems content just stumbling in the dark.⁶⁰

Yet *Christianity Today*, a purportedly Christian magazine, gave this film three and a half out of their top four-star rating. Their chief film critic, Alissa Wilkinson, says this, in part, about the film:

Let's be clear: The Wolf of Wall Street is a great and possibly terrific movie, as movies go, one of the best Scorsese has made in a long while. It makes no sense for a three-hour movie in which you basically know what will happen to be this engrossing.... *Wolf* is also very funny.... ⁶¹

Ms. Wilkinson does make some caveats in her review about graphic content. However, when a magazine with "Christianity" in its title uses adjectives like "terrific," "best," "engrossing" and "funny" to describe this movie, we have the epitome of an oxymoron. What better example of our schizophrenic attitude toward morality?

The "Wolf of Wall Street" was given an R rating, defined by the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) as:

"Restricted. Children Under 17 Require Accompanying Parent or Adult Guardian." Note the word "children." The MPAA is admitting that a 17-year-old is a child. And they are allowing those children unrestricted access to what should never come before their eyes. Additionally, children under 17 can see the movie if accompanied by an adult. It seems that this movie should have been given at least an NC-17 rating, which means "No One 17 and Under Admitted." Martin Scorsese actually had to cut some scenes to avoid this rating.

There's still enough sex in "The Wolf of Wall Street" even though director Martin Scorsese had to trim some footage in order to avoid an NC-17 rating in the US, which would have substantially limited the audience for the film that portrays the sex-and-drugs excess of Wall Street in the late '80s. 62

It seems Mr. Scorsese is more interested in profits than protecting children. I wonder if he realizes, or even cares, that his movies feed a culture that continues to believe it's okay to kill a baby in the womb, a culture that has become numb to news stories like these:

School Surveys 7th Graders on Oral Sex

A middle school in Massachusetts is under fire for requiring children to complete a graphic sex survey—without parental knowledge or consent—that included questions about sexual partners and oral sex.⁶³

Hundreds of New York City high schools students have received morning-after pills since the launch of a program that provides emergency contraception through public school nurses, the city's health department said on Monday.

Many schools around the nation have long made condoms available to students but New York health officials said they believe the city is the first to make hormonal contraceptives available.

The program, which started last year and now has been instituted at 13 high schools, allows school nurses to give students emergency contraceptive pills, designed to prevent pregnancy following unprotected sex or a contraceptive failure if taken within 72 hours. It also provides condoms, birth-control pills and pregnancy testing. ⁶⁴

Teen Sex Slave Trade Hits Home

Teen prostitutes, not even old enough to drive, walk the streets of our cities selling their bodies every night. They call it "the life," but what they're forced into is sexual slavery.

"I got sold," says Sara, who asked that ABC hide her face and change her name for this story. "Like I was an animal." Mistreated, lonely and living in a foster home in a rough neighborhood, Sara was lured into "the life" by a man who claimed to love her. She was only 13.65

The Truth About Teens Sexting

Sex easily and quickly integrated itself into the digital age; and now the teen trend of "sexting"—where a user sends sexually explicit images or messages via text on a cell phone—has parents struggling for a way to address the situation. "We're seeing 14, 15 and 16-year-olds and up are very commonly sharing naked pictures or sexual pictures of themselves," said Internet safety expert Parry Aftab, of Wired Safety ... There's nothing coy about this 21st century amorous pursuit. Children as young as 12, who aren't sexually active, are sending explicit, provocative and even pornographic images to their peers. ⁶⁶

IUDs, Implants Urged For Teen Girls' Birth Control

Teenage girls may prefer the pill, the patch or even wishful thinking, but their doctors should be recommending IUDs or hormonal implants—long-lasting and more effective birth control that you don't have to remember to use every time, the nation's leading gynecologists group said Thursday.

The IUD and implants are safe and nearly 100 percent effective at preventing pregnancy, and should be "first-line recommendations," the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists said in updating its guidance for teens.⁶⁷

As individuals and as a nation, we have a monumental decision to make: are we going to turn back—or continue to turn our backs—to God?

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