

Mother Teresa lectures Clinton — then Clinton lectures pupils

By Paul Bedard
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President Clinton yesterday reacted to a scolding on abortion from Mother Teresa by preaching "personal responsibility" to Christians and teens and warning that careless sex can lead to welfare and AIDS.

Mr. Clinton used speeches to the National Prayer Breakfast and Washington's Kramer Junior High School to make a pact with American teens that if they abstain from drugs, sex and crime, he'll help them find a brighter future.

"I don't intend to give up on you," he told some 200 students and faculty at the Southeast school adopted by the U.S. Secret Service.

When student Robin Davis asked what she could do to restore family values, Mr. Clinton strutted into a sermon that bashed premarital sex and demanded that male teens consider the consequences of sex before engaging in it.

"The first thing you can do is make up your mind you're not going to have a baby till you're old enough to take care of it and until you're married," Mr. Clinton said as he bobbed in the audience.

"This is not a sport; this is a solemn responsibility," Mr. Clinton said of sex. "Is it right or wrong if you're a boy to get some girl pregnant and then forget about it? I think it's wrong," Mr. Clinton said in a reference to the growing number of children in the Washington area who are having children by themselves.

He also called on young men to stop having sex "when they're not

prepared to marry the mothers, they're not prepared to take responsibility for the children and they're not even able to take responsibility for themselves."

In addition to unwanted children, Mr. Clinton said, a byproduct of careless sex is welfare. "One big problem is that people get on it because they start having children when they are young," he said.

His tough talk on sex was

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matched by concerns raised on the spread of AIDS. "AIDS is spread primarily in two ways, because of drug users using unsafe needles and because of unsafe sex — primarily homosexual sex," he said.

While Mr. Clinton's comments were hailed for their strong message on family values, they also displayed anew the gap between the president's rhetoric and his administration's actions.

For example, although he was essentially preaching abstinence, Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders and his AIDS czar have been calling for

condom distribution. AIDS policy director Kristine Gebbie also has called on the nation to concede that "sex is a good and pleasurable thing."

His comments on sexual and personal responsibility were the strongest since he was forced off the issue in December by reports that Arkansas state troopers helped facilitate sexual trysts for the former Arkansas governor even after he was elected president.

The difference in his rhetoric and actions was evident earlier yesterday when Mr. Clinton told the National Prayer Breakfast that there will be always be "differences" between his view and those of pro-life Christians.

Mother Teresa of Calcutta used her address immediately before the president's to decry abortion policies. The Clinton administration funds both domestic and foreign abortion programs.

"I feel the greatest destroyer of peace today is abortion because Jesus said, 'If you receive a little child, you receive me.' So every abortion is the denial of receiving Jesus, the neglect of receiving Jesus," she told a crowd of some 2,000 gathered in the ballroom of the Washington Hilton.

Mr. Clinton supported abortion rights during the 1992 presidential campaign but was a firm opponent before running for office and seeking the support of the pro-choice movement. In a Sept. 26, 1986, letter to the Arkansas Right to Life Committee, for example, he said: "I am opposed to abortion and to government funding of abortions."