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INTERVIEW

Melinda Gates: 'I'm Living Out My Faith in Action'

One of the wealthiest and most controversial women in the world believes that all lives have equal value. She's willing to spend \$3.6 billion a year to prove her point.

INTERVIEW BY TIMOTHY C. MORGAN | JULY 28, 2015



Image: Joe Pugliese / August Images

Melinda Gates describes herself as an “impatient optimist,” something that was nurtured in her while attending Ursuline Academy, the leading Catholic all-girls school in Dallas.

Since Melinda and husband Bill created the Gates Foundation in 2000, they have given away \$33.5 billion of their massive wealth from Microsoft and from their close friend, billionaire Warren Buffett. The foundation started the same year as the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, the 15-year antipoverty campaign centered on 8 global objectives. The two programs share many priorities, such as fighting diseases, reducing extreme poverty, and improving maternal health. The foundation partners with a wide spectrum of organizations. Faith-based groups—including Catholic organizations, World Vision, Lutheran groups, and the Salvation Army—are key recipients of more than 125 foundation grants.

This January, Melinda and Bill Gates announced they were “doubling down” on their poverty-fighting efforts. “The lives of people in poor countries will improve faster in the next 15 years than at any other time in history,” they said. But along with the foundation’s big bets and big spending has come big controversy. In 2012, the couple helped launch Family Planning 2020, a global effort to make voluntary, artificial contraception available to 120 million poor women by 2020.

The foundation—which does not fund abortions—plans to spend \$1 billion on contraception. This has stirred

The foundation — which does not fund abortions — plans to spend \$1 billion on contraception. This has stirred sharp criticism. In 2012, Melinda Gates made a public break with the Catholic Church's opposition to artificial birth control. She said in an interview that when poor women have little access to family planning, ...

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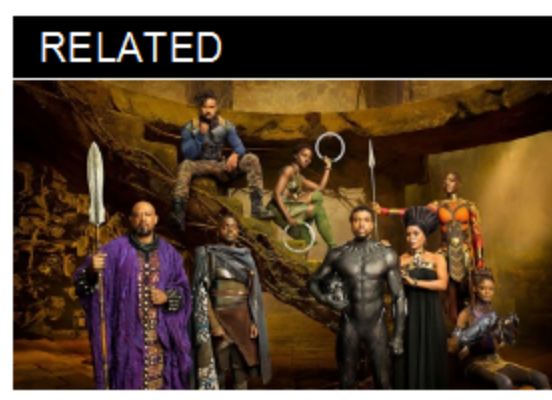
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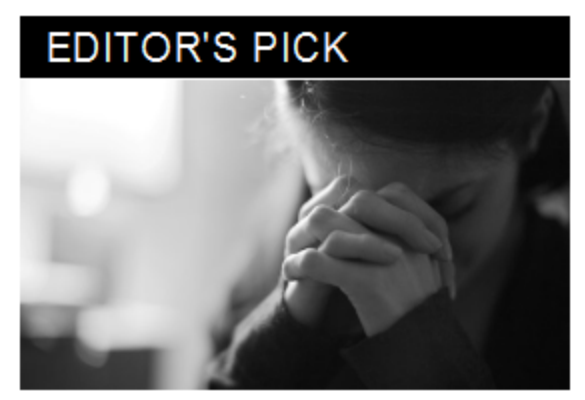
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