“You Are Married to the Lord and Your Father Is Your Boyfriend”
Purity Balls and Reproductive Justice

Delinell Medina, Sara Kukli, Khristian Castelan, Meghan Henrich, Cynthia Morales
FYS09, GEN140, Professor Liebert

History
The Purity Ball was first started in 1998 in Colorado Springs by Randy Wilson, a man with five daughters. He and his wife, Lisa Wilson, are devout Catholics. Purity balls were initially started because Randy Wilson wanted to show his daughters how they should be treated and believed that this ceremony would also place him in his daughters' lives forever. They are to pledge and sign a covenant to their father and God that they will remain pure in every way until marriage. Randy Wilson thought it'd be best to have a close relationship with his daughters, and with this ceremony that would come. As the ceremony proceeds, a blessing is placed upon the daughter that the father will remain tender, truthful, and a loving listener to his daughters.

Ceremony
"A purity ball is a religious ceremony in which fathers and daughters dress up in ball gown attire, spend a night of dinner, have a speech, dance together, and end the evening with a vow to abstain from sex until marriage" (Winter, 2014). During the Purity Ball, the young girls promise to live pure lives before God and make a virginity pledge to remain sexually abstinent until marriage, while the fathers vow to protect their daughters in their choice for purity. In the ceremony, the girls lay a white rose on a cross which symbolizes their commitment to purity to God. This is not only about sex. These young girls are vowing to not hold hands, kiss, or even date any man other than their father until their wedding day.

Laws and Sources
As of today, there are no laws created that endorse or go against purity balls, seeing that it technically doesn’t violate or harm anyone in the process. When looking deeper into the topic of purity balls, one can see that there actually are reasons as to why this particular practice should have certain laws created towards it. The girls that make the pledge aren’t forced to make it (as far as we know) but in a way are being led to make decisions that aren’t fully their own. The main person which sets this tradition upon them, their father, fully supports his daughter taking part in making a pledge about something they barely know anything about. Morally, this is is wrong, but in today’s society the government couldn’t care less and doesn’t make decisions based on morality.

Sources:
The Huffington Post. 5/5/14. Priscilla Frank. “Welcome To The Bizarre And Beautiful World Of Purity Balls”
Daily Mail.com. 3/21/14. Katy Winter. “You are married to the Lord and your daddy is your boyfriend”

What About Boys?
Just as the daughters are given a chance to show the importance of their father/daughter relationship at a purity ball, the sons also get a chance to meet those standards. At each purity ball, the sons are invited to attend the ball and watch the way their father treats other young women. The manhood ceremony is the defining line of childhood and manhood, which is at age 12 (Seltzer, 2010). The sons are led and taught how to make decisions that will protect their mind and honor God so that one day they will do the same with their daughters and sons.

Reproductive Justice
Reproductive justice is a major topic that is being discussed in the United States. Purity balls can violate our reproductive justice as young boys and girls. Decisions made about our bodies at a very young age can be brainwashing. However, the Christian community has viewed this ceremony as harmless (Frank, 2014). They look at it as a way to be pure until they are married. On the other hand, how can we allow a person who is not mature to make a mature decision? Reproductive justice means a lot more than just being able to choose a lifestyle for ourselves. How are these young girls able to make their own life decisions? They aren't. They are being told what to do by their parents and their religion. Often, our beliefs from a 12-year-old perspective of ourselves to a 20-year-old perspective of ourselves are very different, sometimes even contradicting. It is morally right to promise God to be pure until marriage. However, we must realize that our reproductive justice is being violated when being forced to make a promise about something we don't know anything about.