

GROWING IN LOVE: A CRITIQUE

A Threat Worst Than Herod's Troops Coming to a Diocese Near You

By Jimmy Seghers

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Summary

The following summary was prepared for Catholics praying and working to prevent *Growing in Love's* implementation in Catholic grammar schools. A more complete analysis of *Growing in Love* can be found below after the conclusion of this Summary.

I. *GROWING IN LOVE* ENDANGERS CHILDREN!

Brace yourselves moms and dads. The Office of Religious Education for the Archdiocese of New Orleans has approved an explicit sex-education program that endangers children. The course, called *Growing in Love*, is targeted to all Catholic grammar school children grades K-8. The publisher is Harcourt Religion, a subsidiary of Harcourt International, which produces abortion manuals. The course is divided into three books for each grade level: a *Student Activity or Text*, a *Teaching Guide*, and a *Family Resource* book. The *Family Resource* books contains the most graphic sexual material, but there are major defects in the other books as well.

Under the pretext of answering the common questions children ask, parents are guided to harm their children with vivid and detailed sexual images. In the words of Dr. John Thompson, M.D., the psychiatrist who examined *Growing in Love*, "I can find no documentation that the questions are in fact 'common' or that they are age-appropriate. Many 'common questions' are four to six years ahead of the age groups' sexual development and are **quite graphic**." The following topics give a summary of some of this sexually explicit material, but they do not adequately capture its offensiveness. To grasp the full impact of this defective course, please check out the detailed critique of *Growing in Love* which follows this Summary.

Kindergarten children are taught the concepts of homosexuality and sexual intercourse. In the *third grade* sexual intercourse is explicitly described along with erections and instruction regarding the finer points of masturbation. In the *fourth grade* children are to be given the definition of oral sex under the pretext of discussing modesty! In the *fifth grade*, 9 and 10-year old children are given a vivid description of what an orgasm feels like and a how-to description of oral sex. In the *seventh grade* children are given graphic verbal depictions of anal sex, sex toys, sadistic and masochistic sexual acts, and bestiality."

The Pontifical Council for the Family in *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality* warns against this type of sex-ed. “Another abuse occurs whenever *sex education* is given to children by teaching them all the intimate details of genital relationships, even in a graphic way’ (# 139). The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education gives a similar admonition in its instruction, *Educational Guidance in Human Love* (# 72).

According to Dr. Thompson: “Parents are likely to be misled into believing that discussing these topics several years in advance of sexual development will prepare their children for puberty when it may only stimulate unnecessary curiosity.” He exposes the great danger of this material, namely, that it may destroy the latency period of young children. In so doing it could fill their imaginations with sexual images that are premature for their emotional development. Rather than guiding them to chastity the likelihood is that it will lead them to experimentation.

“There are many serious questions raised by the material presented in *Growing in Love*,” according to Dr. Thompson. “What rationale do the authors have for the introduction of explicit material at age-inappropriate intervals? I don’t see this as defensible. Will the material presented prevent unwanted pregnancies and promote development of Catholic virtues? I don’t think so. Will it instead promote unnecessary curiosity and break down natural barriers when it is taught in co-educational classrooms? Yes it will. What outcome data support the effectiveness of introducing this material into our school system? In my professional opinion there is no such outcome data and it can’t be supported.”

The sexual content of *Growing in Love* is clearly in opposition to the Church’s teaching as promulgated in *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*. “It can be said that a child is in the stage described in John Paul II’s words as ‘the years of innocence’ from about 5 years of age until puberty - the beginning of which can be set at the first signs of changes in a boy’s or girl’s body (the visible effect of an increased production of sexual hormones). This period of tranquility and serenity **must never be disturbed** by unnecessary information about sex” (# 78)

“In some societies today there are planned and determined attempts to impose premature sex information on children. But at this stage of development children are still not capable of fully understanding the value of the affective dimension of sexuality. They cannot understand and control sexual imagery within the proper context of moral principles, and for this reason they cannot integrate premature sexual information with moral responsibility. Such information tends to shatter their emotional and educational development and to disturb the natural serenity of this period of life” (# 83).

In these situations The Pontifical Council of the Family gives the following instruction: “Parents should politely but **firmly exclude any attempts to violate children’s innocence**, because such attempts compromise the spiritual, moral and emotional development of growing persons who have a right to their innocence” (# 83). In other words, **parents should not permit their children to participate in this awful program, or any program like it.**

In closing I can do no better than cite Dr. Thompson once more: “In summary, I bring these issues forward to encourage a thorough reevaluation of *Growing in Love* with a strong recommendation that a program is chosen that is age-appropriate and less graphic for our Catholic Students. **In my professional opinion this program will harm children and confuse parents. Our children are our most valuable resource and their virtue must be protected at all costs.**”

Ironically, I have been informed by a doctor with The Governor’s Program on Abstinence, that it is illegal to present the sexually graphic material found in *Growing in Love* in public schools in the State of Louisiana. It’s a scandal to realize that the State of Louisiana has a higher standard than does the diocese of New Orleans. If you are appalled by the content of this course, **you are urged to write to our two bishops asking them to halt the implementation of this dreadful program.** Please **pray** that God will touch the hearts of our bishops.

Both **Archbishop Schulte** and **Bishop Hughes** can be reached at

7887 Walmsley Ave.
New Orleans, LA 70125

Please send a copy to **Archbishop Gabriel Montalvo** at
Apostolic Nuncio
3339 Massachusetts Ave, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008-3687

II. *GROWING IN LOVE’S* HOMOSEXUAL AGENDA.

The reaction of most adults when they read the graphic sexual material in *Growing in Love* is outrage, alarm and puzzlement. Often they express sentiments like, “How can anyone think that this information is helpful to young children?” Tragically, this course is a veneer behind which there is a hidden agenda - the promotion homosexuality as a normal and acceptable life-style, and deliberately misguiding children to believe they are homosexual when they are not. This is alarming!

The Catholic Church affirms that homosexual persons “must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided.” However, the Church is equally insistent that “homosexual persons are called to chastity.”

The psychiatrist, Dr. John Thompson, noted in his analysis: “The information presented in *Growing in Love* is presented with a pro homosexual bias in my opinion.” In kindergarten children are to be taught that “same-sex parenting describes a situation in which gay male or lesbian partners share responsibility for raising the children of one or both partners from previous heterosexual relationships.” The impression is given that these homosexual relationships are just as normal as heterosexual parenting. The

Pontifical Council for the Family insists that “*Homosexuality* should not be discussed before adolescence unless a specific serious problem has arisen in a particular situation” (# 125. b). *Growing in Love* wants it taught to 5-year old children!

Secondly, the definition of a homosexual person, namely, a person who is “sexually attracted to people of their own gender instead of the other gender” is wholly inadequate. Dr. Thompson points out the same defect in the seventh grade text: “There is some concern that the concept of sexual orientation introduced at the seventh grade level describes a definition of homosexuality as persons “sexually attracted to the same gender. Many people are attracted to the same gender and yet are not homosexual.”

Thirdly, accurate instruction is not provided regarding the state of homosexuality and the evil of homosexual acts. The Catholic Church teaches that being homosexual is “objectively disordered,” not merely “disordered” as stated in the text. Furthermore, the Church affirms based “on Sacred Scripture, ‘which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, tradition has always declared that ‘homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered,’ and ‘contrary to the natural law’.” Therefore, “under no circumstances can they be approved.” This is a much stronger denunciation than the vague “morally wrong” found in the text. As a result children can be misled to a false approval of sinful homosexual acts.

The treatment of homosexuality in the fifth grade *Student Text* is highly misleading. “Some people continue to be **attracted primarily** to those of the same gender. This tendency is called homosexuality.” Many young boys and girls at this age are primarily attracted to persons of the same sex. Indeed, much of their social interest centers around “friends”. However, in the vast majority of these cases the attraction is not exclusively or predominantly sexual.

Regarding homosexual acts the fifth grade *Student Text* also makes the following deceptive statement. “The Church teaches that two people of the same gender may not express affection in ways that are appropriate for married love only.” There are two flaws in this declaration. First, it contains the implication that homosexual acts, here incorrectly termed “affection,” are the moral equivalent to the physical expressions of marital love. Secondly, the Church teaches that sexual acts between homosexual persons are “acts of grave depravity, intrinsically disordered, and contrary to the natural law. Under no circumstances can they be approved.” They are not merely *inappropriate*.

Further misdirection is given when the text states: “As our bodies develop and mature, most of us become attracted to people of the other gender. This **tendency** is called heterosexuality.” Heterosexuality is the norm. It is not merely another tendency. Homosexuality, on the other hand, is a tendency, a deviant tendency.

Dr. Thompson also highlights the faulty treatment of bisexuality. “There is a definition of bisexual as individuals ‘sexually attracted to both genders’. Almost anyone could be classified as bisexual by this definition. Sexual attractiveness does not always equate to orientation. These concepts may lead young individuals to question whether they are ‘gay’ or not based on normal feelings. Many young males will have homosexual dreams

during puberty and yet this does not equate to a homosexual orientation. These concepts are difficult to grasp for many adults much less 12-year-old children.”

The homosexual agenda of *Growing in Love* is further revealed in its 22 recommendations of *Always Our Children*, which is deceitfully presented as an official Church document. Rather than giving my personal evaluation to this awful document, I will quote statements from Bishop Fabian Bruskewitz’ appraisal.

Regarding *Always Our Children*, he asserts that “the majority of America’s Catholic Bishops were allowed nothing to say about this document. Still less were they permitted any suggestions or comments about the ‘advisors’ and consultants used by the committee, who, by their own boasting and the ordinary ‘rumor mill,’ have been detected to be people whose qualifications in this area of moral conduct are highly questionable. The document, in a view which is shared by many, is founded on bad advice, mistaken theology, erroneous science, and skewed sociology. It is pastorally helpful in no perceptible way.”

Bishop Bruskewitz adds that “the character of this document is such that it would require a book of many pages to point out all its bad features, which sometimes cross the border from poor advice to evil advice. Our critique of this document says that it is really an exercise in homosexual (‘gay’ and ‘lesbian’) advocacy. It is difficult not to see it as such. ‘Calamity and frightening disaster’ are terms which are not too excessive to describe this document. It is my view that this document carries no weight of authority for Catholics, whom I would advise to ignore or oppose it.” Pray.

III. *GROWING IN LOVE* UNDERMINES THE CATHOLIC FAITH.

Ambiguity is a favorite tool of dissenters to undercut the doctrinal and moral teaching of the Catholic Church. *Growing in Love* presents the Catholic faith with haziness, but it gives the most lurid and unsuitable description of sexual acts.

“Tell the children that love is one feeling we have.” It is a tragic mistake to equate love and feelings in the minds of young children. Genuine love is not embedded in feelings. Children should be taught that their love for God and their parents is rooted in obedience. Children’s love for other children is expressed in how they treat others, for example, with kindness, patience, and unselfishness. These acts of love are not dependent on feelings, and may be in conflict with them.

The definition of the Eucharist, as “the sacrament of Jesus’ loving gift of himself to us,” is inadequate. No explanation of Jesus’ “gift of himself” is given. It is followed by the sentence: “Remind the children that God has given each of them special gifts.” This juxtaposition leads to confusion. In the *Glossary of the Teacher’s Guide* the Eucharist is poorly defined as “the sacrament of Jesus’ loving presence in our lives.” The awesome reality that the Eucharist is truly Jesus must be emphasized lest children come to believe that the Eucharist merely *symbolizes* Jesus. This is very important because many Catholics are confused in regard to the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

"Families often share meals as a way of showing their togetherness. In the Church we share the Eucharist, the meal of God's family. Food makes our bodies strong. The Eucharist makes us stronger in virtue and unites us as God's family."

This explanation of the Eucharist is significantly deficient. In the words of Cardinal Ratzinger: "The Eucharist that Christians celebrate really cannot adequately be described by the term "Meal".

"A husband and wife may show love for each other in physical ways that would be wrong for those who are not married. It is very **wrong** for an adult to use physical signs of married love with a child."

Pedophilia, sexual acts with children, is gravely sinful and a criminal act. It is a great deal more serious than "wrong" or "very wrong." Why is this evil watered down? According to a recent article in the Vatican's official newspaper, pedophilia is called a "crime against humanity."

Marriage is weakly described as: "The union of a man and a woman in a **committed relationship**, usually sanctioned by the state and often celebrated in a religious ceremony." This definition is so wobbly that it can encompass adulterous relationships and couples living together outside of the sacrament of marriage.

"Instead of promoting closeness and self-sacrifice, sexual intercourse outside of marriage **can** lead to selfishness and hurt."

One can easily conclude from this affirmation that there are some situations in which sexual intercourse outside of marriage can be unselfish and helpful. This is not true. Sexual intercourse outside of marriage is always selfish, and it always hurtful because it is gravely sinful.

"Who or what are reliable sources for forming a good conscience?
(Possible answers: Church teachings, families, trusted adults, people who love you.)"

Lumping these sources together without any distinctions gives the impression that they have an equal authority. The teaching of the Church gives Christians an **infallible** source of guidance.

"What are some of the reasons that sexual intercourse belongs only in marriage? (Possible answers: respect for the holiness of marriage and for the marriage partner, the need for faithfulness as a basis for ongoing sharing and for the development of intimacy, the need for a stable family to provide a home for children.)"

Throughout this course there is an over emphasis on sexual intercourse when discussing chastity. All sexual acts between unmarried persons are forbidden. In addition, true morality is based on God's law. Without that underpinning, objective morality quickly disappears in a quagmire of feelings and opinions.

"What are some possible consequences of having sexual intercourse before marriage? (Possible answers: pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, guilt, betrayal, confusion.)"

Why are the loss of God's friendship and the risk of eternal damnation omitted?

"The Church also teaches that all people, heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual, are to live chaste lives, and that sexual intercourse is morally wrong when it is not part of a loving, married relationship." There are two inaccuracies in this statement. First, chastity is not limited to "sexual intercourse." All sexual acts outside of marriage are forbidden. Secondly, these acts are not just "wrong," they are **gravely sinful**.

"The sexual drive is a wonderful gift from God. It is a source of grace for us as long as we respect it." How is the "sex drive" a source of grace? Is it to be elevated to the status of a sacrament? This is silly.

"Sex outside of marriage violates and contradicts the meaning of sexual intercourse—the union that is the most intimate possible between a man and a woman and that requires a lifelong commitment to one another in marriage."

There are two deficiencies in this statement. First, the idea of illicit sexual acts is limited to sexual intercourse, a mistake that is repeated in *Growing in Love*. This creates the implication that sexual acts outside of marriage other than intercourse are permissible - whether they are performed between heterosexual or homosexual persons. Secondly, sexual intercourse is not "the most intimate possible" union between a man and a woman. What about the love of a mother for her child, or the love of Jesus for the Church?

"In most cases mature sexual orientation (as opposed to youthful experimentation of infatuation) **does not appear to be freely chosen** or is at the very least **extraordinarily difficult to change**."

Where is the empirical evidence that supports the statement "mature sexual orientation... does not appear to be freely chosen?" This is an assumption. Many evil tendencies are "extraordinarily difficult to change." Consider the modern plague of addictions. The degree of difficulty does not mitigate the obligation to resist these tendencies. In the case of homosexuality it does highlight the urgent need to resist a mature homosexual orientation and to rely on God's grace.

"Stress to your child that genital contact outside of marriage is **inappropriate**."

Genital contact outside of marriage is **gravely sinful**, not merely "inappropriate!" This is another of the many examples where the grave sinfulness of sexual acts is diluted.

A subtler attempt to twist the moral values of children through their parents and teachers is evidenced by the fact that the book, *Contemporary Christian Morality*, is recommended 29 times in this course. This work is so fundamentally flawed that it is likely to promote relativism, skepticism, and distorted moral values. Parents beware!

IV. HOW IS *GROWING IN LOVE* DEFENDED?

The decision to mandate *Growing in Love* in Catholic schools compels parents to consider home schooling, private Christian schools and public school alternatives. Some have threatened to cut off contributing financially to diocesan projects. It also unfairly places our dedicated and hard working pastors in the unpleasant position of being in the middle of upset parents, and their obligation to faithfully shepherd their flocks and be obedient to their bishop.

It is disgraceful to consider that *Growing in Love* a Catholic religion course. It is claimed that Archbishop Schulte personally approved and mandated this course. This is highly unlikely. Our archbishop has a reputation for promoting authentic Catholic education. It is difficult to believe that he would personally approve this offensive course, which is so contrary to the teaching of the Church. This is why it is urgent that Catholics ask our bishops to stop the implementation of this course.

It is also claimed that *Growing in Love* is less damaging than the course currently used in some grammar schools. It may be that those making this claim have not carefully previewed *Growing in Love*. If this claim is true it testifies to the pitiable state of Catholic education in our diocese and the inept judgment of those who selected these courses.

Others point to the fact that *Growing in Love* has an *imprimatur*. Sadly, this is true. However, an *imprimatur* is not a guarantee that a work is faithful to the teachings of the Catholic Church. As a result concerned parents, including this author, has asked Rome to review this matter and have the *imprimatur* withdrawn. You are invited to do the same.

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Some have claimed that the course is not objectionable, because the most sexually explicit material is in the *Parent Recourse* books. After all, it is claimed, it's up to the parents to decide what is suitable for their children. This argument is counterfeit for several reasons. First, it ignores the reality that the purpose of placing this graphic material in the *Parent Resource* books is to lead parents instructs their children in these concepts. Indeed, the Office of Religious Education confirmed this understanding in a conversation with a concerned parent. Dr. Thompson points out; that parents may be misled to believe that the material presented in these books is age appropriate. They are not. Secondly, this defense ignores the many other defects that are in the *Student Texts* and the *Teacher's Guides*. Finally, the discussion of sexually explicit topics in co-educational classes greatly endangers the latency periods of children.

Our children need to be taught that human sexuality is not merely good, but sacred. They need to understand that their bodies have been united to the Body of Jesus and are the temples of the Holy Spirit. They need to grasp the wonder of marriage, which is modeled after the inner life of the Blessed Trinity and the relationship of Christ and the Church. They need to perceive that marriage is also a sign of our future relationship with Jesus in heaven at the wedding feast of the Lamb. They must be instructed that consecrated celibacy is a present partaking of that future reality, and a sign to married men and women that they can be faithful to their spouses all of their lives. It is only in this manner that a proper foundation can be laid that will allow our children to embrace a life of chastity in our self-gratifying society. This is idea of education in human urged by the Church. Tragically, this vision is thwarted in *Growing in Love*. **Pray.**

Part I: *Growing in Love*, published by Harcourt Religious Publishers.

A. Introduction.

My involvement with *Growing in Love* began when I was asked for an evaluation of the program. Rumors abounded that the Office of Religious Education planned to introduce this sex-education program in the grammar schools of the archdiocese of New Orleans. Quite frankly, past experience made people feel uneasy about some the decisions that come out of this department. Their fears were well founded in this case.

As a result I contacted Harcourt Religion directly to request a preview copy of the entire course. The Harcourt marketing people were professional and cooperative. When the twenty-seven books arrived I began a careful analysis of each text. My critique is based on my personal evaluation of the course material. The entire course was also submitted to Dr. John Thompson, M.D., for his judgment as a psychiatrist.

During the interim, the Office of Religious Education for the archdiocese of New Orleans held a meeting at which it was announced to the parishes' Directors of Religious Education that *Growing in Love* is "mandated" for all grammar schools in the archdiocese. This is a disturbing turn of events, especially when one reflects that New Orleans has always had faithful bishops. The priests in the archdiocese are dedicated and hard working. These men are admirable.

This threat to our Catholic school children illustrates how a diocesan bureaucracy can operate contrary to the teaching of the bishop and the Church. The situation in New Orleans highlights the necessity for vigilance. It is the hope and prayer of many people that our bishop will prevent the implementation of this dangerous program.

It is evident that Harcourt Religion, the publisher of *Growing in Love*, is forcefully marketing this series to many dioceses in the U.S. Beware! If it can happen here, it can happen anywhere.

B. Overview.

Growing in Love is a K through 8th grade course in human sexuality directed toward Catholic school children. Its physical presentation is very attractive and impressive. Sadly, like the apple the wicked queen offered Snow White, this eye-catching packaging hides the poison within.

There are three components for each grade level.

For the child

- Grades K-2: A Student Activity Book for each level
- Grades 3-8: A Student Text for each level

For the parents

- A Family Recourse Book for each level

For the teacher

- A Program Resource Book for each level

The utilization of a **Family Resource** book at each grade level is an excellent idea for several reasons. First, parents need guidance in the spiritual and emotional formation of their children; therefore, a solid Catholic approach can prove invaluable. Second, many Catholic parents are themselves in need of basic catechesis. A program that necessitates parental involvement in their children's formal religious education in the context of human sexuality will help the parents grow spiritually along with their children. This is a particularly critical need because the lack of fervent parental models has a disastrous impact on many children's spiritual formation. Finally, some parents can use help in discussing issues of human sexuality with their children in an age-appropriate manner. In this course, the *Family Resource* books are the most heavily weighted with sexual content.

Because of these reasons and the design of the course, the evaluation of the *Family Resource* books is vital in appraising the entire program. If these guides are significantly defective, the entire course becomes useless, even harmful, because it will convey messages that are opposed to the teaching of the Catholic Church and will damage children. Tragically, the *Family Resource* books are substantially defective, as will become apparent in the evaluation below.

The *Program Resource* books for teachers are also deficient, as they provide instructors with little substantive information that could help them understand and present a proper moral context for this delicate subject matter.

In the critique that follows each of the three components will be appraised according to their grade levels, K-8.

C. Evaluation.

WARNING: THIS CRITIQUE IS INTENDED FOR ADULTS ONLY. THE FOLLOWING EVALUATION CONTAINS QUOTATIONS FROM *GROWING IN LOVE* THAT ARE SEXUALLY EXPLICIT. UNFORTUNATELY, WITHOUT THESE QUOTATIONS READERS OF THIS ASSESSMENT WOULD NOT ADAQUETLY GRASP THE INSIDIOUSNESS OF THIS COURSE.

Grade K (Age 5).

1. Student Activity Book.

All the material is positive and age-appropriate.

2. Family Resource Book.

Of particular concern is the recommendation of the terrible flawed document *Always Our Children*, which is included in a section titled **Church Documents on Sexuality and Family Life Education**. *Always Our Children* is not an official document of the Catholic Church. This faulty document is **not** a work that should be recommended to parents. For more information please read Bishop Bruskewitz' stinging denunciation found in Part II below.

In the section entitled **Talking with Your Child About**, many of the topics are age-inappropriate for kindergarten children. The following examples illustrate this point. The description of pregnancy and birth is far too technical, for example,

"The baby gets food and oxygen from the woman's bloodstream through a tube called the *umbilical cord*.... The baby comes out of the woman's body through her vagina, which stretches to allow the baby to pass through. Sometimes it is safer for the baby and the mother to have a doctor remove the baby from the mother's uterus in an operation called a *cesarean section*."¹

There is also a subtle attempt to make homosexual lifestyles appear as normal and acceptable. Consider the following.

"Your child may also have questions about particular nontraditional living situations.

- **Some single parents have live-in relationships.** The partner, who may or may not be the parent of the children, may take a parental responsibility to a greater or lesser degree.
- **Some children live with two women or to two men.** Same-sex parenting describes a situation in which gay male or lesbian partners share responsibility for raising the children of one or both partners from previous heterosexual relationships. Same-sex partners may also adopt children, act as foster parents, or conceive children through artificial insemination."²

The information presented here is beyond the comprehension of kindergarten children. Clearly the intent is to indoctrinate parents and children into accepting homosexual cohabitation and the adoption of children as normal as similar behavior by married heterosexuals.

Christian morality is further eroded when "live-in relationships" and "artificial insemination" are presented without explaining the Church's condemnation of these practices.

¹ Page 13.

² Page 9.

In addition, it is not age-appropriate to even discuss “**live-in relationships,**” “**same-sex parenting,**” “**gay male or lesbian partners,**” and “**artificial insemination**” with 5 year-old children. In addition, slang expressions like “gay” do not belong in a Catholic religion program that prides itself on using correct terminology.

In the section **Answering Your Child’s Questions** topics and terms are introduced that are age-inappropriate both in their context and in their presentation. It make no sense to discuss **sexual intercourse** and **homosexuality** with kindergarten children. See the quotations that follow.

“Why do boys stand up and girls sit down when they urinate?”

Boys’ and girls’ bodies are made differently. In both boys and girls, urine (liquid waste) leaves the body through a tube called the urethra. In boys the urethra runs through the penis. In girls the urethra empties in front of the entrance to the vagina. Because it’s easier to stand and aim for the toilet or urinal, boys (and men) stand up when they urinate. Girls (and women) sit down on a toilet to urinate, because the urine flows straight down from the urethra.”³

“What does ‘having sex’ mean?”

You may have heard people talking about sex. Sometimes they make jokes about it, or talk about it as if sex were dirty or bad. But God made sex for a beautiful, good reason. When a man and a woman really love each other, they may get married. They then show their love and closeness by kissing, hugging, and holding each other in a special way. This special loving embrace is called *sexual intercourse*, or ‘making love.’ It is part of God’s plan for bringing the married couple closer together and helping them become parents.”⁴

“What does being ‘gay’ mean?”

You may have heard about gay people on television or in movies. Maybe you have heard children call each other ‘gay.’ People who are gay, or homosexual, are sexually attracted to people of their own gender instead of the other gender. A man who is gay loves another man. A woman who is gay, or lesbian, loves another woman. Some children grow up in families where the adults are homosexual partners, although people who are gay are not allowed to be legally married to one another. No one knows for sure why some people are gay. Most people are straight, or heterosexual. It is wrong to pick on someone for being gay, or to call a person gay just because he or she may appear to be different from other people. Note: The Catholic Church teaches that having a homosexual orientation (experiencing oneself as being gay or lesbian) is not in itself wrong, though it is disordered, and that homosexual sexual activity is morally wrong.”⁵

³ Page 14.

⁴ Page 15.

⁵ Page 16.

There are several problems with these recommended responses. The terms “gay,” and “straight,” as indicated earlier, are charged slang words that don’t belong in a Catholic religion book intended for children. Secondly, the definition of a homosexual person, namely, a person who is “sexually attracted to people of their own gender instead of the other gender” is wholly inadequate.

Thirdly, proper instruction is not provided regarding the morality of homosexuality. The Catholic Church’s clear teaching is that being homosexual is “objectively disordered,” not merely “disordered.”⁶ Furthermore, based “on Sacred Scripture, ‘which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, tradition has always declared that ‘homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered,’ and ‘contrary to the natural law’.”⁷ Therefore, “under no circumstances can they be approved.”⁸ That is a much stronger condemnation than the vague “morally wrong” found in the text. As a result of this watered-down instruction on the immorality of homosexuality, both parents and children can be easily led to a false acceptance of sinful homosexual acts.

Finally, when children are exposed to this type of age-inappropriate material, especially when it is not presented in a proper religious context, two very negative things often happen. First, children are despoiled of their natural latency period. Secondly, what inevitability follows is a precocious interest in sex accompanied by a desire to act grown-up, that is, experience sex.

There is also a subtle attempt throughout *Growing in Love* to make homosexual lifestyles appear as normal and acceptable as marital relationships. It is misleading to speak about homosexual relationships as “loving,” just as it would be incorrect to refer to adultery or a premarital sexual relationship as “loving.” Objectively sinful acts are never loving regardless of the “feelings” of the individuals involved.

3. Teaching Guide.

Program Philosophy.

Each of the *Teaching Guides* presents the *Growing in Love* program’s philosophy. In this segment, the “catholicity” of the Church is presented in a deficient manner. “So *Growing in Love* reflects the catholicity of the Church by integrating a multicultural perspective fully and naturally into all program elements.”⁹

The reality is that multiculturalism is merely a fringe element of the Church’s catholicity. The Church is “catholic” or “universal” because the Church is the

⁶ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, henceforth cited as CCC, # 2358.

⁷ *Ibid.*, # 2357.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Page T11.

Mystical Body of Christ and His presence permeates Her being. As a result, Jesus commissioned the Church with a universal mission to convert the entire human race.

Principal Program Consultants.

Three individuals are highlighted in each *Teaching Guide*. They are James J. DeBoy Jr., Toinette M. Eugene, and Fr. Richard C. Sparks, CSP. Each is pictured along with an opening essay. Dr. Eugene writes about “racism, sexism, homophobia, and the other socially isolating evidences of social sinfulness. “**Sexism**” and “**homophobia**” are emotionally charged terms that are used with a variety of meanings. Among many homosexual advocates, the term “homophobia,” for example, is used to describe those who correctly condemn homosexual acts, including the Pope and the Catholic Church. These terms do not belong in grammar school religion books.

The idea of “social sinfulness” needs careful explanation because the expression is sometimes used to negate the awful reality of personal sin. **Social sin**, when understood properly, refers to “structures of sin” that lead individuals to commit personal sin. These structures are themselves rooted in and are the result of personal sin.¹⁰

The defective document *Always Our Children* is listed as a Church document in each of the Teaching guides. One should carefully consider Bishop Bruskewitz’ remarks in Section II. He concludes: “It is my view that this document carries no weight of authority for Catholics, whom I would advise to ignore or oppose it.”

Fr. Sparks’ book, *Contemporary Christian Morality: Real Questions, Candid Responses*, should also be rejected as a resource because it contains many misleading statements. The content of this book is also reviewed in Section II.

Because *Contemporary Moral Theology* and *Always Our Children* are promoted throughout *Growing in Love*, additional objections will not be made as each grade level is reviewed. However, a more complete discussion of these works is given in Section II. These works contain so many false and misleading statements that they demonstrate an intent to undermine the moral perception of parents and their children.

Grade One (Ages 5-6).

1. Student Activity Book.

The material is positive and age-appropriate.

2. Family Resource Book.

¹⁰ CCC, #’s 1869, 408, 1887.

Note: The objectionable material highlighted in the kindergarten books is repeated in the first grade book. The same criticism applies.

3. Teaching Guide.

Lesson 1.

"Tell the children that the Bible contains passages that describe God in male terms such as *Father, Lord, and King*. It also contains passages that describe God as being like a mother who cares for a child. (See *Isaiah 66:13*.)"¹¹

What is the purpose of making this distinction a **Key Content** to first graders? There is absolutely no basis either in Sacred Scripture or in Sacred Tradition of applying a feminine name or pronoun to God. Is this emphasis intended to foster acceptance for twisted expressions like – God: Father, Mother?

Lesson 2.

"Tell the children that love is one feeling we have."¹²

It is a tragic mistake to equate love and feelings in the minds of young children. Genuine love is not embedded in feelings. Children should be taught that their love for God and their parents is rooted in obedience. Children's love for other children is expressed in how they treat others, for example, with kindness, patience, and unselfishness. These acts of love are not dependent on feelings, and may be in conflict with them.

Lesson 3.

"Help the children understand that some signs of love are appropriate in some circumstances but not in others or for some people but not for others. For example, parents show love to one another in a different way than they show love to their children."¹³

These ideas are beyond the capacity of first grade children to understand. Why is it helpful for 5 and 6 year-olds to understand that mom and dad express their love to one another in a manner different than they show their children?

Lesson 4.

"Relate to the children that we also need to respect the bodies of others. We do not touch the private parts (the

¹¹ Page T 36.

¹² Page T 46.

¹³ Page T 52.

parts a swim suit covers) or make fun of the private parts. Any disrespectful habits (such as pulling up girls' skirts) should be addressed."¹⁴

Bringing up the subject of "private parts" in this manner is likely to stir curiosity in areas not previously considered. It would be much better to speak about the sacredness of the human body because it is the temple of the Holy Spirit. In this way, the beginning of a solid foundation for chastity and modesty is laid.

If pulling up girls' skirts is a problem it should be addressed privately, unless the problem is general among the boys. However, the emphasis should not be on "private parts" but rather on respecting God's temple.

Grade Two (Ages 6-7).

1. Student Activity Book.

"Senora Ruiz is a foster parent. She takes care of babies who are HIV+."¹⁵

It makes no sense to introduce the idea of **foster parents** to children of this age, much less the concept of **HIV positive**.

2. Family Resource Book.

"Talking with Your Child About HIV and Aids."¹⁶

This is the heading of a very lengthy discussion of Aids and HIV to young children who can hardly be expected to understand these concepts. What is the benefit of addressing statements like the following to children of 6 and 7? One of the most common means by which HIV is transmitted is

"sexual contact with an infected person.... AIDS is not a 'gay disease'... AIDS is a disease associated with high-risk sexual behavior - having multiple sexual partners."¹⁷

How is it conceivable that this information will motivate young children to lead chaste lives? What it will do is destroy their latency period and develop a premature sexual curiosity.

Once again, graphic information is offered without placing it in its proper moral context. This problem is consistent throughout the course.

¹⁴ Page T 58.

¹⁵ Page 24, picture 2.

¹⁶ Page 9.

¹⁷ Ibid.

"Talking with Your Child About Marriage."¹⁸

The emphasis on **difficulties in marriage, separations, divorce, and annulments** makes no sense at this age level.

Note: All the objectionable material highlighted in the kindergarten and first grade books are reproduced here. The same criticism applies.

Lesson 6.¹⁹

The Church's teaching regarding Jesus' presence in the Eucharist, body and blood, soul and divinity is not taught. The only reference to the Eucharist is the weak statement,

"the Eucharist brings us together in love."²⁰

3. Teaching Guide.

Lesson 2.

The discussion in this lesson regarding AIDS²¹ is age-inappropriate and of no benefit to second grade children. This discussion is carried over with the question:

"What is AIDS?"²²

Lesson 6.

The definition of the Eucharist, as

"the sacrament of Jesus' loving gift of himself to us,"²³

is inadequate. No explanation of Jesus' "gift of himself" is given. It is followed by the sentence:

"Remind the children that God has given each of them special gifts."²⁴

This juxtaposition adds to the lack of clarity.

¹⁸ Page 12.

¹⁹ Pages 28-29.

²⁰ Page 28.

²¹ Page T 44.

²² Page T 46.

²³ Page T 68.

²⁴ Ibid.

The fact that the Eucharist is Jesus Himself must be emphasized lest children come to believe that the Eucharist merely *symbolizes* Jesus. This is very important because many Catholics are confused in regard to the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

At the same time, inordinate attention is given to the ideas of **parenting, adoption, foster children** and **stepchildren**. These are concepts that have little relevancy to the understanding of 6 and 7 year-old children.

Grade Three (Ages 7-8).

1. Student Text.

Modesty is an idea that children of this age can understand, especially when presented properly. In the text, the emphasis is on respecting ourselves and one's private body parts.²⁵ The concept of modesty must be rooted on the sacredness of the human body, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit and a part of Christ's Mystical Body. This is not done in *Growing in Love*.

Pedophilia.

"A husband and wife may show love for each other in physical ways that would be wrong for those who are not married. It is very **wrong** for an adult to use physical signs of married love with a child."²⁶

Pedophilia, sexual acts with children, is gravely sinful and a criminal act. It is a great deal more serious than "wrong" or "very wrong." Why is this evil watered down? Throughout *Growing in Love*, lurid details of sexual acts are presented to the minds and imaginations of children, but the grave evil of these acts is rarely affirmed.

Eucharist.

"**Families often share meals as a way of showing their togetherness.** In the Church we share the Eucharist, the meal of God's family. Food makes our bodies strong. The Eucharist makes us stronger in virtue and unites us as God's family."²⁷

This explanation of the Eucharist is significantly deficient. In the words of Cardinal Ratzinger: "The Eucharist that Christians celebrate really cannot adequately be described by the term "Meal".²⁸

²⁵ Page 18.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Page 37.

²⁸ Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, p. 78.

2. Family Resource Book.

"Talking with Your Child About Conception.

"A Simple Explanation of Conception.

Husbands and wives have special times to be loving with one another as married people. As part of this lovemaking, the husband places his penis in the vagina of his wife. Sperm cells from the man are released into the body of the woman. If an egg cell has been released in the woman's body, it may join with one of the sperm cells. When this happens, the egg cell has been *fertilized*. The egg cell and the sperm cell now join to form a special new cell that is the beginning of a new human being. Their joining is called conception, which means 'beginning.' This new cell has everything it needs to grow, cell by cell, into a person. Half of what each human life needs comes from the woman's egg cell. The other half comes from the man's sperm cell."²⁹

"Answering Your Child's questions.

"What is an erection?

An erection is the enlargement and hardening of the penis caused by increased blood flow. The penis becomes thicker, longer, and firmer, and extends upward and outward away from the scrotum. Erections are usually associated with sexual excitement, which can be physical (stimulated by touching) or emotional and mental (stimulated by sexual thoughts or fantasies). But erections are also common during sleep or in other situations that aren't consciously associated with sexual excitement. Boys can find these spontaneous erections embarrassing, but an erection will subside in a short time as the blood flow decreases.

Other body parts besides the penis (the clitoris and vaginal lips in girls and women, the nipples and lips of both men and women) can become erect or fuller through conscious or unconscious stimulation, though they are less noticeable than the erection of the penis.

"What is Sexual Intercourse?

In marriage God gave men and women the gift of a very special way to express their love for one another, increase their closeness, and help make new life. This gift is called sexual intercourse. When a husband and wife want to express their love in this way, they usually take off their clothes and hold each other closely. They touch, hug, and kiss. Their closeness feels very good. These pleasurable feelings cause the man's penis to become erect. The same feelings cause the woman's vagina to become warm and moist. In sexual intercourse the husband places his erect penis into his wife's vagina. This special closeness may cause intense sexual excitement, called orgasm (*climax, coming*). Semen, a fluid containing sperm cells, is *ejaculated* (forced out) from the man's penis

²⁹ Page 12.

into the woman's vagina. Some sperm cells make their way into the woman's uterus and fallopian tubes. If there is an egg cell present, a sperm cell may join with it to conceive a new life. If the fertilized egg implants itself in the uterus, the woman becomes pregnant."³⁰

Conception takes place the moment the egg and the sperm are united, not when "the fertilized egg implants itself in the uterus."

"Sexual intercourse is usually very pleasurable for the man and the woman, especially if they love each other very much and are committed to each other in marriage. This special, loving physical expression is very private and personal, and deserves respect. That is why we avoid using slang terms for sexual intercourse that make it seem funny or dirty."³¹

What is the purpose of discussing the pleasure of sexual intercourse with children of 7 and 8 other than stimulating their curiosity?

"What is a 'wet dream'?"

A 'wet dream' is the popular term for a *nocturnal emission*, a spontaneous release of semen during sleep. Boys going through puberty often experience wet dreams. Don't be alarmed if you wake up and find your sheets are wet or sticky. You may find that nocturnal emissions are associated with sexual thoughts or dreams, and your penis may be erect. That's normal. During puberty, your body begins manufacturing sperm cells and semen, the fluid that carries them. At certain times, your body needs to release excess sperm cells and semen, so you spontaneously ejaculate during sleep. These spontaneous ejaculations will become less frequent as you get older and your body begins to regulate the production of sperm cells. Nocturnal emissions are automatic; you don't choose to make them happen, and a wet dream is not the same as masturbation.

"What is masturbation?"

Masturbation is deliberately touching the genitals to cause sexual excitement, often leading to orgasm. Masturbation can be individual (often accompanied or caused by reading or watching sexually graphic materials) or mutual, as when partners manually stimulate one another's genitals as an alternative to sexual intercourse. Both boys and girls may be tempted to masturbate, especially during the time of puberty when hormones cause an increase of sexual attraction and sexual fantasies. Although masturbation does not cause physical harm, it is a misuse of God's gift of sexuality because it separates sexual pleasure from its true place and meaning, within marriage. Deliberate masturbation is sinful to a greater or lesser degree depending on the person's age, emotional maturity, and other circumstances. The Sacrament of

³⁰ Page 14.

³¹ Ibid.

Reconciliation may be a great help in dealing with a habit of masturbation.

If you find that you are struggling with sexual feelings and the urge to masturbate, don't be embarrassed. Talk to me about ways you can channel your feelings into more positive activities. If anyone asks you to engage in masturbatory activities, be sure to tell me or another family member or trusted adult immediately; it's wrong for someone your age to suggest engaging in masturbation, and it is sexual abuse for an adult to do so.

"What is 'Sexual abuse'?"

Any harmful misuse of God's gift of sexuality is sexual abuse. When people talk about the sexual abuse of children, they are usually referring to adults touching children inappropriately, having sexual intercourse with children, or asking children to touch the adults inappropriately. Some adults are unable to relate sexually to other adults. They can receive sexual pleasure only from sexual activity with children or other people who are weaker or more easily controlled. The sexual abuse of a child by an adult may be due to emotional or mental illness, but it is always gravely wrong and criminal. Sometimes the abuser is a stranger to the child, but unfortunately it is more likely that the abuser is someone the child already knows. If the abuser is related to the child, the abuse is called *incest*. Sexual abuse may involve other acts of violence, force, or threats, but even when it does not sexual abuse of children is a crime. It is *never* the child's fault.

If you are ever abused, or think someone is trying to abuse you, or if you know someone who is being abused, it is very important that you tell me or another adult you trust, right away. I will always listen to you and help you. Even if someone asks you to keep abuse a secret, or threatens to hurt you or someone else if you tell, or says the abuse is your fault, you need to talk about it and keep talking about it until someone pays attention. Child sexual abuse has to be reported to public authorities so the abuse can be stopped, the abused person can be helped, and the abuser can get the help he or she needs not to hurt anyone else.

"What's a 'period'?"

A menstrual period is the monthly shedding of bloody fluid through the vagina that girls and women experience when they are not pregnant. From the time she reaches puberty until late in her life, a woman is capable of becoming pregnant. Each month a woman experiences strong emotions as her body goes through a process called the menstrual cycle that helps prepare for new life. The lining of the uterus, the muscular sac in which an unborn baby grows for nine months, begins to thicken and fill with nourishing bloody fluid. Midway through the monthly cycle, the woman's ovary releases an egg cell. If the egg cell is fertilized by a man's sperm cell, the fertilized egg implants itself in the uterus and the woman becomes pregnant. If the egg is not fertilized, it doesn't implant, and about fourteen days later the unfertilized egg and the bloody fluid lining the uterus are shed through the

vagina in a menstrual period.

A girl can begin ovulating (releasing egg cells) and having menstrual periods as young as eight or nine years old, or this process, known as menarche, may not occur until she is in her late teens. Every girl develops at her own rate. The average menstrual period lasts a few days, during which time the girl or woman wears a pad (a disposable cotton pad worn to line the underwear) or tampon (a plug of absorbent cotton worn inside the vagina) to absorb the flow of fluid. Pads or tampons must be changed frequently to prevent the growth of bacteria. The blood loss experienced during a healthy menstrual period is not large. Some girls and women experience occasional muscle cramps in the abdomen. A girl or woman can bathe or shower as usual during her period, and swimming and other forms of exercise are fine, too. Exercise may even help ease menstrual cramps.

"How will I know when my period will start?"

A few months before a girl's first menstrual period, she may experience a white or colorless sticky discharge from her vagina. This means her body is getting ready for menstruation. Although most women eventually develop a regular menstrual schedule (approximately every twenty-eight days), for the first few months or even years, a girl's cycle may be irregular. You won't know for sure when your period will begin, so it's important to carry a pad or tampon with you in a purse or backpack.

"What are douches for?"

A douche is a liquid solution used to rinse out the vagina and the vulvar area. You may have seen TV or magazine ads for douches, vaginal deodorants, and other products advertised to promote "feminine freshness." These products are not necessary. Regular showering or bathing, changing pads or tampons frequently during your period, and using correct toilet hygiene (wiping from front to back) are all you need to stay clean and fresh. Douches and other chemicals may irritate the vaginal area. They can actually promote infection by destroying the balance of healthy bacteria in the body. A doctor may prescribe a medicated douche in the case of an infection, but the use of over-the-counter products is not advisable."³²

It is difficult to believe that anyone could consider this entire section of explicit material suitable for children ages 7 and 8. The instruction on intercourse and masturbation can be viewed, and may very well be used, as a how-to manual.

The definition of **modesty** is flawed:

"The virtue that respects, honors, and protects privacy; the quality of avoiding extremes of emotion, action, dress, and language."³³

³² Pages 14-16.

³³ Page 23.

The definition in the *Catechism* is more complete. “Modesty protects the intimate center of the person. It means refusing to unveil what should remain hidden. It is ordered to chastity to whose sensitivity it bears witness. It guides how one looks at others and behaves toward them in conformity with the dignity of persons and their solidarity.”³⁴

Chapter 6

Words from this Chapter. The definition of marriage is completely defective :

“The union of a man and a woman in a **committed relationship**, usually sanctioned by the state and often celebrated in a religious ceremony.”³⁵

This definition is so wobbly that it encompasses adulterous relationships and couples living together outside of marriage.

3. Teaching Guide.

Chapter 1.

Scripture Background.

“Help the students understand that this story does not present literal or scientific truth about the details of creation but tells what we believe about the power and love of God our Creator.”³⁶

This explanation can easily lead to misunderstandings, namely, that Genesis merely presents pious stories. The *Teaching Guide* does not provide guidance to avoid this pitfall. It is true that Genesis does not teach science. However, Genesis teaches many literal truths that Catholics are required to believe by the virtue of faith.

Chapter 6.

In the discussion of the sacraments the true meaning of the Eucharist should be developed. Instead it receives the following inadequate treatment .

“Which sacrament unites God’s family? (the Eucharist)”³⁷

No guidance is given to the teacher to instruct their students in the true meaning of the Eucharist.

³⁴ CCC, # 2521, also: 2522-2524, 2533.

³⁵ Page 29. Emphasis mine.

³⁶ Page 7.

³⁷ Page 37.

Grade 4 (Ages 8-9).

1. Student Text.

Chapter 2.

The discussion regarding puberty is not age-appropriate.³⁸

2. Family Resource Book.

Talking with Your Children About Reproductive Anatomy.³⁹

This entire page is far too explicit and age-inappropriate. What is the purpose of adding the following information under the title the “**female reproductive system**”? Is it to instruct little girls in masturbatory techniques?

“The ovaries, located in the abdomen, store and release mature egg cells. An egg cell travels into the fallopian tube, where it may be fertilized by a male sperm cell. The fertilized egg then implants itself in the uterus, or womb. Sperm cells enter the female body when semen is ejaculated into the vagina, the opening into the woman’s body, by the penis during intercourse. **The clitoris, which is sensitive to stimulation,** does not contribute directly to reproduction but may increase the muscle contractions that accompany orgasm in the woman, helping bring the sperm and egg into contact.”⁴⁰

Talking with Your Child About Modesty in Language.

Parents are urged to

“be sure your child knows the appropriate terms for body parts and sexual activities.”⁴¹

Included in the list of appropriate terms for sexual activity is “**oral sex.**”

It is highly disturbing to realize that a Catholic religion text advises parents to teach their 8 and 9 year-old children the meaning of “oral sex”⁴² under the guise of modesty in language.

Answering Your Child’s Questions.

³⁸ Pages 11-14.

³⁹ Page 8.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Page 12.

⁴² Ibid.

Note: The same highly objectionable material presented in the Family Resource book for grade 3 is reproduced here.

3. Teaching Guide.

Chapter 1.

"What was God's purpose in making human bodies to be complementary? (Possible answer: God wanted men and women to work together to create new life.)"⁴³

This kind of open-ended question that clearly focuses on sexual intercourse is not an appropriate area of discussion in a class of 8 and 9 year-old boys and girls. It will prove awkward for the children. In addition, the discussion itself can break down proper barriers of modesty.

The same criticism applies to the discussion of puberty and reproduction found on pages 12-13. Discussions about human sexuality must be handled very carefully in a mixed class of young boys and girls. It should not be taught in the 4th grade.

Chapter 5.

Rules for Living

"The Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes tell us how to live as loving people. For example, the sixth commandment, 'You shall not commit adultery,' means that we must respect God's gift of sexuality and honor family life."⁴⁴

This is a very watered down explanation of the sixth commandment in a religion series that gives vivid details of sexual activity.

Grade 5 (Ages 9-10).

1. Student Text.

Chapter 6.

In the discussion of Christian Marriage one finds the following statement:

"Within the covenant of marriage, sexual intercourse brings two people together physically, emotionally, and spiritually in the closest possible way."⁴⁵

⁴³ Page 7.

⁴⁴ Page 29.

⁴⁵ Page 47.

Sexual intercourse is a beautiful physical expression of the oneness that is achieved in marriage. However, genuine love binds a couple in the “closest possible way,” not sexual intercourse. Intercourse is intended to express that loving unity.

“Instead of promoting closeness and self-sacrifice, sexual intercourse outside of marriage **can** lead to selfishness and hurt.”⁴⁶

This is another incorrect statement. One can easily conclude from this affirmation that there are some situations in which sexual intercourse outside of marriage can be unselfish and helpful. This is not true. Sexual intercourse outside of marriage is always selfish, and it always hurtful.

Chapter 7.

The fittingness of discussing **homosexual relationships** at this tender age is dubious. In addition the issue of homosexuality is developed in a way that causes confusion rather than clarity. The following statement is highly misleading.

“Some people continue to be attracted primarily to those of the same gender. This tendency is called homosexuality.”⁴⁷

Many young boys and girls at this age are primarily attracted to persons of the same sex. Indeed, much of their social interest centers around their “friends”. However, in the vast majority of these cases the attraction is not exclusively or predominantly sexual.⁴⁸

“The Church teaches that two people of the same gender may not express affection in ways that are appropriate for married love only.”⁴⁹

There are two flaws in this statement. First, there is an implication that homosexual acts, here mistakenly termed “affection,” are the equivalent of the physical expressions of marital love. Secondly, sexual acts between homosexual persons are much more than not “appropriate.” They are “acts of grave depravity,” “intrinsically disordered,” and “contrary to the natural law.”⁵⁰ “Under no circumstances can they be approved.”⁵¹

⁴⁶ [Ibid.](#)

⁴⁷ [Ibid.](#), p. 55.

⁴⁸ CCC, # 2357.

⁴⁹ Page 55.

⁵⁰ CCC, # 2357.

⁵¹ [Ibid.](#)

"As our bodies develop and mature, most of us become attracted to people of the other gender. This **tendency** is called heterosexuality."⁵²

This incorrect statement blurs the lines between the biological norm, heterosexuality, and the deviant tendency of homosexuality. Heterosexuality is the norm. It is not merely another tendency.

2. Family Resource Book.

Talking with Your Child about Masturbation.

The text cites the *Catechism* and subsequently lists things that might mitigate the gravity of this sin. However, it does not quote the Catechism, which states: "Both the Magisterium of the Church, in the course of its constant tradition, and the moral sense of the faithful, have been in no doubt and have firmly maintained that **masturbation is an intrinsically and gravely disordered action.**"⁵³ This omission of the gravity of the sin of masturbation can easily lead to conclusion that masturbation is not a serious matter.

Talking with Your Child About Sexual Orientation.

Avoid homophobia.

Homophobia is defined here as

"a kind of bias against or exaggerated fear of those who are attracted to persons of the same gender."⁵⁴

"Homophobia" is a highly charged word, as we have discussed earlier. Among homosexual advocates this term is used as a catchall to condemn anyone, including the Church, who criticize homosexual acts.

Answering Your Child's Questions.

It is appalling to realize that those responsible for creating *Growing in Love* seriously think the following discussions should be held with children who are 9 and 10 years of age. It's scandalous to consider that this material is found in a religious textbook directed to Catholic school children.

The quotations that follow are so blatant that an extensive critique is unnecessary. In addition this explicit material is not presented in its proper moral setting.

"What is foreplay?"

⁵² Page 54.

⁵³ CCC, # 1352. Emphasis mine.

⁵⁴ Page 13.

God designed the human body to be very sensitive to pleasurable feelings. This pleasure contributes greatly to the beauty and intimacy of sexual intercourse, the gift of God that brings married couples together and allows them to participate in the creation of new life. Many animals mate in order to reproduce, but humans are capable of expressing love and building emotional closeness through sexual activity. That is why the sexual act, for humans, is much more than intercourse.

Foreplay is the term we use for the kissing, hugging, and sexual touching that leads to intercourse. Through foreplay, the husband and wife increase each other's pleasurable feelings and communicate their desire. Foreplay helps prepare the bodies of both partners for intercourse, promoting the erection of the man's penis and the woman's clitoris, and contributing to the softening and moistening of the woman's vagina. When separated from their natural connection to married lovemaking, the actions that constitute foreplay become a misuse of God's gift of sexuality and are objectively sinful. That is why the Catholic Church asks young people and those who have made a commitment to single life to abstain from the kind of intimate kissing and touching (sometimes called *petting*) that marks foreplay."⁵⁵

Foreplay outside of its proper marital setting is more than “a misuse of God’s gift of sexuality.” It is “objectively” **gravely “sinful.”**

“What does orgasm feel like?”

There's no easy way to describe the sensations associated with orgasm or sexual climax, because they're not like anything else. Some people have attempted to compare orgasm to a sneeze, which is equally explosive and hard to describe! God created the human body capable of this intense excitement and pleasure in order to increase the bond of love that sexual intercourse was designed to create between a husband and wife. Men and women experience orgasm differently from each other, and each individual experiences it in a unique way also.

Orgasm is accompanied by a number of physical changes in the body. As sexual excitement increases, the body concentrates its resources on the genital area. Both men and women may experience a building muscle tension. The heartbeat and the breathing increase rapidly. Some people experience flushing, or reddening of the skin, as blood flow increases to the surface of the skin.

In men, orgasm is marked by a series of muscular contractions that expel semen from the penis. Women also experience muscular contractions of the clitoris, vagina, and uterus, and vaginal lubrication may increase suddenly. Orgasm lasts only a few seconds, after which the body relaxes and begins to resume its regular rhythms. The penis quickly becomes limp. Men need a time of rest before the penis is capable of becoming erect again, but women are capable of experiencing multiple orgasms with little or no interval between them.

⁵⁵ Page 14.

It is not necessary (or even usual) for the husband and wife to come to orgasm at the same time. While a man almost always experiences an orgasm during sexual intercourse, a woman may not, although she may still experience pleasurable feelings. Direct stimulation of the clitoris, which may or may not occur during intercourse, usually brings a woman to orgasm. For conception to occur orgasm is not necessary, even for the man, since some sperm cells may leave the penis before it is fully erect."⁵⁶

"What is 'French kissing'? What's a 'hickey'?"

So-called 'French kissing,' or 'wet' kissing, is kissing with the mouth open, allowing one person's tongue to enter the other's mouth. This kind of kissing is more intimate, pleasurable, and personal than closed-mouth kissing. It is an example of an activity associated with petting from which unmarried people should abstain. A 'hickey,' or *love bite*, is a small round bruise or red swelling on the skin (often on the neck or breasts) caused by intimate kissing that accidentally or deliberately includes biting or forceful sucking.

Because saliva (which can contain the HIV or herpes virus as well as other pathogens) is exchanged in open-mouthed kissing, this practice puts you at risk of infection with a sexually transmitted disease or other illness. The herpes virus is easily transmitted by contact with cold sores or fever blisters, and the HIV virus can reach the bloodstream through tiny cuts or sores in the tongue and gums. If the skin is broken by a love bite, pathogens can be transmitted through saliva or blood."⁵⁷

"What is oral sex?"

Oral sex involves using the mouth, lips, or tongue to stimulate the genitals, or inserting the penis into the mouth. Using the mouth and tongue to stimulate the vagina and clitoris is called *cunnilingus*. Using the mouth and tongue to stimulate the penis is called *fellatio*. Both homosexual and heterosexual couples engage in oral sex.

Some single people or people involved in adulterous relationships use oral sex as an alternative to sexual intercourse, mistakenly believing they are not doing anything immoral because they claim that 'oral sex isn't really sex.' Because of the possible exchange of body fluids, oral sex carries a high risk of transmitting STDs, especially herpes. Any practice of oral sex outside of consensual use as part of foreplay by a married couple is a misuse of the gift of sexuality and is objectively sinful."⁵⁸

"What is PMS? What's menopause?"

The letters *PMS* stand for premenstrual syndrome, a set of symptoms experienced by some girls and women at some time during their fertile years. Hormonal changes associated with the days preceding a menstrual period sometimes cause

⁵⁶ [Ibid.](#)

⁵⁷ [Page 15.](#)

⁵⁸ [Ibid.](#)

temporary weight gain and bloatedness from fluid retention, aching or tender breasts, a flare-up of skin blemishes, a craving for salt or sweets, headache, and mood swings. These symptoms have been both overlooked and blown out of proportion. Exercise, rest, and good nutrition can alleviate some symptoms of PMS, and more difficult cases can be treated with nutritional supplements, herbs, or medications. Menstruation does not make women emotionally or psychologically unstable or disabled.

Menopause (sometimes called the *climacteric* or 'the change') is the ending of the woman's fertile years. At around the age of fifty, most women begin to experience symptoms associated with the cessation of the menstrual period. The body produces much less estrogen, and ovulation and menstruation cease. Hormonal activity may cause flushing, called *hot flashes*, forgetfulness, and insomnia. These symptoms usually diminish after menopause.

Some women choose to take estrogen supplements during and after menopause to alleviate symptoms and to provide protection against the greater risk of heart disease, bone loss, and Alzheimer's disease that can accompany menopause. These benefits must be weighed against increased risk of cancer for some women. Although a woman can no longer become pregnant after menopause, she continues to be a sexual person, and can maintain energy and good health throughout life."⁵⁹

"How can I tell whether my body's developing the way it should?"

Puberty can be a confusing time. Everyone goes through puberty at his or her own rate of development. You may compare yourself with other boys or girls your age and wonder whether you're 'normal.' Girls worry about getting their first period and wonder whether their breasts will ever develop (or worry that they're *too* developed). Boys are embarrassed by voices that squeak and crack and wonder whether their penis is the 'right' size and if they'll ever have enough of a beard to shave.

Your rate of development depends on a number of things, including family patterns. If you have any questions about your development, we can talk about them together. If you're really concerned, or if the signs of puberty are very late in arriving, you can talk to a doctor or other health-care professional. Give yourself time, and develop interests and activities that keep you healthy and take your mind off being excessively self-conscious."⁶⁰

"I really like someone of my own gender. Does that mean I'm gay?"

Puberty brings a flood of unaccustomed sexual feelings and attractions. Young people often find themselves physically drawn to friends, teachers, or coaches of their own as well as the other gender. These superficial attractions are part of puberty; they're like a rehearsal for the feelings of real

⁵⁹ [Ibid.](#)

⁶⁰ Pages 15-16.

love and sexual attraction that come to us as we mature. Sexual orientation is much deeper and more lasting than an occasional attraction. So you probably have no reason to worry.

It's important to talk to me or another trusted adult (not the person to whom you're attracted) about your feelings, and then to find ways to channel that energy into other activities and interests. Dwelling on sexual feelings is inappropriate, and acting on them (with someone of either gender) would be wrong. If anyone encourages you to 'experiment' with your sexuality, say no and tell me or another trusted adult immediately. Abusers (who are almost always heterosexual, by the way) [What is the foundation for and the purpose of this aside?] often take advantage of young people's confusing sexual feelings. Your sexuality is still in the process of development. Show respect for yourself and for others by not stereotyping as gay or lesbian boys and girls whose sexual development is still unformed, or who look or act in ways that are not typical of their gender."⁶¹

"What is AIDS? How do people get it?"

AIDS—Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome—is a complex of symptoms associated with infection by HIV (the human immunodeficiency virus). HIV attacks the body's immune system, leaving it vulnerable to a number of serious and potentially fatal infections and diseases. AIDS was first identified in the United States in the early 1980s, and has become epidemic in many parts of the world. The virus that causes AIDS is carried in the bloodstream and spread through direct contact with blood, semen, and other body fluids. The virus cannot survive long outside the body, and can be killed outside the body with standard disinfectants.

The most common means by which HIV is transmitted are: (1) sexual contact with an infected person; (2) injection with contaminated needles (such as needles shared by intravenous drug users or the accidental injection of a health-care worker with a needle containing the blood of an infected person); (3) from an infected mother to a child in the womb, during childbirth, or through breastfeeding; (4) transfusion with infected blood (in this country, the blood supply has been tested for HIV since 1985 and has been considered safe since then); and (5) use of unsterilized medical or dental instruments or those used for tattooing or body piercing. There have been no documented cases of HIV transmission through sneezing, insect bites, or sharing eating utensils, toilets, or swimming pools. AIDS is not a 'gay disease'; the majority of those worldwide who are HIV-4- (infected with the virus) are heterosexual. [This is a superficial treatment of the complex issue of the origin and spread of AIDS.]

AIDS is a disease associated with high-risk sexual behavior—having multiple sexual partners, engaging in sexual practices that carry increased risk of body fluid exchange, and having sexual relations with intravenous drug users. Although new treatments promise hope, there is at present no

⁶¹ Page 16.

cure for HIV and AIDS, and no guaranteed 'safe sex.' However, abstinence from sexual activity and from intravenous drug use provide total protection. For two people who are sexually active to be protected from infection, they must be strictly monogamous (have sex only with each other) and must never have had sexual relations or engaged in intimate activity with others in the past. Both partners must never have engaged in intravenous drug use. The Church's teaching on reserving sexual intercourse for marriage promotes protection against AIDS and other STDs."⁶²

3. Teaching Guide.

Chapter 4.

"Who or what are reliable sources for forming a good conscience? (Possible answers: Church teachings, families, trusted adults, people who love you.)"⁶³

Lumping these sources together without any distinctions gives the impression that they have an equal exactness and authority. The teaching of the Church should be emphasized because it gives Christians an **infallible** source of guidance.

Chapter 6.

"In your own words, what do the spouses promise [in the sacrament of marriage]? (Possible answers: to care for each other in good times and bad, to love each other throughout life, to support and help each other in everyday responsibilities.)"⁶⁴

What is omitted above is the promise of lifetime fidelity.

"Within the covenant of marriage, sexual intercourse brings two people together physically, emotionally, and spiritually in the closest possible way."⁶⁵

Sexual intercourse is a beautiful physical expression of the oneness that is achieved in marriage. However, genuine love not intercourse binds a couple in the "closest possible way." Intercourse is designed by God as an expression of that loving unity.

Grade 6 (Ages 10-11).

1. Student text.

⁶² [Ibid.](#)

⁶³ Page 32.

⁶⁴ Page 44.

⁶⁵ Page 47.

The material presented is age-appropriate and not objectionable.

2. Family Resource book.

Answering Your Child's Questions.

Note: The identical offensive material presented in the 5th Grade Family Resource book is repeated here.

3. Teaching Guide.

Chapter 4.

"How can the Church help us make responsible decisions in new areas like cloning? (Possible answers: Church teachings are consistent; they remind us that all life is sacred; they help us weigh what is possible against what shows respect for god's gift of life.)"⁶⁶

What is omitted from the answer above is the safeguard the Holy Spirit gives the Church when it officially teaches matters of faith and morals. This is the reason the Church's "teachings are consistent."

"What are some of the reasons that sexual intercourse belongs only in marriage? (Possible answers: respect for the holiness of marriage and for the marriage partner, the need for faithfulness as a basis for ongoing sharing and for the development of intimacy, the need for a stable family to provide a home for children.)"⁶⁷

Throughout this course the emphasis is on sexual intercourse when discussing chastity. Sexual acts between unmarried persons is forbidden. In addition, the possible answers listed in the *Guide* leave out the most important answer, namely, God's commandments. True morality is based on God's law. Without that underpinning, objective morality quickly disappears in a quagmire of feelings and opinions. Both adults and children (when appropriate) need unambiguous statements based on God's law regarding the morality of sexual behavior outside of marriage.

Discussing **AIDS** and **HIV** is not an appropriate topic for children 10 and 11 years of age.⁶⁸

Chapter 5.

⁶⁶ Page 30.

⁶⁷ Page 31.

⁶⁸ Page 33.

The discussion of **masturbation** is unnecessary at this age level and harmful in a co-ed class.⁶⁹

“What are some possible consequences of having sexual intercourse before marriage? (Possible answers: pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, guilt, betrayal, confusion.)”⁷⁰

Why is the loss of God’s friendship and the risk of eternal damnation omitted?

Grade 7 (Ages 11-12).

1. Student Text.

Chapter 1.

“Heterosexual persons are sexually attracted to persons of the other gender, while **homosexual** persons - often called gays of lesbians - are attracted to persons of the same gender.”⁷¹

The 7th grade *Student Text* continues the course’s fixation with and indoctrination in homosexuality that began in kindergarten. The defining of a person’s sexual orientation in terms of mere “attraction” is inaccurate and confusing. What is omitted are the needed qualifiers “exclusive” or “predominant.”⁷²

“The Church also teaches that all people, heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual, are to live chaste lives, and that sexual intercourse is morally wrong when it is not part of a loving, married relationship.”⁷³

There are two inaccuracies in this statement. First, chastity is not limited to “sexual intercourse.” All sexual acts outside of marriage are forbidden. Secondly, these acts are not just “wrong,” they are **gravely sinful**.

The citation of *Always Our Children*⁷⁴ highlights this flawed document and its distorted discussion of homosexuality. It should not be recommended reading. One should consider Bishop Bruskewitz’ evaluation of this document found in Part II.

Projects.

“With a Partner. Choose a partner of the other gender. On your own, make a list of qualities of the other gender.

⁶⁹ Page 39.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Page 6.

⁷² CCC, # 2357.

⁷³ Page 7.

⁷⁴ Witness Words, Page 9.

Exchange lists with your partner. Talk about your lists. Circle any stereotypes you identify.”⁷⁵

An exercise of this nature can be harmful as it may leads boys and girls to discuss sensitive sexual issues with persons of the opposite sex. Such a conversation would certainly break down needed protective barriers.

Chapter 2.

“Sexual attraction can lead to another kind of love. Sexual **passion** is romantic love and desire. Passionate love is an important part of being human and is very powerful.”

This treatment of “passion” is fundamentally flawed. Passion in the sense it is used here is an intense sexual desire or attraction. It has nothing to do with genuine love. Indeed, it is the “fools gold” of love. It feels like love, but it isn’t love. Authentic love contains two essential elements. The first is self-sacrifice and the second is commitment. In the formation of young people it is important that they understand the difference between passion and true love because they will be entering an age when their passions can be easily and powerfully stirred. Calling passion love adds confusion, not clarity.

The discussion of **infatuation**⁷⁶ is a shallow treatment of the subject that makes no sharp distinction between infatuation and real love.

“Avoiding Dangerous Situations.

Socialize in groups rather than as couples. Avoid situations where you are alone in an unsupervised setting with someone of the other gender.”⁷⁷

This is good advice, but no explanation is given to help young people understand its necessity. Avoiding **occasions of sin** is a concept that many young people do not understand. The subject of the occasion of sin is subsequently given a brief treatment,⁷⁸ but it is an important topic that should be emphasized and developed. It is not.

Chapter 4.

In the discussion regarding the Church’s Magisterium⁷⁹ the charism of **infallibility** is carefully avoided.

⁷⁵ Page 13.

⁷⁶ Page 18.

⁷⁷ Page 19.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Page 35.

There is a constant flaw in *Growing in Love* that focuses on sexual intercourse and ignores other aspects of chastity. Consider the following example:

“Because they [priests] are **celibate**, which means they remain unmarried and abstain from sexual intercourse, they are more available to serve the Church.”⁸⁰

The conclusion can be drawn from this statement that sexual acts other than intercourse are permissible. That is false. Celibacy embraces every aspect of the virtue of chastity, not merely sexual intercourse.

Chapter 5.

“The sexual drive is a wonderful gift from God. It is a source of grace for us as long as we respect it.”⁸¹

How is the “sex drive” a source of grace? Is it to be elevated to the status of a sacrament? This is silly.

“Sex outside of marriage violates and contradicts the meaning of sexual intercourse—the union that is the most intimate possible between a man and a woman and that requires a lifelong commitment to one another in marriage.”⁸²

There are two deficiencies in this statement. First, the idea of illicit sexual acts is limited to sexual intercourse, a mistake that is repeated in *Growing in Love*. This creates the implication that sexual acts outside of marriage other than intercourse are permissible – whether they are performed between heterosexual or homosexual persons. Secondly, sexual intercourse is not “the most intimate possible” union between a man and a woman. What about the love of a mother for her child, or the love of Jesus for the Church?

Chapter 6.

Marriage.

The detailed discussion of **Contraception, Natural Family Planning, Infertility, and Reproductive Techniques**⁸³ is exceedingly premature when it is directed to children who are only 10 and 11 years of age. The same criticism applies to the text’s discussion of **Birth Control and Abortifacients**.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Page 39.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

2. Family Resource Book.

Talking with Your Child About Gender Anomalies.⁸⁵

Under this heading parents are instructed to discuss the following ideas with 7th grade children: *pseudohermaphrodite*, *testicular feminization*, *adrenogenital syndrome*, *transsexual* or *transgendered persons*, and *drag*. The absurdity should be self-evident.

Talking with Your Children About Sexual Orientation.⁸⁶

This treatment is further evidence of this course's obsession with homosexuality, a concept that is introduced in kindergarten.

The following statement also poses problems.

"In most cases mature sexual orientation (as opposed to youthful experimentation of infatuation) **does not appear to be freely chosen** or is at the very least **extraordinarily difficult to change.**"⁸⁷

Where is the empirical evidence that supports the statement "mature sexual orientation ...does not appear to be freely chosen?" This is an assumption. Many evil tendencies are "extraordinarily difficult to change." Consider the modern plague of addictive behaviors. The degree of difficulty does not mitigate the obligation to resist these tendencies. In the case of homosexuality it does highlight the urgent need to resist a mature homosexual orientation.

Talking with Your Child About Appropriate Expressions of Affection.

"The heightened sexual emotions a person experiences during petting can lead to sexual intercourse."⁸⁸

Does that mean anything goes as long as it does not lead to sexual intercourse, as is the case with homosexual persons?

"Stress to your child that genital contact outside of marriage is **inappropriate.**"

Genital contact outside of marriage is **gravely sinful**, not merely "inappropriate!" This is another of the many examples where the grave sinfulness of sexual acts is diluted.

⁸⁵ Page 8.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid. Emphasis mine.

⁸⁸ Page 9.

Talking with Your Child About Responsible Parenting.⁸⁹

Much of this discussion is not age-appropriate.

Talking with Your Child About Reproductive Ethics.⁹⁰

For heaven sake, these are children in the 7th grade. How does it benefit them to be discussing **infertility, *in vitro* fertilization, artificial insemination, and surrogate mothers** together with **experimentation on unborn embryos and fetuses?**

Answering Your Child's Questions.

Note: Once again vivid and detailed information regarding sex acts is presented without its proper moral framework.

'What does 'losing your virginity' mean? What is 'secondary virginity'?

A virgin is a person who has not engaged in sexual intercourse. 'Losing your virginity' is a popular expression for having sexual intercourse for the first time.

There is no way to tell whether a person is a virgin. In girls who have not yet had sexual intercourse, a thin membrane called the hymen partially covers the opening to the vagina. (The hymen allows the menstrual flow to leave the vagina, and in most girls it allows the insertion of a tampon.) However, the hymen can be perforated by many activities besides intercourse, including horseback riding and other vigorous exercise, so its absence is not proof of sexual activity. A woman whose hymen remains intact until her first experience of sexual intercourse may experience some discomfort and slight bleeding when the penis is inserted, but feelings of sexual pleasure and excitement (especially if the experience takes place within a caring and committed relationship) compensate for the discomfort. The Church's teaching on reserving sexual intercourse for marriage promotes making the first sexual experience a deeply personal gift of oneself in loving intimacy.

Some people believe that engaging in sexual activities other than intercourse (such as oral or anal sex, whether heterosexual or homosexual) outside of marriage is okay because these activities don't 'technically' violate virginity. But being a virgin is not just a technical or physical state. Intimate sexual activity, even if it does not include intercourse, is reserved for the committed union of a man and woman in marriage. A person who is the victim of a sexual assault or molestation remains a virgin regardless of his or her physical experience, because the self giving for which sexual intimacy was designed did not occur.

So-called 'secondary virginity' is a voluntary promise, made by a person who has been sexually active prematurely, to abstain from sexual intercourse until marriage. Many young people find it

⁸⁹ Page 12.

⁹⁰ Page 13.

difficult to withstand the pressure from peers and society to become sexually active at an early age. Or they may be so driven by curiosity about the mystery of sexuality that they experiment. These actions are morally wrong. People who engage in premarital sex risk pregnancy or STD infection. But people are capable of changing their lives for the better. It takes courage to turn your life around, but restoring God's great gift of sexual intimacy to its rightful place within marriage is worth the effort."⁹¹

This discussion should be handled with much less explicitness and with unnecessary information deleted.

"How will I know when I've found the right person to marry if I haven't had any sexual experiences?"

There are many factors involved in achieving a successful marriage. Many studies have shown that so-called 'sexual compatibility' is one of the least important of these factors. If a couple share friendship, loyalty, similar values, and have taken the time to get to know one another well enough to make a lifelong commitment, then the love and sexual attraction they feel for one another will find expression in married sexual intimacy. Dating should be practice in real love and lasting relationship skills, not lovemaking. Sexual involvement and promiscuity before marriage can actually have negative effects on marriages (not to mention the heightened risks of teen pregnancy and STD5). Statistics show that couples who live together before marriage are at a higher risk for separation and divorce than those who reserve sexual intimacy for marriage."⁹²

How is this a relevant subject for children who are only 11 and 12 years of age?

"What is impotence? Is there a corresponding problem for women?"

Impotence, or erectile dysfunction, in men is the temporary or permanent inability to sustain an erection. Impotence may have many causes, whether physical (such as nerve damage or medications that affect circulation) or emotional (such as depression or unexpressed anger toward the partner). Fatigue, stress, alcohol and drug use, smoking, and age can all affect potency. Most cases of erectile dysfunction, which prevents sexual intimacy and affects fertility, can be helped with surgery, medication, behavior modification (such as quitting smoking), or counseling.

There is no corresponding condition for women. However, many physical and emotional factors can affect whether a woman's body responds to sexual intimacy in a pleasurable way. If a woman is stressed, tired, or ill, for example, her vagina may not become lubricated and she may find intercourse irritating or painful. Many women also find orgasm difficult to achieve without direct stimulation of the clitoris."⁹³

⁹¹ Page 14.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Page 15.

Far too much information is given here at an inappropriate age.

“What is anal sex?”

Anal sex involves the use of the penis, tongue, lips, fingers, or some other object to stimulate the sensitive area around and inside the anus and rectum. Anal sex, while popularly associated with gay men, is sometimes practiced by heterosexual couples and lesbians. Some heterosexual young people believe that anal sex is a harmless substitute for intercourse. However, anal sex carries very high risks of physical injury, infection, and transmission of STDs, especially the HIV virus. Any practice of anal sex outside of consensual use as part of foreplay (preparation for vaginal intercourse) by a married couple is a grave misuse of the gift of sexuality and is therefore sinful.”⁹⁴

This how-to instruction is totally uncalled for. What is the benefit to the child, for example, to bring up “anal sex”?

“What are ‘sex toys’? What is ‘S and M’?”

So-called ‘sex toys’ are objects used to stimulate the genitals in individual or mutual masturbation. You may have heard references to a *dildo*, or artificial penis, for example, or to the use of a vibrator to massage the genitals. Any artificial devices may only add another layer of dehumanization to masturbation, which in itself separates sexual activity from its God-given meaning. ‘S and M’ stands for sexual practices that rely for sexual gratification on *sadism* (the need to inflict pain and humiliation on others) and *masochism* (the need to experience humiliation and pain).

In adults, these and other nontraditional sexual practices, such as *voyeurism* (sexual gratification from spying on others), *exhibitionism* (sexual gratification from exposing one’s genitals in public), *bestiality* (sexual activity with animals) and *fetishism* (sexual gratification linked to touching or wearing certain objects) are usually signs of emotional immaturity and may lead to psychological problems or criminal behavior. Experimenting with any of these practices is wrong.”⁹⁵

How is giving this graphic information to children going to help them preserve their chastity? It won’t!

“What is a ‘test tube baby’? What’s a ‘surrogate mother’?”

Both of these terms refer to extraordinary methods of conceiving or carrying a child—meaning methods outside the normal processes of conception and pregnancy. A ‘test tube baby’ is a child conceived through *in vitro* fertilization, a process by which the mother’s egg and the father’s sperm are extracted and joined to each other under laboratory conditions in a test tube or petri dish. The fertilized ovum is then implanted into the mother’s uterus. Sometimes many eggs are fertilized and only one or a few are implanted. The so-called ‘surplus’ embryos may be frozen for later use or destroyed. If more than one embryo begins

⁹⁴ [Ibid.](#)

⁹⁵ [Ibid.](#)

to grow in the woman's body, she may choose to have some removed through abortion and allow only the most desirable number to survive. A 'surrogate mother' is a woman who has another couple's fertilized ovum implanted in her uterus, where the child grows until birth and is then given to the biological parents.

These and some other technological means developed to help couples overcome fertility problems are morally wrong, both because they interfere with God's plan for the unitive and procreative dimensions of human sexuality and because they almost always lead to the destruction of embryos, which is the taking of innocent human life. However, there are medical procedures for enhancing fertility (such as prescribing fertility drugs or hormones) and increasing the possibility of conception (such as the GIFT procedure, in which a fertilized egg is surgically assisted in becoming implanted) that do not interfere with the marital act or involve the death of embryos. These techniques are not forbidden by the Church. In any case, we believe that every human life is precious, no matter how the child was conceived or carried to birth.

"Is celibacy possible?"

Yes, the Church has always taught that voluntarily abstaining from marriage and sexual intimacy is a special gift that requires the support of a strong friendship with God, mature friendships with others, and a healthy sense of self-esteem. The sexual urge is very strong, but it is not on the same level as hunger or thirst. Abstaining from sexual intercourse does not cause physical or emotional harm. Adults who are single by choice or circumstance, priests, members of religious communities, and those who are of a homosexual orientation are capable of abstaining from sexual intercourse and living fulfilled, loving lives.

"Do married people outgrow the desire for sexual intimacy?"

No. Although the hormones that contribute to sexual desire are at their peak during the childbearing years of young adulthood, humans desire and are capable of sexual intimacy throughout their adult lives. Once she has passed menopause, a woman can no longer conceive a child, but a man continues to produce sperm and is theoretically capable of fathering a child at even an advanced age. Married couples may engage in sexual intercourse less frequently as they grow older, but as long as they remain otherwise healthy, intercourse and other physical expressions of intimacy remain an important way for older couples to share love and closeness.

"Why is it wrong to have an extramarital affair?"

Studies show that adultery does emotional and spiritual harm to everyone involved. It violates the public commitment a husband and wife have made to each other, and thus is a grave sin. The spouse and children of the partner involved in an extramarital affair have had their trust violated and have been deprived of the love and intimacy that is rightfully theirs.

The cheating spouse may feel an initial boost from having been found attractive by another person, but must live an increasingly dishonest life. The person having an affair with a married person sacrifices his or her self-esteem and often winds

up feeling lonelier than if he or she were not in a relationship at all. Adultery also carries the risk of physical harm through sexually transmitted diseases, which may infect the innocent spouse as well. There is also the risk of pregnancy outside the marriage.

Adultery does not have to destroy a marriage, but overcoming the damage done by an extramarital affair takes strong faith and often counseling for all involved, as well as a serious commitment to identify and work through the hurt that has been experienced."⁹⁶

The authors of *Growing in Love* feel compelled to provide children with the most lurid details of sexual activity, but are too squeamish to clearly state that adultery is a mortal sin for which one could spend an eternity in hell.

Chapter 1.

The **definition of homosexual** is clearly defective:

"Sexually attracted to persons of one's own gender."⁹⁷

3. Teaching Guide.

Chapter 1.

The flawed definition of homosexuality as "attraction" is repeated without the needed clarifications.⁹⁸

Projects.

With a Partner. Choose a partner of the other gender. On your own, make a list of qualities of the other gender. Exchange lists with your partner. Talk about your lists. Circle any stereotypes you identify."⁹⁹

An exercise of this nature can be harmful if it leads boys and girls to discuss sensitive sexual qualities. Such a conversation would certainly break down needed protective barriers. Yet, no caution is given to the teacher to make sure that sensitive sexual issues are not discussed.

Chapter 2.

⁹⁶ Pages 15-16.

⁹⁷ Page 19.

⁹⁸ Page 7.

⁹⁹ Page 13.

No clarification is given the teacher to adequately differentiate passion and infatuation from true love.¹⁰⁰

Occasions of sin is an important concept for children to grasp. No help is given the teacher to explain this important idea beyond the superficial treatment found in the *Student Text*.¹⁰¹

Chapter 4.

The Magisterium is not affirmed as an infallible guide to assist Christians in forming their conscience.¹⁰²

Chapter 5.

The grave sinfulness of adultery is not affirmed.

Chapter 6.

The discussion about **contraception, infertility, and reproductive technologies** is inappropriate for children in the 7th grade.

Grade 8 (Ages 12-13).

1. Student Text.

Chapter 3

"In sexual intercourse the couple gives the most complete gift of themselves."¹⁰³

This is a false statement that has been made repeatedly throughout this course.

Chapter 4

Sexual relationships outside of marriage are gravely sinful. This is not affirmed.

2. Family Resource Book.

Talking with Your Child About Natural Family Planning.¹⁰⁴

This discussion is not age-appropriate for 8th grade children.

¹⁰⁰ Page 18.

¹⁰¹ Pages 19 & 22.

¹⁰² Page 35.

¹⁰³ Page 28.

¹⁰⁴ Page 9.

Answering Your Child's Questions.

Note: The discussions about impotency, anal sex, “sex toys,” and “S and M” are clearly objectionable.¹⁰⁵ The moral gravity of adultery is not explicitly affirmed.

3. Teaching Guide.

Chapter 3.

Affection and Vocation.¹⁰⁶

What is the point of discussing marital relationships with 8th grade children? Consider the following discussion question.

“What are some other ways besides sexual intercourse by which a married couple might express their love for each other?”¹⁰⁷

This is clearly not age-inappropriate.

CONCLUSION.

The words **offensive**, **disturbing**, **appalling**, **diabolical**, and **scandalous** are not too strong to apply to *Growing in Love*. Under the pretext of affirming Catholic moral teaching it undermines it in many devious ways. Consider the following:

- Homosexuality is often presented in a way that makes it appear “normal” and “acceptable.”
- A superabundance of sexually explicit material is presented, that is age-inappropriate.
- Much of this graphic sexual material is offered to young children and their parents without its moral context.
- This program would destroy the latency period of many children and entice them to premature sexual curiosity and experimentation.
- There is a repeated failure to clearly define the grave immorality of homosexual acts and other sexual sins.

¹⁰⁵ Page 15.

¹⁰⁶ Page 28-29.

¹⁰⁷ Page 29.

- Substantially flawed works that undermine Catholic moral teaching are recommended to teachers and parents, specifically, *Always Our Children* and *Contemporary Christian Morality*.
- There is a failure to caution against sexually explicit class discussions. This is a great danger in classes made up of boys and girls.
- Love is equated with feelings.
- Many Catholic doctrines are watered down, for example, the Eucharist, the Mass, Papal infallibility, and the Mystical Body and its relevance to chastity. Pope John Paul II's *Theology of the Body* is ignored.
- Using weak substitute terms like “wrong,” or “inappropriate” dilute the gravity of sexual sins.
- The importance of sexual intercourse is exaggerated.
- There is a tendency to limit chastity to sexual intercourse.

The importance of forming children in modesty and chastity is a frequent theme of Papal documents directed to parents and educators. A powerful resource to enhance this vital development is John Paul II's *Theology of the Body*. From 1979 to 1984 the Holy Father used his Wednesday addresses to instruct the faithful on the mystery of the human incarnation as evidenced in Sacred Scripture. Elucidating the basis concepts of the *Theology of the Body* would go a long way to ground parents and teachers in solid principles that could be imparted to children. Sadly, this insightful instruction is not mentioned in *Growing in Love*, no doubt, because it is rejected by Fr. Sparks.¹⁰⁸

What this course fails to do in undermining the moral values of parents and their children, *Always Our Children*, which is recommended twenty-one times, and Fr. Sparks' moral mish-mash, *Contemporary Christian Morality*, which is recommended twenty-nine times, attempts to complete. Because these works are featured so prominently in *Growing in Love*, they are reviewed separately in Section II below.

In the Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio*, Pope John Paul II proclaims that “the Church is **firmly opposed** to an often widespread form of imparting sex information dissociated from moral principles. That would merely be an introduction to the experience of pleasure and a stimulus leading to the loss of serenity – while still in the years of innocence – by opening the way to vice.”¹⁰⁹

My concern also extends to the obvious age-inappropriateness of the explicit sexual material in *Growing in Love*. This motivated me to seek the professional opinion of an

¹⁰⁸ Richard C. Sparks, C.S.P. 2001 Religious Education Congress, “Catholic Sexual Morality: More Than ‘Thou Shall Nots’,” Convention Seminar Cassettes, # 322.

¹⁰⁹ Pope John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, # 37. Emphasis mine.

eminent psychiatrist, Dr. John W. Thompson, Jr. M.D. His insightful letter immediately follows this analysis. Dr. Thompson’s academic and professional credentials are listed separately in Part III.

The following is a summary of the sexual topics discussed in *Growing in Love*. They are listed along with the grade levels to which they are directed. Consider this summary in connection with the following admonition. When answering their children’s questions, the Pontifical Council for the Family warns parents to avoid “giving excessive importance to pathological sexual problems.”¹¹⁰ This is a caution that *Growing in Love* repeatedly ignores.

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Topic(s)</u>
K	Homosexuality and sexual intercourse.
1	Homosexuality and sexual intercourse.
2	Homosexuality and sexual intercourse; HIV, AIDS, marriage problems, divorce, and annulments.
3	Penis sizes, Sexual intercourse is explicitly discussed along with erections and masturbation.
4	Penis sizes, Sexual intercourse is explicitly discussed along with erections and masturbation. The concept of oral sex is also introduced under the guise of modesty!
5	Homosexuality, masturbation, foreplay, orgasms, French kissing and “a hickey,” and a detailed description of oral sex.
6	Homosexuality, masturbation, foreplay, orgasms, French kissing and “a hickey,” and a detailed description of oral sex. Cloning, sexual intercourse, AIDS & HIV, and pre-marital intercourse.
7	Contraception, Natural Family Planning, infidelity, reproductive techniques, birth control & Abortifacients, oral and anal sex, impotency, sex toys, “S & M,” test tube babies, surrogate mothers, and adultery.
8	Contraception, Natural Family Planning, infidelity, reproductive techniques, birth control & abortifacients, oral and anal sex, impotency, sex toys, “S & M,” test tube babies, surrogate mothers, adultery, and marital relationships.

Regarding children’s stages of development, the Pontifical Council for the Family makes the following clear declaration. “It can be said that a child is in the stage described in

¹¹⁰ Pontifical Council for the Family, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*, Dec 8, 1995, # 96.

John Paul II's words as 'the years of innocence' from about 5 years of age until puberty – the beginning of which can be set at the first signs of changes in a boy's or girl's body (the visible effect of an increased production of sexual hormones). This period of tranquility and serenity **must never be disturbed** by unnecessary information about sex."¹¹¹ *Growing in Love* clearly violates this prohibition as early as kindergarten.

To be sure there are authentic Catholic books which present similar sexually explicit material. John F. Kippley's classic **Sex and the Marriage Covenant: A Basis for Morality**, unlike *Growing in Love*, is not only directed to adults but its emphasis is on a thoroughly Catholic understanding of human sexuality. Another example is Germain Grisez' monumental three volume work, *The Way of the Lord Jesus*, which is directed to adults studying Moral Theology not grammar school children. In its excessive eagerness to portray the most lurid sexual acts to children *Growing in Love* would certainly endanger children as the Pontifical Council for the Family predicts.

“In some societies today there are planned and determined attempts to impose premature sex information on children. But at this stage of development children are still not capable of fully understanding the value of the affective dimension of sexuality. They cannot understand and control sexual imagery within the proper context of moral principles, and for this reason they cannot integrate premature sexual information with moral responsibility. Such information tends to shatter their emotional and educational development and to disturb the natural serenity of this period of life.”¹¹²

In these situations parents are instructed: “Parents should politely but **firmly exclude any attempts to violate children's innocence**, because such attempts compromise the spiritual, moral and emotional development of growing persons who have a right to their innocence.”¹¹³

Parents should not permit their children to participate this awful program, or any program like it.

¹¹¹ *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*, # 78. Emphasis mine.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, # 83.

¹¹³ *Ibid.* Emphasis mine.

May 17, 2001

Jimmy Seghers
Totus Tuus Ministries
17236 St. Gertrude Drive
Covington, LA 70435

Dear Mr. Seghers,

Per your request, I have reviewed the *Growing in Love* series of publications produced by Harcourt Religion Publications. These books have been suggested for use in Catholic Schools to help educate children and introduce concepts of sexuality and family life education. The materials are divided into three resources for each grade level and include the Student Activity Book, The Teaching Guide, and the Family Resource Book. These books introduce concepts of diversity and sexuality to different grade levels K through 8th grade. As a psychiatrist I make the following evaluation.

The Student Activity Book is the least objectionable and introduces most concepts at age-appropriate levels. The discussion of puberty in the 4th grade, age 8 and 9 is not appropriate, however. "Your body is getting ready to grow in a special way." "After young people have gone through puberty they are **fertile**." The concept of fertility is not age-appropriate for fourth graders. Most 9 or 10 year-old children are not prepared to understand concepts that are not actually happening to them. Many will not go through puberty until they are 13 to 15 yrs old. This discussion on fertility is very premature in my opinion

There is some concern that the concept of sexual orientation introduced at the seventh grade level describes a definition of homosexuality as persons "sexually attracted to the same gender." Many people are attracted to the same gender and yet are not homosexual. There is a definition of bisexual as individuals "sexually attracted to both genders". Almost anyone could be classified as bisexual by this definition. Sexual attractiveness does not always equate to orientation. These concepts may lead young individuals to question whether they are "gay" or not based on normal feelings. Many young males will have homosexual dreams during puberty and yet this does not equate to a homosexual orientation. These concepts are difficult to grasp for many adults much less 12-year-old children.

The Teaching Guides also introduce many topics at age-inappropriate levels. The definition of AIDS is introduced in the 2nd grade book totally out of context on page T44. There is little to be gained when using AIDS as an example of the concept of "Sharing God's Love" with 7 and 8 year olds.

The most inappropriate material is presented the Family Resource Guides. These books are resources for parents guiding them to discuss "common questions" that young children ask and give "suggested answers" to the common questions. I can find no documentation that the questions are in fact "common" or that they are age-appropriate.

Many “common questions” are four to six years ahead of the age groups’ sexual development and are **quite graphic**. First graders have suggested answers for “having sex” and “gay”. Third graders get suggested answers for “wet dream”, “masturbation”, “period” and “douches”. This information is not appropriate for 8 and 9-year-old children. Parents are likely to be misled into believing that discussing these topics several years in advance of sexual development will prepare their children for puberty when it may only stimulate unnecessary curiosity.

There are many serious questions raised by the material presented in *Growing in Love*. What rationale do the authors have for introduction of explicit material at age-inappropriate intervals? I don’t see this as defensible. Will the material presented prevent unwanted pregnancies and promote development of Catholic virtues? I don’t think so. Will it instead promote unnecessary curiosity and break down natural barriers when it is taught in co-educational classrooms? Yes it will. What outcome data support the effectiveness of introducing this material into our school system? In my professional opinion there are no such outcome data and it can’t be supported.

The information presented in *Growing in Love* is presented with a pro homosexual bias in my opinion. It is likely to stimulate unnecessary curiosity and promote an attitude of unnecessary sexual experimentation in latency age children.

In summary, I bring these issues forward to encourage a thorough reevaluation of *Growing in Love* with a strong recommendation that a program is chosen that is age-appropriate and less graphic for our Catholic Students. In my professional opinion this program will harm children and confuse parents. Our children are our most valuable resource and their virtue must be protected at all costs.

Respectfully submitted,

John W. Thompson, Jr., MD

Part II: Readings Recommended in *Growing in Love*.

Regrettably, time (due to the urgency in completing the critique and getting this information into the hands of concerned parents, school administrators and Church officials) does not permit the evaluation of all the works that *Growing in Love* recommends as supplemental reading. That should be done before this or any similar course is recommended for the use in Catholic schools and by Catholic parents. This is merely an expected level of due-diligence. However, because Fr. Sparks' book *Contemporary Christian Morality* and the document *Always Our Children* are featured so prominently in *Growing in Love* they deserve special consideration.

Furthermore, if *Growing in Love* is approved by a diocesan Office of Religious Education, the implication is given that the course's content has the bishop's approval. This approval would certainly apply to works that are repeatedly recommended throughout the texts.

- 1. *Always Our Children, a pastoral Message to Parents of Homosexual Children*, published by the Committee on Marriage and the Family of the U.S. bishop's conference.**

Rather than giving my personal evaluation to this awful document, I will quote Bishop Fabian Bruskewitz. He states unequivocally: "it should be made clear that the document was composed without any input from the majority of the American Catholic bishops, who were given no opportunity whatever to comment on its pastoral usefulness or on its contents." He notes that "I believe one would be justified in asserting that in this case flawed and defective procedures, badly in need of correction and reform, resulted in a very flawed and defective document."

Furthermore, Bishop Bruskewitz asserts that "the majority of America's Catholic Bishops were allowed nothing to say about this document. Still less were they permitted any suggestions or comments about the 'advisors' and consultants used by the committee, who, by their own boasting and the ordinary 'rumor mill,' have been detected to be people whose qualifications in this area of moral conduct are highly questionable. The document, in a view which is shared by many, is founded on bad advice, mistaken theology, erroneous science, and skewed sociology. It is pastorally helpful in no perceptible way."

The bishop adds that "the character of this document is such that it would require a book of many pages to point out all its bad features, which sometimes cross the border from poor advice to evil advice."

Bishop Bruskewitz concludes with the following evaluation. "Our critique of this document says that it is really an exercise in homosexual ('gay' and 'lesbian') advocacy. It is difficult not to see it as such. 'Calamity and frightening disaster' are terms which are not too excessive to describe this document. It is my view that this

document carries no weight of authority for Catholics, whom I would advise to ignore or oppose it.”¹¹⁴

**2. *Contemporary Christian Morality: Real Questions, Candid Responses*,
by Richard C. Sparks**

According to the author “this book purports to be about issues in ‘Christian,’ not exclusively ‘Roman Catholic,’ morality.”¹¹⁵ Why, then, is it recommended reading in a Catholic religion series? Furthermore, this work is so fundamentally flawed that it is likely to reinforce or promote relativism, skepticism, and distorted moral values. The following citations from Fr. Sparks’ book together with my evaluation are intended to illustrate some of its many faults.

Morality.

The moral misdirection begins on the first page with the following inadequate definition of morality: “*Morality is one’s values, choices, and actions.*”¹¹⁶ This is followed by the explanation that “the ‘one’ in our definition can refer to an *individual*.... The ‘one’ can also refer to a *community*.”¹¹⁷ God and the infallibility of His Church are omitted.

Subsequently, he seems to support “objective morality.”¹¹⁸ However, he doesn’t speak of objective morality as something apart from the individual’s subjective determination. He merely defines it “as a way life ought to be lived and a way it shouldn’t.”¹¹⁹ Clarity is muddled further when he adds: “Whether one speaks of it as God’s will or as the way of Nature [?] or the Fates [?] meant it to be or as what is reasonable to thoughtful human beings.” Notice how Fr. Sparks equates “God’s will” with “the way of Nature” and “the Fates.”

Amazingly, he adds: “Our moral choice may be the lesser of **two evils** or the greater good among a variety of viable alternatives.”¹²⁰ To state that it can be a correct moral choice to chose evil is clearly contrary to the teaching of the Catholic Church.¹²¹ It is particularly offensive that this assertion is made in the context of “objectively right choices.”¹²²

Determining Objective Morality.

¹¹⁴ All quotations are from the May 3-9, 1998 issue of the *National Catholic Register*, p. 8.

¹¹⁵ Page 67.

¹¹⁶ Sparks, *Contemporary Christian Morality*, p. 1 all italics are in the original unless stated otherwise.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ *Ibid.* Emphasis mine.

¹²¹ CCC, #’s 1759, 1760, 1761.

¹²² Sparks, *Contemporary Christian Morality*, p. 3.

Fr. Sparks undermines the reliability of Sacred Scripture as a source of determining objective morality by undermining the Fifth Commandment, “Thou shall not kill” (Ex 20:12), which Jesus affirms in Mt 5:21). He states that “the commandment against killing was never seen, even by Israelites, as a prohibition of all killing.”¹²³ He fails to point is that the Hebrew stem, *r-st-h*, means “murder” for which there is an absolute prohibition. Thus, properly translated in English, the commandment reads: “Thou shall not murder.” Murder is unjust killing to which there are no exceptions.

The author follows this misinformation by suggesting “that human reason can figure out moral truth. Whether one calls it natural law, or folk wisdom, or prudence, or maybe even common sense, there is something in the mind and heart of all people that can intuit and reason *what ought to be*, based on an honest look at the *way things are*”¹²⁴ [whatever that means]. The error of this treatment of the natural law becomes evident when it is compared with the teaching of the Catholic Church, which affirms that “the moral law is the work of divine Wisdom.”¹²⁵ While man participates in Wisdom because of God’s goodness, his understanding and will must be submissive to that Wisdom and the Church that Jesus established.¹²⁶

Do Christians have an advantage in determining objective morality because of divine revelation? Not according to Father Sparks. “...Christians have no corner of the market of moral knowledge.”¹²⁷ Then he undermines divine revelation with this assertion. “While the New Testament speaks about love of neighbor and forgiving someone many times over, one can also find similar wisdom in the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament), which the Jews follow; in the Qur’an, which Muslims follow; in the scriptures of other world religions; and in the practical wisdom of many who have no particular religious faith.”¹²⁸ Note how he equates Sacred Scripture with the “*Qur’an*,” “the scriptures of other world religions,” and even with “the practical wisdom of many who have no particular religious faith.” Divine revelation becomes meaningless in this presentation. He even goes so far to state that “Christians have no special knowledge.”¹²⁹

Magisterium.

Fr. Sparks undermines the Church’s *Magisterium* when discussing helps to make good moral decisions. “The Roman Catholic church places special emphasis on its bishops and the pope, collectively knows as the church’s *magisterium*, as a source of theological and moral wisdom.”¹³⁰ Because of the egregious errors contained in this section of Fr. Sparks’ book, it needs to be evaluated part-by-part.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ CCC, # 1950.

¹²⁶ CCC, # 1954.

¹²⁷ Sparks, *Contemporary Christian Morality*, p. 5.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

Wisdom connotes ideas of “knowledge,” “insight,” and “judgment.” While embracing those concepts the Church’s Magisterium goes far beyond them. The Magisterium proclaims absolute and infallible truth in the areas of doctrine, what we are to believe, and morals, how we are to behave.¹³¹

“Some ascribe to this body of leaders almost mystical powers when it comes to discerning right from wrong.”¹³² This is an obvious attempt to ridicule the Church’s teaching authority.

“Others suggest that they [The Church’s Magisterium] are blessed in a special way by God’s Spirit which empowers them for their task – to do their homework well, to consult widely, to study issues in depth, and to lead church members into a deeper communal and personal discernment process”¹³³ What the Holy Spirit doesn’t do, according to Fr. Sparks, is to infallibly guide the Church’s Magisterium. Ultimately, he attributes the final authority in doctrinal and moral matters to the Church members “deeper communal and personal discernment process.”

Fr. Sparks concluded with this statement: “in either instance, church members owe a special degree of respect to their church’s leaders and their official decrees.”¹³⁴ What he omits is the assent of faith and obligation of obedience.

Conscience.

Fr. Sparks presents conscience as the trump card that wins over any other consideration. “After thoughtful, informed, and prayerful consideration, however, one is still obliged to follow one’s inner conscience decision.”¹³⁵ What is not affirmed is the Church’s clear teaching that we are obligated to follow a **certain** conscience.¹³⁶ He also ignores the role Sacred Scripture, the Church’s Magisterium, and the divine law in forming a certain conscience.¹³⁷

For Fr. Sparks conscience is reducible to the feeling of being right. Thus he praises Martin Luther’s integrity in maintaining the heresies that split the Church apart, because “he felt he had to be true to his conscience.”¹³⁸ This distorted view leads him to equate Luther’s integrity with that of St. Joan of Arc and St. Thomas More.¹³⁹

The conscience doesn’t create right or wrong, good or evil rather it enjoins men “to do good and to avoid evil. It also judges particular choices, approving those that are

¹³¹ CCC, #’s 2035, 2036, 2037, 2051.

¹³² Sparks, *Contemporary Christian Morality*, p. 25.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

¹³⁶ CCC, #’s 1790, 1800.

¹³⁷ CCC, #’s 1786, 1792, 1794, 1798, 1799, 1802.

¹³⁸ Sparks, *Contemporary Christian Morality*, p. 16.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

good and denouncing those that are evil.”¹⁴⁰ The ultimate determination of morality is God, not man. The conscience, then, “bears witness to the authority of truth in reference to the supreme Good to which the human person is drawn, and it welcomes the commandments.”¹⁴¹

Abortion.

Consider how the following statements undermine the absolute divine prohibition against abortion. The remarks are so blatant that little comment is needed. “All things being equal, it would **seem**¹⁴² that the prohibition against killing the innocent would cover the pre-born human life as well, making abortion an immoral action.... But the difficulty is the phrase ‘all things being equal.’ Some Christian bodies, most notably Catholics and Baptists, believe that the prohibition against abortion is **practically** absolute.¹⁴³ ...Other mainline Christians and their churches prohibit most abortions, ... But in the case of rape, forced incest, or if the mother’s very life or basic health is at risk, then ‘all things are not equal’.” Notice how the teaching of the Catholic Church is presented as one opinion, but not the truth!

Sexual Acts Outside of Marriage.

Fr. Sparks affirms that “it has been the constant tradition of the Christian churches that the **full** [emphasis mine] sexual expression of genital intercourse belongs only in marriage.”¹⁴⁴ However, he appears to give a carte blanche to the unmarried for all sexual acts other than intercourse. “Each couple must discern their own level of intimacy and depth of commitment and respond accordingly, appropriately.”¹⁴⁵ This guideline is so porous that it is valueless as a moral standard. “For single people, the question is one of appropriateness - how physical should we be given our level of maturity, intimacy, vulnerability, honesty, and commitment?”¹⁴⁶ This is ridiculous, because it is no standard at all.

Fornication.

“I find the term ‘fornication’ offensive to many and, in some instances, too simplistic or loaded a term for the complexity of the situation and the subjective sincerity of many of the couples involved.”¹⁴⁷ What kind of nonsense is this?

¹⁴⁰ CCC, # 1777.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Emphasis mine. When I was a graduate student in History my professors referred to such expressions as “weasel words.”

¹⁴³ Emphasis mine. The teaching of the Catholic Church is clear. An abortion is never justifiable for any reason or under any circumstances. See: CCC, #'s 2270, 2271, 2274, 2322, 2323.

¹⁴⁴ Sparks, *Contemporary Christian Morality*, p. 62.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 63.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 64.

His distorted views are further expressed in the following statement. “So I would prefer to say that, according to our Christian tradition, sex outside of marriage is seen as always objectively immoral, leaving the determination of sinfulness to each person’s own prayerful discernment with God, often guided by one’s spiritual director, pastor, confessor, a trusted friend, or mentor.”¹⁴⁸ If each person determines sinfulness, how does “objectively immoral” have any meaning? Notice, too, how he equates the authority of “one’s spiritual director, pastor, confessor, a trusted friend, or mentor” with “discernment with God.”

Contraception.

The author acknowledges the official teaching of the Catholic Church without adequately explaining the Church’s prohibition. He also affirms that a sizable percentage of Catholics reject the Church’s teaching regarding contraception, without commenting on the objective immorality of this position. He then adds that “direct contraception can be a moral option, provided one’s reasons are focused on the holistic good of the spouses and their marriage.”¹⁴⁹

Direct contraception is *never* morally permissible. The Catholic Church teaches that “**every action** which, whether in anticipation of the conjugal act, or in its accomplishment, or in the development of its natural consequences, proposes, whether as an end or as a means, to render procreation impossible’ is **intrinsically evil**.”¹⁵⁰

Homosexuality.

Fr. Sparks acknowledges that “the Christian tradition has generally upheld that homosexual genital actions are wrong but that *being* homosexual, having a gay or lesbian sexual orientation, is *not* morally wrong.”¹⁵¹ What he doesn’t present is the Catholic Church’s clear statement that being homosexual is “objectively disordered.”¹⁵² Furthermore, the Catholic Church teaches that “homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered,” and “contrary to the natural law.”¹⁵³ Therefore, “under no circumstances can they be approved.”¹⁵⁴

Subsequently, Fr. Sparks cites unnamed theologians, pastoral ministers who work with homosexual persons, as the basis of rejecting the Christian condemnation of homosexual acts. After all, “isn’t that his or her ‘natural’ state. Isn’t that person’s homosexual orientation ‘normal’ for him or her?”¹⁵⁵ This flawed use of “natural” and “normal” can also provide a moral basis for justifying other immoral acts, for

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 67-68, quotation on page 69.

¹⁵⁰ CCC, 2370. Emphasis mine.

¹⁵¹ Sparks, *Contemporary Christian Morality*, p.74.

¹⁵² CCC, # 2358.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, # 2357.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ Sparks, *Contemporary Christian Morality*, p. 77.

example, rape, the sexual abuse of children, and adultery. After all, one could argue, these “natural” and “normal” for the perpetrator.

Fr. Sparks further dilutes the clear Biblical condemnation of homosexuality in the following manner. “I am persuaded by those scholars who, in doing their homework, struggle to see what these scripture prohibitions meant in context and then to discern what significance they might have for us today, twenty to thirty centuries later.”¹⁵⁶

Fr. Sparks is persuaded by the opinions of some scholars, but he is unmoved by the teaching authority of his Church.

This brief examination of Fr. Sparks’ book only highlights its many flaws. Clearly this is not a book that should be recommended to Catholics.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 78.

Part III: CURRICULUM VITAE - JOHN W. THOMPSON, JR, M.D.

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Birthplace & Date: June 3, 1956 New Orleans, Louisiana

Marital status: Married

EDUCATION:

University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio, Texas. 1979-1982, B.S. in Biology.

University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston, Texas. 1982-1986, M.D.

University of Florida, College of Medicine, Gainesville, Florida, 1986-1990, Psychiatric Residency Training

University of Florida, College of Medicine, Gainesville, Florida, 1989-1990, Forensic Fellow in Psychiatry.

BOARD CERTIFICATION:

ABPN - Diplomate of the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology, in Psychiatry, April 1992. #35664

ABPN - Added qualifications in Forensic Psychiatry, December 1994. #244

ABPN - Board Examiner Part II, Miami, January 1995.

ABPN - Added qualifications in Addiction Psychiatry, June 1998.

LICENSURE:

Louisiana Medical License 09107R, March 1992.

ACTIVITIES IN MEDICAL, PROFESSIONAL OR MENTAL HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS:

American Medical Association, 1984-present.

American Psychiatric Association, 1985-present.

Florida Psychiatric Society, 1986-1992.

Louisiana Psychiatric Medical Association, 1992-present.

American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law, 1990-present.

AAPL Practice Guidelines for NGRI Task Force, 1999-present.

American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry, 1992-present.

LPMA: Chairman, Psychiatry and the Law Committee, 1994-1996.

LPMA: Secretary. June 1996 to June 1997.

American Academy of Forensic Sciences - 1996 to present.

COMMUNITY SERVICE, CIVIC & SOCIAL ACTIVITIES:

Special Olympics, Galveston, Texas. 1984-1986.

Church Related Nursing Home Visitation, 1986-present.

Active Participant in Triathlons since 1986.

Member of Advisory Committee, Louisiana Economic Development and Gaming Corporation, 1994-1995.

MILITARY SERVICE:

United States Air Force, July 29, 1976 - July 28, 1982, Radiologic technician, rank E-5. Supervised weekend shift radiology department at Wilford Hall Medical Center. 1977-1982.

United States Air Force, 9/30/88 to 6/30/92. Rank O-3. Served as Inpatient Staff Psychiatrist and Inpatient Chief at Wilford Hall Medical Center, San Antonio, Texas.

CLINICAL APPOINTMENTS:

Wilford Hall Medical Center, San Antonio, Texas. Inpatient Attending Psychiatrist. July 1, 1990.

Wilford Hall Medical Center, San Antonio, Texas. Acting Inpatient Chief, periodic appointments since January 1991.

Medical Director, Addictive Behavior Unit, The Ochsner Clinic, New Orleans, Louisiana, June 15, 1992 to August 31, 1993.

Clinical Director for Feliciana Forensic Facility in Jackson, Louisiana from September 1, 1993 to present.

ADMINISTRATIVE APPOINTMENTS:

Undergraduate Education Committee, Graduate Education Committee, Resident Selection Committee, Department of Psychiatry, University of Florida, 1986-1990.

Quality Assurance/Risk Management Coordinator for the Division of Mental Health. Entailed supervising the QA/RM for Depts. of Psychiatry, Psychology, Social Work and Occupational Therapy, Wilford Hall Medical Center, June 5, 1991 to January 31, 1992.

Coordinator in Dept. of Psychiatry WHMC for implementation and operating instructions of Clozaril Treatment System January-August 1991.

Quality Assurance/Risk Management Coordinator for the Addictive Behavior Unit, Ochsner Clinic, New Orleans, Louisiana, June 1992 to August 31, 1993.

Physician Advisor, The Ochsner Health Plan, September 1992 to August 31, 1993.

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS:

Associate Clinical Professor, University of Florida, Department of Psychiatry, 1990 to present.

Associate Clinical Professor, University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, May 1991 to June 1992.

Associate Professor of Clinical Psychiatry, Tulane University School of Medicine, September 1, 1993 to present.

Director of the Division of Forensic Neuropsychiatry, Tulane University School of Medicine, September 1, 1993 to present.

Director of Fellowship in Forensic Psychiatry, Tulane University School of Medicine, July 1, 1994 to present.

Vice-Chairman of the Department of Psychiatry & Neurology, Tulane University School of Medicine, January 1, 2000 to present.

TEACHING ACTIVITIES:

"Tricyclic Antidepressants, informed use by Non-psychiatric Physicians." Lectures to Medicine Housestaff, Department of Medicine, University of Florida, 1986-1990.

"Chronic Alcohol Use and Complications." Lecture series to Veterans' Administration patients at Veterans' Hospital in Gainesville, Florida, 1986-1987.

"Somatoform Disorders, Factitious Disorders and Malingering." Lectures to Medical Students, Department of Psychiatry, University of Florida, 1987-1990.

"Paraphrenia: A Review and Case Presentation." Grand Rounds Presentation, Department of Psychiatry, University of Florida, June 1988.

"Electroconvulsive Therapy." Lectures to Medical Students, Department of Psychiatry, University of Florida, 1989-1990.

Forensic Lecture Series. Lectures on Criminal Responsibility, Competency to Stand Trial, Involuntary Civil Commitment, Duty to warn, etc., for General Psychiatric Residents, Department of Psychiatry, University of Florida, 1989-1990.

"Involuntary Civil Commitment." Lectures to Medicine Housestaff and outpatient clinic Faculty, Veterans Administration Hospital, Gainesville, Florida, 1990.

"Emergency Room Psychopharmacology" and "Treatment of the Aggressive/Dangerous Patient." Lectures to Psychiatry Interns, Department of Psychiatry, University of Florida, July 1989.

"An Overview of Psychopharmacology." Lecture to Clinical Psychology Interns, Department of Clinical Psychology, University of Florida, October 1989.

"Priapism and Psychotropic Medication." Grand Rounds Presentation, Department of Psychiatry, University of Florida, June 1989.

Oral Examiner for Medical Student Psychiatry Oral Exams, Department of Psychiatry, University of Florida, 1989-1990.

Preceptor for Medical Student Rotation at Jail Psychiatry Clinic, Department of Psychiatry, University of Florida, 1989-1990.

"Clozapine." Grand Rounds presentation, Wilford Hall Medical Center, December, 1990.

Forensic Seminar Series, Civil, Criminal, Malpractice with Landmark Case review in specific areas. Wilford Hall Medical Center to PGY-2 Residents, March 1991 and February 1992.

Forensic Seminar Series, University of Texas Health Science Center, 10 lecture series on various aspects of Forensic Psychiatry and Risk Management, July-October 1991.

"Malingered Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders." presented to National Association of Disability Examiners conference, Austin, Texas, October 10, 1991.

"Informed Consent and Right to Refuse Treatment in Psychotropic Prescribing." CME conference PRACTICAL RISK MANAGEMENT FOR THE MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL, University of Florida College of Medicine, Division of CME, November 23, 1991.

Preceptor for UTHSC Medical Students on Interviewing and "AMSIT" Mental Status Examination training, September-December 1991.

Forensic Seminar Series, Co-chaired with Dr. Gene Usdin for PGY-3 and PGY-4 Residents at Ochsner Clinic, Louisiana State University and Tulane University. October to December 1992.

Substance Abuse Seminar Series, for PGY-2 residents at the Ochsner Clinic, New Orleans, September to December 1992.

"The History of the Insanity Defense." Grand Rounds Presentation, Department of Psychiatry, The Ochsner Clinic, January 12, 1993.

"Adolescence and Addiction." CME Conference - 5th Annual Outpatient Management in Family Practice, Ochsner Clinic, New Orleans, April 17, 1993.

"The History of the Insanity Defense." Grand Rounds Presentation, Department of Psychiatry, Tulane University School of Medicine, October 1, 1993.

Presentation on Gambling Addiction, Biloxi Regional Medical Center, Biloxi, MS, Fall 1993.

"PRIME-MD: A New Instrument for Diagnosing Mental Disorders in Primary Care." Program Director for this CME presentation, December 11, 1993 and October 29, 1994. Featuring Dr. Sheldon Preskorn.

"Gambling: Fun to Addiction." Guest speaker at annual Byron Griffith Memorial Presentation, Tulane University School of Medicine, May 19, 1994.

"Informed Consent, Medication Refusal." Coordinator of state forensic CME presentation, Southeastern Louisiana State Hospital, June 3, 1994.

Grand Rounds Presentations, Feliciana Forensic Facility, "Competency to Stand Trial," June 30, 1994; "History of Insanity Defense," July 22, 1994; "Right to Refuse Treatment," September 1, 1994; "Involuntary Commitment," October 6, 1994.

Presented lectures in Forensic Fellowship Seminar Series: "Historical Figures in Forensic Psychiatry," "History of Insanity Defense," "Criminal Responsibility in Insanity Defense," "Involuntary Hospitalization," "Competency to be Executed," "Informed Consent," "Right to Treatment/Right to Refuse Treatment," July 1994 - present.

"Competency to be Executed." Psychiatry Journal Club, Tulane University School of Medicine, November 9, 1994.

"Jail Psychiatry." Public Psychiatry Course lecture, Tulane University School of Medicine, November 10, 1994.

"Confidentiality/Right to Treatment." Forensic Seminar at Ochsner Clinic, New Orleans, LA, November 15, 1994.

"Substance Abuse in the Elderly" at Neuropsychiatric Aspects of Primary Care CME Symposium, Le Pavillon Hotel, New Orleans, LA, February 19, 1995.

"Manson Family Values." Grand Rounds Presentation, Department of Psychiatry, Tulane University School of Medicine, March 3, 1995.

"Gambling." Addictions Jazzfest Conference, Le Monteleone Hotel, New Orleans, LA, May 6, 1995

"Compulsive Gambling: A Professional Prospective." Minnesota Council on Compulsive Gambling Presentation, Tulane University School of Medicine, July 25, 1995.

"Forensic Issues in Correctional Psychiatry." Janssen CNS Roundtable Discussion, San Antonio, Texas, September 1, 1995.

"Medical Ethics and Forensic Psychiatry." Yale/Ochsner Board Review Course, New Orleans, LA, September 1995 - 1997.

Director, Tulane's Homecoming CME Program, Clinical & Forensic Aspects of Psychoses. Presented "Novel Antipsychotics & Competency Restoration." October 14, 1995.

"Right to Treatment/Right to Refuse Treatment." New Dimensions in Mental Health Administration Course, Le Monteleone Hotel, New Orleans, LA, October 30, 1995.

"Assessment of Dangerousness for Release of Insanity Acquittees." Grand Rounds Presentation, Central Louisiana State Hospital, December 14, 1995.

"Gambling Addiction." Presentation to the Phoenix Society, Tulane University School of Medicine, March 6, 1996.

"Psychiatric Testimony in the Jeffrey Dahmer Trial." Psychiatry Journal Club, Tulane University School of Medicine, April 17, 1996.

"Psychosis '96." Visiting Faculty Training Program, Atlanta, GA, April 19-21, 1996.

Faculty member for Interactive Medical Network's psychLINK's live, interactive video symposium, "Aggression in the Treatment of Schizophrenic Inpatients." Dallas, Texas, May 1, 1996.

"Domestic Violence." Women's Mental Health '96 Conference, Westin Canal Place Hotel, New Orleans, LA, May 2, 1996.

"Adult Forensic Psychiatry: Transitioning to the Community." Intercontinental Hotel, New Orleans, LA, September 3, 1996.

"Domestic Violence." Medical Education Council of Pensacola, Pensacola, FL, September 21, 1996.

"The Right To Treatment/Right to Refuse Treatment." New Dimensions in Mental Health Administration Course, Royal Sonesta Hotel, New Orleans, LA, October 1996.

"Compulsive Gambling: From Fun to Addiction." DePaul Hospital, New Orleans, LA, March 28, 1997.

"Medical Ethics and Forensic Psychiatry." Patton State Hospital, Patton, CA, April 9, 1997.

"Risperdal in Competency Restoration." Terrell State Hospital, Terrell, TX, May 15, 1997.

"The Insanity Defense, History and Practical Applications" and "Informed Consent and Psychotropic Medications." East Louisiana State Hospital, June 3, 1997.

"Use of Risperidone and Competency to Stand Trial." Medical Center for Federal Prisoners, Springfield, MO, September 3, 1997.

"Informed Consent - Malpractice and Antipsychotic Medication." Dinner Symposium. Springfield, MO, September 3, 1997.

"Overview of Pathological Gambling." Minnesota Council on Compulsive Gambling Conference. Tulane University School of Medicine, September 11, 1997.

"Bad Boys, Bad Boys, What you gonna do?" Presentation on sexual predators at East Louisiana State Hospital. September 23, 1997.

"The Insanity Defense from Hale to Hinckley." Presentation to Orleans Parish District Attorney's Office, December 13, 1997

"Aggression in Psychiatric Patients." Presentation to Big Spring Texas State Hospital. December 18, 1997.

"Aggression and Violence in Psychiatric Patients: A Correctional Perspective." Miami, Orlando, Tallahassee, Fla. March 3-5, 1998.

"Competency Restoration." Vernon State Hospital. "Aggression and Violence in Psychiatric Patients." Trinity Springs Hospital. March 25-26, 1998.

"Mental Illness Behind Bars." Public Psychiatry Class. Tulane University School of Medicine, April 16, 1998.

"Aggression and Violence in Psychiatric Patients." Presentation to state medical directors. Baton Rouge, LA, April 17, 1998.

Training in evaluation and treatment of sexual predators. East Louisiana State Hospital, April 20, 1998.

"Aggression and Violence in Psychiatric Patients." Fulton State Hospital, Fulton, MO, April 30, 1998.

"Aggression and Violence in Psychiatric Patients." Mid-Missouri Mental Health Center, Columbia, MO, April 30, 1998.

"Gambling: From Fun to Addiction." Dinner Symposium, St. Louis, MO, April 30, 1998.

"Aggression and Violence in Psychiatric Patients." St. Louis State Hospital, St. Louis, MO, May 1, 1998.

"Aggression and Violence in Psychiatric Patients." St. Louis County Jail, St. Louis, MO, May 1, 1998.

Chairperson for APA Scientific and Clinical Report Session "Psychosocial Factors in Violence and Risk for Self-Harm." Toronto, Canada, June 4, 1998.

"Aggression and Violence in Psychiatric Patients." Dinner Symposium, NY, NY, July 15, 1998.

"Informed Consent, Malpractice and Psychotropic Medications." Staten Island Clinic, NY, July 16, 1998.

"Use of Atypical Antipsychotics to Control Aggression." Cherokee Mental Health Institute, Cherokee, IA, August 11, 1998.

"Aggression and Violence in Psychiatric Patients." Dinner Symposium, Des Moines, IA, August 14, 1998.

"Use of Atypical Antipsychotics to Control Aggression." Independence Mental Health Institute, Independence, IA, August 19, 1998.

"Aggression and Violence in Psychiatric Patients." Dinner Program, Cedar Rapids, IA, August 19, 1998.

"Malpractice, Informed Consent, and Antipsychotic Medication." Dinner Symposium for community health professionals, Lafayette, LA, September 21, 1998.

"Malpractice, Informed Consent and Antipsychotic Medication." Grand Rounds. Tulane University School of Medicine, September 25, 1998.

Moderator and Program Chair for Criminal Justice Advisory Board. Windsor Court Hotel. New Orleans, LA, October 14, 1998

"Paraphilias." Tulane Psychiatry Department Homecoming Presentation, Westin Hotel. New Orleans, LA, October 17, 1998.

"Ethics in Forensic Psychiatry." South Beach Psychiatric Hospital, Staten Island, New York, October 30, 1998.

"Informed Consent" Grand Rounds, St. Vincent's Medical Center Staten Island, New York, October 30, 1998.

"Insanity Defense." Presentation to Tulane's Medical/Legal Society. Tulane University School of Medicine, November 11, 1998.

"Aggression & Violence in Psychiatric Patients." Presentation to NW Montana Psychiatric Rehabilitation Center, St. Joseph, MO, November 12, 1998.

"Malpractice, Informed Consent and Antipsychotic Medication." Dinner Symposium. Kansas City, KS, November 12, 1998.

"Aggression & Violence in Psychiatric Patients." Colmery O'Neil VA Medical Center, Topeka, KS, November 13, 1998.

"Aggression and Violence in the Seriously Mentally Ill." Presentation to Georgia Best Practices Conference, Atlanta, GA, November 17, 1998

"Restraints in Outpatient Clinics." Presentation to Louisiana State Medical Director's Council Meeting, March 22, 1999.

Chairperson, Criminal Justice National Advisory Board, Laguna Niguel, California, April 29-May 1, 1999.

"Informed Consent and Malpractice." Psychiatry Journal Club, University of Texas at Houston, Houston, TX , June 8, 1999

"Review Panels: Assessment Strategies - A Systematic Approach to Assessing People before Conditional Release." Presentation for Southeast Louisiana State Hospital staff, June 24, 1999.

"Correctional Psychiatry in Louisiana." Presentation to the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill. Lake Charles, LA, August 6, 1999.

"Violence and Aggression in Psychiatric Patients," Lincoln Regional Center, Lincoln, NE, August 19, 1999.

"Violence and Aggression in Psychiatric Patients," Dinner Symposium, Omaha, NE, August 19, 1999.

"Violence and Aggression in Psychiatric Patients", Dinner Symposium, Des Moines, IA, August 24, 1999.

"Malpractice, Informed Consent and Antipsychotic Medication," Cherokee Mental Health Institute, Cherokee, IA, August 25, 1999.

"Forensic Report Writing and Psychiatric Testimony." Presented to medical staff of ELMHS, Jackson, LA, September 14, 1999.

"Aggression and Violence in Psychiatric Patients." Clifton T. Perkins Hospital Center, Jessup, MD, September 21, 1999.

"Aggression and Violence in Psychiatric Patients." Kings Contrivance, Columbia, MD, September 21, 1999.

"Cycle of Urban Unemployment, Crime and Drugs." Moderator of this multimedia session at APA's 51st Institute on Psychiatric Services, New Orleans, LA, November 1, 1999.

"Violence and Psychosis in Correctional Settings." Presentation at APA's 51st Institute on Psychiatric Services, New Orleans, LA, November 2, 1999.

"Malpractice, Informed Consent," NW MO Psychiatric Rehab Center, St. Joseph, MO, November 18, 1999.

"Violence and Aggression in Psychiatric Patients," Dinner Symposium, Kansas City, MO, November 19, 1999.

"Testamentary Capacity," Roundtable discussion with residents of University of Kansas, Wichita, KS, December 13, 1999.

"Insanity Defense," Presentation to community based psychiatrists, Wichita, Kansas, December 13, 1999.

"Malpractice, Informed Consent." Grand Rounds Presentation at University of Kansas, Wichita, Kansas, December 14, 1999.

"Violence and Aggression in Psychiatric Patients." Dinner Symposium. Kingwood, Texas, February 9, 2000

"Violence and Aggression in Psychiatric Patients." Life Resource MHMR, Beaumont, Texas, February 10, 2000

"Ethics and Forensic Psychiatry." Dinner Symposium. The Palm, Houston, Texas, February 10, 2000.

"Violence and Aggression in Psychiatric Patients." San Quentin Prison, California, March 16, 2000.

"Violence and Aggression in Psychiatric Patients." Dinner Symposium, Sacramento, CA, March 16, 2000.

"Violence and Psychosis: Patterns and Themes of Aggression." Grand Rounds at Napa State Mental Hospital, Napa, CA, March 17, 2000.

"Violence and Psychosis: Patterns and Themes of Aggression." Presentation at Tulane University School of Medicine's Mardi Gras Symposium, New Orleans, LA, February 25, 2000.

“Informed Consent.” Presented to Tulane University Medical School’s Medical/Legal Society, March 22, 2000.

“Patterns and Themes of Aggression in the Mentally Ill.” Grand Rounds at Mercy Hospital and Clinics, Des Moines, Iowa, July 25, 2000.

“Patterns and Themes of Aggression in the Mentally Ill.” Grand Rounds at Minnesota Security Hospital, St. Peter, Minnesota, July 27, 2000.

“Patterns and Themes of Aggression in the Mentally Ill.” Grand Rounds at Anoka Treatment Center, Anoka, Minnesota, July 28, 2000.

"Patterns and Themes of Aggression in Correctional Psychiatry." Presentation to Annual CME Conference for Central NY Psychiatric Association, September 27, 2000.

"Patterns and Themes of Aggression in Correctional Psychiatry." Presentation to Riker's Island Psychiatric and Pharmacy Staff, September 28, 2000.

Draft AAPL Practice Guideline for NGRI Evaluations. Presentation of the Task Force, Vancouver, Canada, AAPL Meeting, October, 2000.

"Review Panel Process in Louisiana, Conditional Release Decision-Making." Presentation to National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors, Chandler, Arizona, December 5, 2000.

"A Procedure for the Restoration to Competency: A Critical Pathways Approach." Presentation to National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors, Chandler, Arizona, December 6, 2000.

“Doctors Who Kill: Privileging and Credentialing Gone Mad." Presentation at Tulane University School of Medicine’s Mardi Gras Symposium, Sex, Spies, & Videotape: Forensic Issues on the Fringe. New Orleans, LA, February 18, 2001.

“Doctors Who Kill: Privileging and Credentialing Gone Mad." Grand Rounds, Baylor University School of Medicine, Houston, Texas, March 7, 2001.

PUBLICATIONS:

Thompson JW, Ware M, Blashfield R.: "Psychotropic Medication and Priapism: A Comprehensive Review." *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry* 51:10. October 1990.

Barnard GW, Thompson JW, Freeman WC, Robbins L, Geis D, Hankins GC: "Competency to Stand Trial: Description and Initial Evaluation of a New

Computer-Assisted Assessment Tool (CADCOMP)." Bull Am Acad Psychiatry Law, Vol. 19 No. 4, 1991.

Beighley PS, Brown GR, Thompson JW: "DSM-III-R Reactive Psychosis Among Air Force Recruits." Journal of Clinical Psychiatry, September 1992.

Thompson JW, Calhoun C.: "Judicial Inferences of Insidious Proclivities Ruled Not Enough, Louisiana v. Perez." Newsletter American Acad Psych & the Law, Vol 20, #2, September 1995.

"Sexual Harassment and Discrimination: Implications for Behavior Change in the Workplace." Book Chapter submitted February 1999. Thompson JW, Ballina R.

Newman AW, Thompson JW. "Constitutional Rights and Hypnotically Elicited Testimony." Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law, Vol. 27, No. 1, 1999.

Thompson JW, Winstead DK: "Impulse Control Disorders", chapter of publication CURRENT DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT IN PSYCHIATRY, Appleton & Lange Publications, 2000.

Bertman LJ, Thompson JW, Waters, WF, Estupinan L, Martin J, Russell L: "Effect of an Individualized Treatment Protocol on Competency Restoration in Pretrial Forensic Patients." Submitted to Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law for publication, September 2000.

Thompson JW, Vazzana A: Curbside Consultation submitted to American Family Physician on scenario "A pregnant woman who is the victim of physical abuse." Submitted February 2001.

Newman AW, Thompson JW: "The Rise and Fall of Forensic Hypnosis in Criminal Investigation." Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law, Vol. 29, No. 1, 2001.

LeBourgeois HW III, Foreman TA, Thompson JW Jr: "Novel Cases: Malingering by Proxy in Animal." Submitted to Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law for publication, March 2001.

ABSTRACTS:

Barnard FW, Thompson JW, Freeman WC: "Competency to Stand Trial: Description and Initial Evaluation of a New Computer-Assisted Assessment Tool (CADCOMP)." AAPL Meeting, 1990.

Thompson JW, Giorgi-Guarnieri DL, Zonana HV, Ciccone JR: "Legislative and Judicial Approaches to Treatment Refusal." AAPL Meeting, October 1994.

Thompson JW, Calhoun CC, Janofsky JS, Vosburg C: "Judicial Decision Making after Foucha: State v. Perez." AAPL Meeting, October 1995.

Soong CS, Thompson JW: "Pathological Gambling in a Forensic Setting." AAPL Meeting, October 1995.

Norko MA, Weinstein, HC, Berger BR, Thompson JW, Hanson AL: "Psychiatry Between a Rock and a Barred Place." AAPL Meeting, October 1997.

Carrington D, Thompson J, Pena J: "Requests for Protective Custody of the Mentally Ill: the family's role in rapid intervention and the prevention of harm." APA, Toronto, Canada, June 1998.

Scott CS, Thompson, J, Utter, D, Cullen J, McDermott BE: "Death Penalty Evaluator - Examiner or Executioner?" Presentation at AAPL Meeting, Fairmont Hotel. New Orleans, LA, October 25, 1998.

Carrington D, McDermott BE, Thompson J: "Danger by Age: Analysis of Forensic Sex Offenders." Presentation at AAPL Meeting, Baltimore, MD, October 14, 1999.

McDermott BE, Thompson J: "Mad or Bad? The Release of Insanity Acquittes." Presentation at AAPL Meeting, Baltimore, MD, October 15, 1999.

PROFESSIONAL PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED:

Guest reviewer, Journal of Clinical Psychopharmacology, April 1992 to present.

Guest reviewer, Psychiatric Times, January 1993.

Guest reviewer, Journal of Clinical Psychiatry, August 1992 to present.

Associate Editor, AAPL Newsletters, 1998 to present.

Reviewer for Journal of American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law, 1998 to present.

FORENSIC COURT EXPERIENCE:

Qualified as expert witness twenty times in Florida State Courts and in Federal Court in Florida.

Appointed as an expert consultant by USAF at WHMC in 1990-1992.

Appointed by courts in Florida to render opinion on Competency to Stand Trial or Mental State at the Time of Offense in 75 to 100 legal cases.

Appointed by military courts to render opinion on Competency to Stand Trial and Mental State at Offense.

Qualified as an expert witness in Psychiatry in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania District Court, April 1992.

Over 300 Medical Evaluation Board Exams performed in Military to render psychiatric diagnosis, impairment and prognosis for Military members presented to Medical Evaluation boards.

Qualified as an expert in field of Forensic Psychiatry in civil and criminal court throughout Louisiana.

HONORS:

Air Force Commendation Medal for Outstanding Service, at Wilford Hall Medical Center, 1977-1982.

Chief Resident, Department of Psychiatry, University of Florida, 1989-1990.

Wilford Hall Medical Center Staff Physician of the Quarter October 31, 1991 to December 31, 1991.

Air Force Commendation Medal First Oak Leaf Cluster for Outstanding Service, Wilford Hall Medical Center, 1990-1992.

Listed in *The Best Doctors in America: Southeast Region (1996-1997, 1997-1998)*

Distinguished Visiting Professor, Wilford Hall Medical Center, San Antonio, TX, June 19-23, 1995.

Listed as one of city's best psychiatrists in *New Orleans Magazine*, August 1998.

Elected Fellow of the APA, December 2000.