

## *Sex Education in the Church*

### *It's Time for the Church to Step up to the Plate*

By Harold & Bette Gillogly

Several years ago, *HomeLife Magazine* published our survey questionnaire on what makes a healthy marriage. Here are the results they published: 33% of the over 2300 respondents stated the primary source for their sex education was “friends and the locker room.” That didn’t surprise us. 50% of these same people said that parents *should* be a child’s primary source of sex education. That didn’t surprise us. Another 33% (the second largest group) said they believed the *church* should be the primary source.<sup>1</sup> This did not surprise us either.

During the many years we’ve been involved in marriage enrichment, we have heard couples say again and again, “When it comes to teaching our children a Godly view of sex, we feel like a lone voice in the wilderness. Where is the church? We can’t fight this war alone.”

No wonder Christians feel overwhelmed and outnumbered. It’s the bottom of the ninth inning. The other side has been at bat for centuries, running up the score. And if the church does not step up to the plate soon, the ungodly voices of this world are sure to win.

These voices bombard us with lies on every side. Did you know that only 6% of the sexual activity displayed by the media (TV, books and movies) are between married couples? Six percent! And in a research project by John Mark Dempsey and Tom Reichert, they found that 85% of sex in movies is between unmarried people.<sup>2</sup> The message: *Sex in marriage is*

*boring. The only exciting sex is between unmarried couples.*

Christian or not, more and more couples are believing this message and living together outside of marriage. Thirty years ago, there were only 523,000 unmarried couples living together in the U.S. In ten years, this figure tripled to 1,589,000, and redoubled by 1991 to 3,000,000.<sup>3</sup> These numbers are very troubling. But even more troubling is the fact that only one-sixth of all young adults explicitly disapprove of “shacking up.”<sup>4</sup> Christians are swallowing the lies of the ungodly voices of this world hook, line and sinker!

Who is proclaiming the truth to them – that living together before marriage will severely harm them; that they will experience more sexual problems, not less; that their odds of divorce will be 50% higher than couples who remain pure until marriage?<sup>5</sup> Who is helping them understand that God’s sequence, *...a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and [then] they will become one flesh*” (Genesis 2:24) is the way to a healthy marriage – a healthy relationship?

**It's time for every Bible believing, Bible teaching church to step up to the plate.**

Because so many Christian couples learned about sex in “all the wrong places,” they often feel inadequate to talk about it as a couple and to teach their children about sex. Indeed, most couples in the church today do not even *know* God’s perspective of sex. The

church has never taught them that God views married sex as pure and undefiled. *Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed [married sex, intercourse] kept pure.* (Hebrews 13:4 NIV) If Moms and Dads don’t know what the Author of sex thinks about sex, and can’t even talk about it between themselves, then how can they communicate the truth to their children? They need their church to be on their side, to be their ally in this battle for the hearts and minds...and bodies... of their children.

Pornography is another weapon our enemy the devil is using to wage an assault on the Christian family. Years ago, Promise Keepers conducted a survey at one of their events. 50% of the 50,000 men responding admitted to viewing pornography the week before they came to the Promise Keeper event.<sup>6</sup> Those who have extensive experience in this field say that between 25% and 35% of the men sitting in church on any Sunday morning are struggling with pornography.<sup>7</sup> Most of the men we have counseled have told us similar stories of getting into pornography in their early teens or even pre-adolescent years. It’s not enough for the church to be on the defense against pornography. We must take pro-active, offensive measures to protect families from this scourge. Proverbs 6:27 warns, “Can a man scoop fire [immorality] into his lap without his clothes being burned?” When laps are ablaze, we must put out the fires, *and* we must also convince the naïve to stay away from fire in the first place.

## Sex Education (cont')

Where has the church been in this battle? For the most part... invisible. What has been its message? Silence – and through its silence, the message conveyed that sex is much too dirty to talk about. Such evasive measures might not be so harmful if it were not for the fact that our enemy – the evil one – is in full battle array and declared all-out war on morality years ago. He's been fighting like crazy – while the church has been avoiding.

Several years ago, a pastor wrote us a scathing letter regarding the chapter on sex in our curriculum book *Achieving God's Design for Marriage*. He wrote, "Just imagine! What if some teenager got ahold of your book and read that chapter?" Well, we thought, they would find out what the Author of sex has to say about sex, which is very different from the lies they've probably already heard. But the "innocent" teens in his church were left with only the lies. He sent our book back.

A while ago, we were scheduled to speak in a church one Sunday evening on the topic of "Romance and Sex." Several weeks before, an elderly lady scolded the pastor for having "that word (s-e-x)" in the bulletin announcing our topic. She was so insistent, he dropped "that word," but still had us come and speak. We don't know what kind of flack he got afterwards, but we do know that God started a work of healing in some couples' relation-

ships that night because one courageous pastor broke the silence.

It's time for every Bible believing, Bible teaching church to step up to the plate. How can churches do this?

Here are some suggestions:

1. Have a GTO Romance and Married Love seminar at the church for all couples. (Think of the potential for outreach in this one-day, four-part seminar! For more information, see our website [www.marriages.net](http://www.marriages.net) and give us a call at 615-283-8363.)
2. Have a seminar for single adults at the church to help them understand their sexuality and God's plan for healthy relationships.
3. Have Biblical books and CDs/tapes on sex available in the church library. (Dr. Ed Wheat and Clifford and Joyce Penner have excellent tape/CD sets. Come to think of it, we have a CD set as well. And our "Experiencing Sexual Intimacy" 7-part webinar series is available on our website [www.marriages.net](http://www.marriages.net).)
4. Have classes for teens about sex from God's perspective – *why* He commands sexual purity. (The Southern Baptist "True Love Waits" program is terrific, as well as Josh McDowell's "Why Wait?")
5. Have classes for parents on how to talk with their children about sex.

Perhaps you can think of some other suggestions that would help churches fulfill their responsibilities in this area. If you do, we would like to hear them.

Please mail them to: GTO Marriage Ministries, 2436 Haskell Dr, Antioch TN 37013 or email them to [gtocentral@marriages.net](mailto:gtocentral@marriages.net).

**Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold...**

We close with Romans 12:2 (Phillips' Paraphrase): *Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let God remake you so that your whole attitude of mind is changed. Thus you will prove in practice that the will of God is good, acceptable to him and perfect.* We the church have for too long allowed the world to squeeze God's people into its own mold in this area of sexuality, and we are reaping the consequences. It's time for the church to step up to the plate and courageously teach what the Creator of Sex says about His creation.

<sup>1</sup> "And the Survey Says..." HomeLife Magazine, August 2000.

<sup>2</sup> "Movie Sex Isn't Marrying Kind," USA TODAY, 11/10/00.

<sup>3</sup> Marital Status and Living Arrangements, Census Bureau, March 1991.

<sup>4</sup> National Survey of Families and Households, U of Wisconsin.

<sup>5</sup> Marriage Savers, Michael J. McManus, Zondervan. 1993.

<sup>6</sup> Promise Keepers, Denver, CO

<sup>7</sup> One In Christ, Inc., Alachua, FL

If you would like to order the above resources or receive more information contact:

**GTO Marriage Ministries**, 2436 Haskell Drive, Antioch, TN 37013

TOLL-FREE order line: **1-800-546-5486** or order online at [www.marriages.net](http://www.marriages.net)

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