

National Physicians Center for Family Resources. *Sex Q&A: Kids' Questions—Parents' Answers.* Birmingham, AL: National Physicians Center for Family Resources, 2002. 80 pp. Glossary. Resources. With accompanying compact disk *Prescriptions for Parents: A Physicians' Guide to Adolescence and Sex.*

This booklet admirably provides parents with the necessary factual information needed for parental guidance in transmitting the understanding of sexuality-related issues to their children. (This reviewer however has an important reservation [see below in the discussion of the accompanying compact disk].) The following reviews the booklet and the compact disk as separate entities.

The booklet *Sex Q&A: Kids' Questions—Parents' Answers* is a collaborative effort of over forty physicians. Teenage pregnancies, abortions, sexually transmitted diseases, and disrupted lives are identified as the social and medical ills of adolescents in the new millennium. What is unusual about this booklet is the positive attitude towards abstinence. Abstinence is correctly portrayed throughout as the only totally effective and rewarding means to the prevention of pregnancy as well as the social and medical ills that can afflict adolescents who engage in premarital sexual intercourse.

Many scientific surveys have shown that American parents and their adolescents overwhelmingly agree that sexual issues should be taught in the home. However, over one-third of adolescents recently surveyed said that they have never had a helpful conversation about sex with their parents. Thus in the majority of cases, the epidemic of social and medical ills is directly linked to inadequate or erroneous sexual education of adolescents. The failure of parents and children to communicate is identified as the common etiology contributing to various means of destruction of wholesome lives for far too many adolescents. This booklet presents the facts in a user-friendly manner.

Sex Q&A opens with a helpful section titled "Ten Pointers for Parents." This section facilitates parental discussions about sex,

pointing out the importance of beginning appropriate discussions in early childhood and showing how to extend these discussions throughout adolescence. The main body of the booklet provides the necessary factual information on 1) puberty, 2) reproduction, 3) sexuality, 4) sexually transmitted diseases, and 5) emotional and social issues of adolescence. Information in these areas, as related to sex education, is presented in a straightforward manner that is elegantly designed to be factual while illustrating the means to minimize the embarrassment that generally accompanies parent-teenager conversation about the so-called facts of life.

The format of the booklet is excellent. It contains four line diagrams of male and female anatomy with labeled body parts. There is a glossary of eighty biological and medical terms appropriately defined in understandable lay terminology. The terms are highlighted each time they appear in the text. The booklet also lists recommended resources for further information. Addresses, phone numbers, fax numbers, and web sites are given for each recommended resource.

The compact disk titled *Prescriptions for Parents: A Physicians' Guide to Adolescence and Sex* contains audio, graphics, and textual information on six topics. Each topic is verbally introduced by a specialist. Dr. Laura Schlessinger, radio/TV personality and author, introduces topic number one, Communication. Dr. John Rosemond, family psychologist and columnist on parenting, introduces topic number two, Character. Physicians of appropriate specialties introduce topics number three, Puberty, number four, Reproduction, number five, Sexuality, and number six, STDs. Due to the graphic images, textual content, and the medical, social, and moral issues associated with the above topics, parental discretion is advised. Parents should review the content of the disk before viewing it with their adolescent.

The information provided will contribute to teenagers' appreciation of the beauty and rewards of reserving sexual relations for marriage and will inform them of the health and social consequences that accompany premarital sex. The section on Reproduction

includes subsections dealing with pregnancy, contraceptives, and abortion. In Reproduction's subsection on pregnancy, three crucial points are emphasized: 1) pregnancy begins when an egg cell is fertilized by a sperm cell, 2) abstinence, when compared with contraceptive methods, is the only way to completely avoid pregnancy, 3) none of the contraceptive methods protect against STDs. However, a vital segment in this compact disk falls victim to "The Silencing of Science," i.e., the alteration of the terminology of human embryology for cultural and political reasons. In the Reproduction subsection on contraceptives, the mechanisms of action of birth control pills, drug implants, drug injections, emergency contraceptives, and intrauterine devices are portrayed solely as contraceptive, even though this section states as scientifically known that all of these methods alter the endometrial lining and prevent implantation of the embryo. Prevention of the implantation of an embryo is an abortifacient action on an ongoing pregnancy, not a contraceptive action of preventing fertilization. The scientifically correct definition of contraception is the prevention of fertilization. Drug-induced destruction of an embryo by preventing its uterine implantation is an abortion.

The reproduction subsection on abortion gives clear and concise information on the methods of abortion, complications of abortion, and alternatives to abortion. To access the information on these topics, one must click on the appropriate tab, i.e., methods, complications, or alternatives. What is truly unique about *Prescriptions for Parents: A Physicians' Guide to Adolescence and Sex* is that under the topic of the complications of abortion, the link between abortion and the increased incidence in the development of breast cancer is explained well on a pharmacologic and pathologic basis. Furthermore, in discussing the alternatives to abortion, this section mentions the counseling services provided by crisis pregnancy centers and Care Net, in addition to adoption assistance available through both private and state agencies.

Further information on the above booklet and CD-ROM, both of which promote

positive health messages regarding adolescent sexuality suitable for use in a family environment, can be found on the internet site <http://www.physicianscenter.org> under the home page heading Order Resources.

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Pennock, Robert T., ed. *Intelligent Design Creationism and Its Critics: Philosophical, Theological, and Scientific Perspectives*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, A Bradford Book, 2001. xx + 806 pp. Bibliography. Index.

The first thing one notices about this book is that the title is undoubtedly tendentious. Intelligent Design (ID) theorists insist that their arguments should not be identified with creationism (i.e., with religion), but should be judged on their own merits. But the editor of this book has ignored this plea, and perhaps prejudices the discussion from the beginning. This prejudice is confirmed in the odd opening essay of the book by philosopher Barbara Forrest. Forrest provides a very long-winded overview of the motives, political maneuverings, and strategizing of ID theorists, thus blurring the distinction between the motives and worldview of ID theorists and their actual arguments for their philosophical and scientific claims. Forrest is so keen to point out that ID theorists are motivated by "religious zeal" that she comes very close to ad hominem attack. One wonders how Pennock and Forrest would react to a book called "Atheistic Evolution and Its Critics," or to an essay on the political maneuverings, strategizing, and motives ("the atheistic zeal"?) of those who support evolution. The point is that these background matters are irrelevant to an assessment of ID arguments,