

the younger politicians with the Romney orientation to move into the wings — and we may not have that much time to spare.

In an era that desperately needs the best men the country has to offer, George Romney would have been an outstanding President. Those of us who had high hopes for his Presidency now can only hope that his influence as a Cabinet member will be strongly felt in the White House.

SACRED OR SECRET?

Stanton L. Hovey and Bruce G. Rogers

Sacred or Secret? A Parents' Handbook for Sexuality Guidance of Their Children. By Ernest Eberhard, Jr. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1967. Pp. 123. \$2.50

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Sacred or Secret is one of the first books, written specifically for the L.D.S. audience, to tackle the problem of sex education in the home. It is, according to the author, "an attempt to give all parents some workable, effective guidelines . . ." (p. 8) in sexuality education.

The term "sexuality" is used throughout the book to denote a "full, positive, divine meaning," rather than "the narrow physical sense in which the word sex is used and portrayed by a sensual and perverted world . . ." (p. 21). While one cannot quarrel with such a virtuous outlook, it does illustrate the horns of the dilemma on which the author is caught. On the one hand, he desires to give accurate, practical instruction to his audience, avoiding where possible abstract platitudes difficult to translate into concrete action. But on the other hand, his potential buying audience contains a sizeable number of people to whom the words "sex education" are almost synonymous with "communist conspiracy." This dilemma (which is faced by any behavioral scientist writing on secular topics for the L.D.S. audience) is evident throughout Eberhard's book. While trying to be plain to the reader, he appears to write at length to justify his intentions.

The first four chapters are essentially an exposition of the sacredness, not secretness, of sexual urges and behavior. Throughout the book, the author continues to dissociate the sacred from the secret, and sexuality from the biological aspects of sex. Mr. Eberhard has numerous quotations from the General Authorities and admonitions of his own to use family councils, to visit the Temple regularly, and to utilize the full program of the Church. The author should be given credit for taking L.D.S. sex education out of the realm of negative morality and placing it on a positive and constructive plane. The reader is encouraged to acquire a healthy attitude toward his own sexuality and that of his children.

All readers will find many new insights along with some interesting interpretations of Mormon practice. But the behavioral scientist may be dissatisfied with the treatment of several issues, and the layman may have difficulty with some principles developed without sufficient concrete examples. Future authors writing in this area might do well to consider the format

used by Haim Ginott in his book, *Between Parent and Child*, wherein he used parent-child dialogues to illustrate his main points.

Mr. Eberhard believes that sexual relations should serve more than a procreational function, fulfilling important marital and personal needs as well. While some readers may infer from this discussion that he favors birth control, there is actually no direct treatment of this topic.

The fifth chapter, entitled "A Proper Vocabulary," is the only one dealing directly with fundamental biological aspects of sexuality. It consists of a list of words (e.g., *vulva*, *penis*) and brief (usually one sentence) definitions. Inasmuch as many readers may not have an adequate background in this area, it is unfortunate that the author should consider this coverage sufficient. And those who can follow these definitions may find them superfluous — too elementary to give any added understanding.

Eberhard believes that the details of sexual instruction should depend on the age and maturity of the child; however, he is not always clear as to differences in approaches at different ages. For example, he writes, "children should be taught only the beautiful and positive aspects of sexuality. It is harmful to discuss, in the presence of girls the pain, difficulties, and dangers of childbirth" (p. 61). Later, the end of childhood is defined as the onset of pubescence, and one might assume that a different approach is called for at that time, although there may be some question as to the advisability of teaching a viewpoint which will have to undergo considerable modification later on. We believe it might have been helpful for the author to have supplemented his view with a discussion of the important differences between children and adolescents which would necessitate this change in approach. One chapter contains answers to typical questions asked by children about sexual matters, similar to those in other books on sex education. However, the strength of Eberhard's position is the integration of L.D.S. values and theology in his sample answers.

While the L.D.S. parent cannot deny the truth of the proposition that sex is part of God's plan, he may wonder about some of the inferences derived therefrom. Consider the following:

Sexuality should always be presented to children from God's perspective. It should never be presented in a biological or limited frame of reference which leaves out its function in the eternal plan of man's exaltation (p. 81).

Yet the Church is quite content to allow secular institutions to teach its youth other subjects without a theological perspective. We note that the Church does not maintain a medical school, but relies upon state or private institutions. Hopefully, the L.D.S. medical student will master the facts of medical education and use them within the perspective of gospel ideals. How should the school, Church, and family complement each other in teaching the facts of human reproduction? While this is a major topic of concern within the Mormon community, Eberhard unfortunately never actually comes to grip with it.

In a chapter entitled "Special Problems," Eberhard discusses genital play, masturbation, seminal emission, menstruation, and venereal disease. After pointing out that masturbation does not lead to insanity or physical or mental degeneration, he adds, "Continued masturbation is, of course, a sign of major social maladjustment. . . . Excessive masturbation is certainly a sign of infantilism" (p. 108). This certainty as to the significance of masturbation is certainly not shared by all authorities in the field, inasmuch as there is relatively little research data available on the subject. In regard to seminal emissions the author points out that "The Creator provided [the physical desire for relief of physiological pressure] in the form of a spontaneous emission which generally occurs during sleep (p. 110). Some adolescents may want to know why it is all right to have an emission during sleep but not all right if they help it along before sleep. Eberhard's complete avoidance of such a question poses one of the major limitations of the book: the most likely questions asked by a youth (though probably not in the context of a seminary class) are not anticipated by the author. A discussion of morality should be added to such analysis, but cannot take the place of it.

One may question how much sex instruction should be carried in Church books. Perhaps one could argue that Church bookstores are not the place for secular topics. If a person wants a textbook approach to finance, history, mathematics, etc., he goes to the appropriate secular books. In Church books he seeks moral and spiritual philosophy. Should we likewise leave sex education to the secular teachers? Or will the Church see fit to encourage curriculum development in this area by L.D.S. authors for Seminary and Family Home Evening use? *Sacred and Secret* appears to indicate the latter direction.