

## Kentuckians introduced to sex ed materials

By Ken Walker  
State Correspondent

LOUISVILLE—Sex. Why are so many Christians unwilling to tell their children that it's good and part of God's plan—within the confines of marriage?

Karl Babb posed that question, and many others, at the Kentucky Baptist Convention's annual Haworth Conference Jan. 28-29 at Melbourne Heights Baptist Church in Louisville.

"There's a fear that if we talk to our children about this, they will become sexually active," said Babb, a staff member with the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's family ministry department. "Well, they're already talking about it more than we

know, and our silence is causing problems."

To emphasize the point, he displayed a quote from a commentator on NBC-TV's "Dateline:" "Remember, by the time your kids hit 12 or 13, they've already seen a decade's worth of sex in the media. So if you don't teach them what you want them to learn, they'll simply learn it flipping channels."

"Christian Sex Education" was the theme of this year's conference, designed by the KBC's family ministry department to teach church leaders how to train parents to talk with their children about sex.

The centerpiece of the campaign is a six-volume Christian sex education series published last summer by the

Sunday School Board. The books are designed for young children (ages 4-6), middle age (7-9), pre-adolescents (10-12) and teen-agers.

The series includes a guide for parents and church leaders, plus one for couples titled "Celebrating Sex In Your Marriage."

Babb said the top market for the series so far has been young parents, with more than 4,000 sets sold in eight months.

"The positive response we've had has been amazing," he said. "Parents have told us, 'We're in desperate straits and we've needed this material.' They say they buy the sets so their children can grow up with (the books)."

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## New sex education materials introduced

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Jimmy Hester, a Sunday School Board editor who worked with the series throughout its development, reviewed the extensive planning, evaluation and field testing behind the product.

The material had to meet both sound biblical and educational guidelines, he said, and respond to present-day family situations. It is aimed at building healthy individual and family behavior, he added.

The conference opened with a series of small-group discussions about various topics, aimed at exploring some embarrassing questions or situations.

One exercise, "It's Everywhere You Turn," asked participants to list examples of sexual messages in newspapers and on billboards, radio, movie marquees, bumper stickers and T-shirts.

A few observations from partici-

pants:

■ Some parents will go to great lengths to avoid serious problems, such as the father who insisted his teen-age daughter's pregnancy was the result of "immaculate conception."

■ One pastor reported having seen a bumper sticker on condom use declaring, "Just Double Up."

■ A youth minister noted some parents are reluctant to discuss sex because it never was talked about in their childhood.

Though the turnout of 25 was small, those who attended agreed the conference was worthwhile.

"This affirmed my feelings that we need to train parents," said Jim McMurtrie, minister of music and youth at First Baptist Church in Madisonville. "Parents are groping for any kind of helps. They don't have the tools. And this is going to put it back in the home, where it belongs."

First Baptist already has promoted the series and is planning parental training sessions. The youth will attend a three-day "True Love Waits" retreat Feb. 19-21, with a recognition dinner later for those who sign abstinence pledges.

At Springdale Baptist Church in Louisville, Youth Pastor Tracy Turner introduced the material to parents Feb. 6. Teens will be taught from the "True Love Waits" material this month, he said, with a pledge card service slated the second Wednesday of March.

Allison Becker, whose husband, Bill, is associate pastor at Auburndale Baptist Church in Louisville, said she will use the training for either weekly sessions or a weekend parental retreat.

"I see such a need for Christian sex education," she said. "We will discuss these issues. We have the series in our library and will let them know it is available."