

THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS

SEMINAR FOCUSES ON LIFE, PHILOSOPHY OF HENRI NOUWEN, C4

AN INCREASING NUMBER OF CHRISTIAN AUTHORS ARE SAYING
LET'S WRITE ABOUT SEXBY ANN BYLE
THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS

THE LIST

GRAND RAPIDS — The bedroom doors are flung wide open. Sheets and blankets are thrown off the bed, lingerie is strewn across the floor. The participants in this scenario are standing around with happy, even astonished grins on their faces and Bibles on their bedside tables.

Sex and Bibles in the same room? You betcha. Sex is smack dab in the Christian spotlight these days, thanks to a spate of books released by evangelical publishers such as Zondervan, Baker Publishing Group and Kregel Publishing, all based in Grand Rapids.

These books are moving the sexual fun and dysfunction of evangelical readers out of the dark bedroom into broad daylight for all to see.

In fact, Grand Rapids seems to be at the epicenter of the trend. In Publisher's Weekly, the bible for book retailers, salespeople and publishers, religion book review editor Jana Reiss writes that today's sex books "are more personal, even confessional, and often quite candid about their authors' own failings. What's more, they are increasingly open to discussing specific topics that just a decade ago were mostly taboo."

In an interview, Reiss said, "Interestingly, the revolution in CBA (Christian Booksellers Association) sex books still seems to have its locus in Grand Rapids, Mich., where... Christian publishing houses remain pioneers in exploring the topic. The jury is still out about whether this is merely a coincidence or a direct result of the cold Michigan winters."

Consider the titles of recent books:

- "When Two Become One: Enhancing Sexual Intimacy in Marriage" (Revell, of Baker Publishing Group) by Christopher and Rachel McCluskey

- "Sex and the Soul of a Woman" (Zondervan) by Paula Rinehart

- "Sexual Intimacy in Marriage" (Kregel) by William Cutrer and Sandra Glahn

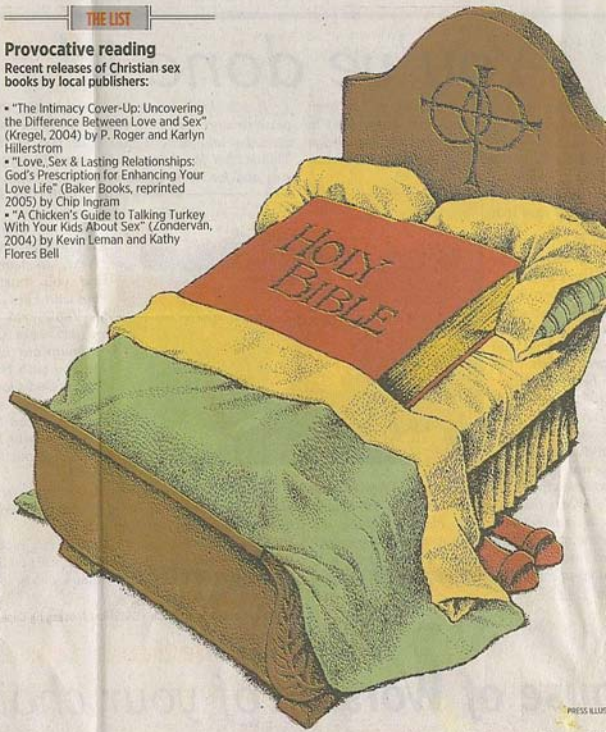
- "Questions You Can't Ask Your Mama About Sex" (Zondervan) by Craig Gross and Mike Foster

Jim Kregel, president of Kregel Bookstores, has been in the bookselling business since 1972. He was around when "Intended for Pleasure: Sex Technique and Sexual Fulfillment in Christian Marriage" (Borvall) by Ed

Provocative reading

Recent releases of Christian sex books by local publishers:

- "The Intimacy Cover-Up: Uncovering the Difference Between Love and Sex" (Kregel, 2004) by P. Roger and Karlyn Hillerstrom
- "Love, Sex & Lasting Relationships: God's Prescription for Enhancing Your Love Life" (Baker Books, reprinted 2005) by Chip Ingram
- "A Chicken's Guide to Talking Turkey With Your Kids About Sex" (Zondervan, 2004) by Kevin Leman and Kathy Flores Bell



Lewis Smedes (Eerdmans, 1976).

"Back then, there wasn't big shelf area for human sexuality," Kregel said. "The books toed the line as far as controversy, but I didn't sense any hesitancy to stock books like this. They offered a fresh, new view on human sexuality, and people welcomed that."

"Intended for Pleasure" has been

and "Sheet Music" (Tyndale, 2003), a steady seller at area bookstores.

"If there's one group of people who should talk candidly and enthusiastically about sex, it ought to be those who believe the Creator created this wonderful pleasure for two people," said Leman, also co-author of "A Chicken's Guide to Talking Turkey With Your Kids About Sex" (Zonder-

Zondervan. "The trend is a vanished truth about sex identity from a Christian perspective."

No kidding. Books such as Questions, Real Answers (Zondervan) by Dr. Louis McBurney reveal that Christianity is looking for truthful answers in all its forms. The pain of the Real Sex column in M

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