

# NOVEMBER 8, 2010 PCN FORUM-SELLING SEXINESS TO CHILDREN BY BILL DOHERTY

## WHAT DREW YOU TO THIS TALK?

Dr. Doherty began the forum by asking "What drew you to this talk?" Examples cited included the desensitization of what is proper, the impact of advertising, and the desensitization of teenage boys to sex and the effect on their relationship with teenage girls.

## WHAT ARE EXAMPLES OF OVERSEXUALIZATION?

Dr. Doherty then asked for examples of oversexualization. Examples cited included how girls dress, halloween costumes and clothing marketed to girls, advertising in magazines, billboards and on t.v., t.v. shows, including Disney Channel, music lyrics, how dolls are dressed, forms of dancing and rise of plastic surgery among teens.

## WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN OUR CULTURE TO DRIVE THIS?

Dr. Doherty then asked why this has become such a problem and why it is being driven younger and younger. Reasons cited included more economic prosperity, indulgent parents, children becoming decision makers and specific marketing driven toward them, adolescents maturing earlier, lower moral standards in media (sex and violence creeping from cable t.v. to broadcast t.v.), breakdown of nuclear family and community, availability of pornography and that people that speak out against this are marginalized.

## WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS?

**CONSEQUENCES FOR GIRLS:** Dr. Doherty divided the audience into groups and asked for consequences. Consequences for girls included the loss of innocence and childhood, low self esteem, dressing like cookie cutters and not understanding how the way they dress affects how people perceive them.

**CONSEQUENCES FOR BOYS:** Examples cited included that they won't know wrong from right, expectation of sex and dichotomy between sex and relationships.

**CONSEQUENCES FOR FATHERS:** Examples cited included fear of making compliments, fear of being seen as too authoritative and wanting to be friends with children, and hard to challenge status quo so fathers give up and hand over authority/rule making to mothers.

**CONSEQUENCES FOR MOTHERS:** Examples cited included navigating the fallout of trying to guide our kids through this, authority being handed off from father, being perceived as not cool if we don't let them do it, and how to prepare kids for relationships.

**CONSEQUENCES FOR SOCIETY:** Examples cited included earlier sexual activity, more teen pregnancy, sex sells creating more materialism, anorexia and loss and lack of respect.

## WHY DO WE GO ALONG WITH IT?

Dr. Doherty then asked why we let it happen. Examples cited included peer pressure, we don't have to agree, fighting an uphill battle, and wanting to be friends with our kids.

## WHAT CAN WE DO IN OUR HOMES?

Dr. Doherty then asked what we can do at home to try and stop or limit this. He said we should:

Be prepared for what is coming

Be explicit about values

Make policies that you explain and stick to

Speak up to retailers and marketers

Foster community connections (spoke about parent groups creating web sites to battle sexualization and craziness of birthday parties)