

The Pervasive issues and specific theological problems which fall under the Ten Deficiencies
By Archbishop Alfred Hughes

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Archbishop Hughes noted that a great number of the publishers have mentioned that they would appreciate further guidance so that their writers might avoid some of the required changes which arise in Subcommittee reports. He reminded the publishers that in 1997, Archbishop Buechlein identified ten recurring deficiencies in both the elementary and secondary level texts. Although great strides have been made towards improving the quality of textbooks, in some ways these deficiencies are still present. Archbishop Hughes proceeded to walk the publishers through each of the Ten Doctrinal Deficiencies identifying where there has been significant improvement and where there remains room for improvement.

1) There is insufficient attention to the Trinity and the Trinitarian structure of Catholic beliefs and teachings. Archbishop Hughes explained that at the time of Archbishop Buechlein's presentation, the understanding and significance of the Trinitarian structure was not always understood or appreciated in texts. This is now very present in the textbooks brought before the Subcommittee. The second issue in this item pertained to Trinitarian language. This is also an issue which no longer needs addressing. A related issue is still occurring, although not in every text. In a laudable effort, some texts attempt to root the love of family members for each other in the Trinitarian love of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for one another. However it needs to be clear that in the Holy Trinity, it is the sharing of their common divine nature with one another that grounds the love that is theirs for one another. Participation in the love among the divine persons of the Trinity is the active love that grounds family love.

2) There is an obscured presentation of the centrality of Christ in salvation history and an insufficient emphasis on the divinity of Christ. Archbishop Hughes noted that in years past, there was an imbalance on the relationship between the divinity and the humanity of Christ. This has been addressed, but once in a while in attempt to emphasize the humanity of Christ, texts can slip into referring to Christ as a human person. There is also a tendency at times to equate the redemption that Christ offers with a return to the state of paradise. In paradise, Adam and Eve enjoyed both original holiness and original justice. Original justice is not restored through the salvation offered by Christ.

3) Another trend is the indistinct treatment of the ecclesial context of Catholic beliefs and magisterial teachings. Archbishop Hughes noted that this issue has been addressed and tentative language is no longer commonly found in texts reviewed by the Subcommittee. There has occasionally been a lack of clarity on the teaching of the infallibility of the Pope and the infallibility of the bishops in union with the Pope. There is occasionally a weak presentation on the interrelationship between Scripture and Tradition. There is one Font of Revelation expressed in two distinct ways, through both Scripture and Tradition. The Magisterium is not a source of revelation, but it does have the gift to interpret authentically and reliably the content of revelation.

4) **There is an inadequate sense of a distinctly Christian anthropology.** Archbishop Hughes reported that there is now a better presentation of Christian anthropology. Something that remains an issue is a lack of clarity on the teaching of both the theological virtues and the cardinal virtues.

5) **There is a trend that gives insufficient emphasis on God's initiative in the world with a corresponding overemphasis on human action.** Archbishop Hughes stated that this has been very well addressed in current textbooks; however, if a text develops its presentation of catechetical teaching from the vantage point of humankind, it can understate the divine intervention of grace.

6) **We have detected an insufficient recognition of the transforming effects of grace.** Archbishop Hughes noted that there can be an unclear distinction between sanctifying grace and actual grace. The Subcommittee has also found in a few texts an unclear or untrue teaching on Martin Luther's theological positions in contrast to Catholic teaching on justification and merit.

7) **We have found a pattern of inadequate presentation of the sacraments.** It was noted that there has been an enormous development in this area. Occasionally there is a lack of clear teaching on the Rite of Baptism and how Baptism is related to the Sacrament of Confirmation. It is important that the formula and action of Baptism be communicated in catechetical texts, because in a case of emergency any Christian can administer Baptism. There can also be a lack of clear teaching on the possibility of salvation for the unbaptized. The *Catechism* is very clear on this matter. There is a tendency in our own times to express over optimistically the possibility of salvation without Baptism without expressing the conditions of the *Catechism*. There needs to be a desire to do God's will and a desire to develop a good conscience with whatever help is available. The *Catechism* has clear teaching on the salvation of unbaptized infants.

8) **We have seen a pattern of deficiency in the teaching on original sin and sin in general.** In the past, there was a pattern of deficiency on the teaching of original sin and sin in general. Some texts still do not give explicit teaching on the difference between mortal and venial sins.

9) **We have found a meager exposition of Christian moral life.** Related to this deficiency, the Subcommittee finds that many texts provide insufficient distinction between natural law and revealed law. It is important to be attentive to giving instruction about the formation of good conscience. The Subcommittee has found that this is not always fully done and it is not always done with full accuracy. It is also important to recognize that there can be culpable ignorance; we can be guilty of not knowing what is right or wrong if we have not done our part to form our conscience.

10) **Finally, we have found an inadequate presentation of eschatology.** It was noted that this has been partially remedied in current texts, but there is a need to be alert to this issue. We live in a secular culture and the whole purpose of Christian life is to live life in this world so that we can live life eternally with God in the next.