



CONSERVATIVE CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE



## POSITION PAPER ON PORNOGRAPHY AND OBSCENITY

The Conservative Congregational Christian Conference is aware of the widespread and harmful influence which pornography increasingly is having on our country. It has become clear to us that we can no longer remain idle while promoters of pornography contribute to the decline of the morals of society by advocating a lifestyle which is contrary to Biblical teaching, is harmful to the family, and is ultimately destructive to individuals.

The word pornography is derived from two Greek words: *porne* which means “harlot,” and *graphein* which means “to write.” Originally, then, pornography referred to “the writing of harlots” (*pornographos*). Today it refers to any explicit depictions of erotic behavior (as in pictures, photographs, writings, or books) which are intended to cause sexual excitement.

Pornography has its roots in the abuse of sexual expression. The New Testament makes it abundantly clear that a cardinal vice of the pagan world was impurity and immorality. The Apostle Paul pays special attention to the sinful behavior characteristic of the Gentile world, particularly the sins of immorality and homosexuality (Romans 1:24-27). Sexual sins head up a list of sins which characterized a world that had sunk deep into the depravity of the flesh and of the spirit: the most fundamental sin being the rejection of God and His righteous ways (Romans 1:21,25,28,32). Today, in our secular and humanistic society, the Biblically condemned forms of sexual immorality are not only tolerated but openly promoted as “alternate life styles” which should be accepted.

Standing in sharp contrast are the Scriptures which condemn fornication (Eph. 5:3; Col. 3:5), adultery (Lev. 20:10; Rom. 1:24), incest (Lev. 18:6; I Cor. 5:1), homosexuality (Lev. 20:13; Rom. 1:24), bestiality (Lev. 18:23), and prostitution (Lev. 19:29; Eph. 5:5). Also the Old Testament makes it clear that the presence of evil sexual practices was a major cause for God’s judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:5,13). Scripture tells us “it is God’s will that you should be sanctified; that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God...” (I Thess. 4:3-5).

Pornography is one form of depraved man’s insistence on explicit sexual activity. Pornography is known to visually depict, and by inference, to approve and encourage, most if not all of the earlier mentioned forms of sexual immorality. Pornography is especially degrading to women since most pornography involves the use of women in subordinate and degrading roles for the purpose of sexual exploitation. In many cases it fosters the mentality which considers women as only objects which exist to gratify the selfish and sometimes sadistic desires of men. Pornography is a form of profound hostility toward women.

In recent years, pornography has moved rapidly beyond adult scenes involving nudity and heterosexual intercourse to scenes which depict homosexuality, bestiality, and group sex orgies. Perhaps even worse is its exploitation of children. Our sensitivities are outraged at the degrading roles which children are called upon to perform. Often the result is permanent emotional damage to the child, and in some cases, death by murder. Today, “Kiddie Porn” is a fast growing and profitable segment of the pornography industry. Its focus is on children at an early or pre-adolescent age. For the sake of these children, this outrageous exploitation must stop.

Less explicit, but with the potential to be just as morally harmful, are the activities of our film and television industries. Too often the Judeo-Christian values which call for sexual faithfulness to one partner in marriage are either ignored or distorted. Too often the media seems determined to present adultery, incest, prostitution, and in some cases, homosexuality, as the normal way of life. The positive portrayal of Christians is also a

missing ingredient in an industry which often claims to simply reflect that which is social reality or that which the public wants.

Through the use of “soft core” pornography, the television and film industries promote sexual values which are blatantly anti-Christian. Furthermore, many of the life-styles and values which are modeled on the screen work against the traditional community values of society. Media values are often in direct

contradiction to those life styles and values which are modeled and proclaimed in the Scriptures as examples of holy living. Such holy living is pleasing to God and healthy for us.

We are deeply alarmed at the spread of all levels of pornography as modern technology is utilized. With the rise in popularity of cable television, video cassette recording, “dial-a-porn”, and personal computers, the distribution of pornography is made even easier. As an industry, it is now a multibillion dollar business and is often linked to organized crime. This expanded access means increased availability in our homes to both adults and unsupervised children.

Those who indulge in pornography also may become victims as they experience a need for escalation. Much research indicates that pornography is both seductive and addictive. It desensitizes the viewer and creates an appetite for even more sexually explicit material. This addiction can happen to anyone who regularly opens himself to pornography’s influence. Other documentation shows that pornography in some cases is linked to violence in sex related crimes such as rape or child abuse. This kind of perverted sexual activity is the result of a society which has come to believe that sex is simply another natural appetite and that it should be satisfied regardless of its manner of satisfaction.

It is time for Christians to wage war on pornography. Churches and individual Christians can no longer remain silent. We must call individuals to repentance by rebuking their sin and we must speak prophetically of God’s certain judgment upon a society which tolerates such activity. It is time to insist on legislation and firm enforcement of laws which would prohibit those few who would seek to make financial gain by exploiting the fallen nature of mankind. “Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people” (Prov. 14:34).

We call on the President of the United States, the Department of Justice, the Postal Service, and all proper authorities to enforce those laws and statutes which already exist against sexually explicit material. We call on local Christians and local churches to become involved in their individual communities. We take note that the Supreme Court has ruled that pornography is not protected by the First Amendment and that obscenity shall be determined by local community standards. Thus, it is that we believe this evil can be reduced, controlled, or eliminated if we the people and our elected officials refuse to tolerate its presence in our local communities.

In recognition of our obligation to uphold the righteousness of God, and recognizing that evil often exists because Christians too often remain silent, we, the Conservative Congregational Christian Conference, therefore:

ADOPT this position statement condemning pornography;

COMMIT ourselves to do everything we can to work toward the elimination of pornography in our society;

PLEDGE OURSELVES

- to reaffirm those scriptural principles which promote human dignity,
- to protect our families from sexual exploitation,
- to provide healthy roles for the expression of human sexuality,
- to pray that God will grant national repentance, to forgive our sin, and to deliver us from our national obsession with all forms of sexual behavior which deviate from His revealed will.