
PORNOGRAPHY:

FAR FROM THE SONG OF SONGS



A Study Paper
Adopted By The 200th General Assembly (1988)
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

**PORNOGRAPHY:
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**A POLICY STATEMENT ADOPTED BY
THE 200TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (1988)
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)**

**THE OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY**

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March 1989

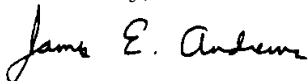
Dear Members of Sessions, Presbyteries, and Synods:

The 200th General Assembly (1988) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) received "with deep appreciation" a major report of the Task Force on Pornography established jointly by the Committee on Women's Concerns and the Council on Women and the Church. The Office of the General Assembly was directed to print the study document along with a study guide and response form and transmit a copy to each congregation, presbytery, and synod of the denomination.

As indicated in the recommendations approved by the General Assembly, the Women's Ministry Unit has been directed to receive the responses from the studies, and with the Committee on Social Witness Policy to prepare a report with accompanying recommendations for the establishment of a public policy statement by the 203rd General Assembly (1991).

Additional copies of this study paper may be ordered as indicated on the inside front cover of this publication.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James E. Andrews". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the left of the typed name.

James E. Andrews
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly

PORNOGRAPHY: FAR FROM THE SONG OF SONGS

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I. Introduction

General Assembly Actions

Responding to overtures from the presbyteries of Elizabeth and Cincinnati, the 196th General Assembly (1984) adopted a resolution on pornography that mandated the Council on Women and the Church (COWAC) and the General Assembly Mission Board (Office of Women) to “persevere in their work in the areas of pornography and obscenity and the education of the church and society to combat the abusive treatment of women.”

Taking action to provide the budget necessary for this study in both 1985 and 1986, the 198th General Assembly (1986) directed the Council on Women and the Church and the Committee on Women’s Concerns to complete the work approved in 1984. In addition, the 1985 action directed the two women’s advocacy groups as follows:

... to present the results of their research and proposals to develop educational materials and plans to distribute them to sessions and congregations;

... to develop material for education purposes concerning obscenity, pornography, sexual harassment, and other forms of sexual exploitation of persons, appropriate for study within sessions and congregations;

... to make the church aware of educational resources already in existence that cover the topics of obscenity, pornography, sexual harassment, and other forms of sexual exploitation. [The entire texts of the 1984, 1985, and 1986 General Assembly actions are in the Background Material of this report.]

These actions were consistent with the work done by the women’s advocacy groups since their establishment in 1972 in the PCUS and in 1973 in the UPCUSA. Previous General Assemblies had assigned studies on rape and battering, reported in 1978, on sexual harassment (1982), and on sexual exploitation of women (1986).

The 198th General Assembly (1986) assigned “the appropriate agency (Advisory Council on Church and Society, [or] the Social Justice and Peacemaking Ministry Unit) to advocate the public policy position of the General Assembly in the area of pornography, and assist the church in its social witness.”

Process of the Study

In July 1986, following action by the General Assembly Council to provide funding for the pornography study, COWC and COWAC initiated the formation of a task force, with Sylvia Thor-

son-Smith, of Grinnell, IA, a former member of COWAC, serving as coordinator.

In consultation with COWAC and COWC, the following persons were invited to serve on the task force:

The Rev. Anne Callison, R.N., Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic; Ms. Doris Carson, Kingsport, TN; Ms. Patsy H. Correll, Spartanburg, SC; Ms. Carol E. Davies, Independence, MO; the Rev. Barbara Horner-Ibler, Mt. Vernon, NY; Ms. Diana Lim, Cupertino, CA; the Rev. Dr. Allen Maruyama, Denver, CO; Ms. Faye McDonald Smith, Atlanta, GA; Ms. Elizabeth McWhorter, Atlanta, GA; Dr. Cheri Register, Minneapolis, MN; and the Rev. Dr. James Spalding, Iowa City, IA. Dr. Elizabeth H. Verdesi and Ms. Judith D. Atwell, New York staff for COWAC, and the Rev. Carole Goodspeed, Atlanta staff for COWC, have also worked with the task force.

The Task Force on Pornography held four meetings: December 2-4, 1986, in New York, NY; March 18-20, 1987, in Minneapolis, MN; June 29-July 6, 1987, at Ghost Ranch in Abiquiu, NM; and September 20-22, 1987, in Atlanta, GA. In addition to these sessions, members and staff attended numerous events and spoke to many people with expertise or interest in the issue of pornography. These meetings included presentations by persons with diverse viewpoints. Bibliographies were prepared, books and articles were read, and members shared with each other written reviews of what they had read. (A more detailed report of the process may be found in the Background Material.)

Task force members who attended the 199th General Assembly (1987) conducted hearings, in order to hear opinions directly from Presbyterians on the issue of pornography. During its meeting at Ghost Ranch, the task force held an informal session to discuss the issue with those attending other seminars there. It met with Mr. Keith Wulff of the Communications Unit of the Support Agency concerning the preparation of a survey on pornography to be distributed to the members of the Presbyterian Panel in September 1987.

Progress reports of the work of the task force were presented to COWC and COWAC at their joint meetings in March and July 1987. The report was adopted by both groups in November 1987, and approved for recommendation to the 200th General Assembly in 1988. The Advisory Council on Church and Society reviewed the report at its December 1987 meeting and took action to support it.

Affirmations that Guided the Study

The work of the Task Force on Pornography was rooted in the following affirmations:

We affirm

- that God is the source of human dignity;
- the equal dignity of women and men as being created equally in the image of God;
- the created goodness of the human body, both male and female;
- the inherent goodness of naked flesh in all of its infinite forms, colors and conditions;
- that human beings were created with the possibility for ultimate acts of celebration and joy in sexuality;
- that God calls human beings to positive expressions of mutual affirmation and commitment, especially as typified in the calling to faithful, respectful marital and family relationships;
- that the historic pattern of dominance and subjugation in human relationships is a distortion of God's intended creation;
- that images and portrayals of sexual behavior are not in themselves evil or offensive;
- that God's gift of sexual pleasure is fulfilled in acts of human love and mutual respect;
- that God demands sexual responsibility, balancing love for the self and love for the other;
- that God calls us to promote the dignity of all persons and to confront the circumstances in society that negate the integrity of human life;
- the Christian calling to love across all the boundaries of human limitation, modeling our relationships after God's covenant with us and the example of Jesus Christ;
- that Christians are called to study the complex relationship between pornography and contemporary society;
- that Christians are called to understand the issue of pornography today within the context of its history and the history of religious attitudes;
- that Christians face the challenge of living in a pluralistic society that warrants our commitment to the protection of diversity and freedom;
- that Christians are called to model the covenantal, compassionate community;

- our belief as Christians that the love of Jesus Christ is the Good News, empowerment in a world filled with conflict, alienation, and fear.

II. Theological Statement

Preface

As a result of its research and study, the Task Force on Pornography is convinced that pornography is a powerful symptom of injustice and alienation in human society. Through words and images, pornography debases God's intended gifts of love and dignity in human sexuality. Although humankind was created male and female, equally and fully in the image of God, the history of humanity reveals a fundamental pattern of dominance and subjugation. While this historic pattern of systematic oppression has been exposed more fully in our time than ever before, we live in an age also marked by the shattering of many norms of behavior and the subsequent loss of moral restraints. In such a time pornography has proliferated. The task force believes that the church is called to give serious attention to this issue, to reject all forms of dominance and subjugation, and to witness to loving respect and equality in human relationships. Reflected in the title of this report is the conviction that pornography represents human discord, far from the mutual sexual delight depicted biblically in the Song of Songs.

Pornography is a striking sign of human brokenness and alienation from God and from one another. This particular form of brokenness and alienation discloses a distortion of male and female relationships rooted in a pattern of dominance and subjugation. The central issue of pornography is not so much the disturbance of traditional norms of sexual morality as it is the gross distortion of power revealed in its graphic sexual images.

From the perspective of biblical understanding and the Reformed tradition, pornography represents a vivid expression of human alienation: from the creator God who makes covenants and from one another as covenant partners of God.

The creation story presents male and female as created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27). The image of God is not complete without both male and female. Man and woman, as made in the image of God, are to reflect in their relation to each other the relation of God to human creatures. If male and female related to one another in this way, sexual relationships between women and men, as well as all other relationships, would reflect the wholeness of

God's creation. Historically, the predominant interpretation of the story of the creation has indicated that God created the human race with the image of God somehow less complete in the female. Such an interpretation guarantees that the female will always be seen as inferior to the male, and it fosters the exploitation of women, one form of which is pornography.

In Genesis 3, the story of the Fall portrays the breaking of the relationship of wholeness expressed in creation. Here is a parable of the false and egocentric attempt of human beings to "play God" that results not only in breaking the covenant relationship with God but also in distorting the human sexual relationship. The man and the woman felt threatened by each other and sought to hide their nakedness as they sought also to hide from God. Theology which interprets this story as a paradigm of man's vulnerability to the temptress woman legitimizes the domination, control and exploitation of all women. Pornography reinforces the same images of power.

The sexual relationship of male and female is central in the story of Creation and the Fall; it can also be viewed as a way of expressing the covenant relationship of God with people. God is said "to know" the covenant people. The Hebrew verb "to know" is a term that, as the Genesis account shows, refers to the sexual encounter between a man and a woman (in Genesis the relation of Adam and Eve). "To know" connotes mutuality and intimacy. Closely tied to the eros quality of love in human relations, it is also connected with agape love as concern and care for the other.

God's covenant concern for Israel is characterized by the term "compassion," expressed in Hebrew by the word that means "womb." In sexual terms compassion is not a superficial feeling but one felt deeply within the body, an eros love. The highly sensual love poetry of the Song of Songs in the Hebrew Bible, where man and woman take pleasure in and celebrate one another's bodies, has been seen through the centuries as symbolic of the relationship of God and the people of Israel, of Christ and the church.

The God of the covenant has compassion and saves the people. So, too, God forges a covenant relationship with loving kindness (*hesed*), an agape love. In covenant relationship, God's love (*hesed*) is given, returned, and shared with those in the covenant community, thus becoming the model of the compassion expressed among those in the community for each other and for others. The people of the covenant are to show compassion for one another in ways that express both dimensions of love.

The old covenant and the new expect human beings to live in such a way that they express toward each other the compassion that God has extended to them. The term for this life is *shalom*, which means health, wholeness, unity, peace. In living as covenant people in *shalom*, there can be no separation of body and spirit. And there can be no easy separation of eros and agape or connecting sexuality only to eros, surrounding it with taboos, or expressing it through patriarchal oppression or pornographic exploitation.

How does God deal with the disruption of creation and the breaking of the covenant? The Law (Torah) was given as a remedy for the human hardness of heart. But we humans, in our alienation, in both biblical times and today, turn the law into a legalistic system, and often use it to exploit, oppress, and degrade other human beings.

Jesus came seeking to restore *shalom*, the wholeness of human relationships in creation and in covenant. The acceptance of the anointing by the woman in Bethany (Mark 14:3–9), the lifting up of the woman taken in adultery (John 8:3–11), the healing of the woman who touched his garment (Mark 5:25–34), and the affirmation of children (Mark 9:35–37, 42; 10:13–16) all indicate Jesus' compassion ("womb love") for victims of a patriarchal, alienated society. Jesus dealt both firmly and lovingly with those who were the exploiters and oppressors of his day, the tax collectors and the religious authorities. In the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ the compassion of God reaches out to all—to the oppressor and the oppressed, the exploiter and the victim.

God establishes the church as the community of covenant and compassion, the community in which all divisions are overcome and all conflicts are healed. In the covenantal Christian community, members share the "womb love" of God with both the oppressor and the oppressed in order to heal the wounds of society. The alienation that is expressed in pornography, sexual exploitation, and violence is to be overcome in the community marked by wholeness, compassion, eros, and agape.

The *shalom* of the covenant community, seeking to fulfill its created nature in the relationship of woman and man, is also a sign for the larger community, a witness to God's intention for the whole created order. The achievement of such wholeness, free from pornography and sexual exploitation, is also the task of the Christian community and its members as they fulfill their calling day by day and as they seek to change the systems that debase and distort the life of persons and communities.

III. Why Study Pornography Now?

Pornography is not a new phenomenon in human history, nor is it a new issue for the church. During the 1970s both the PCUS and the UPCUSA conducted studies on issues related to human sexuality, including pornography. In 1973, the PCUS General Assembly adopted a paper, "Pornography, Obscenity, and Censorship," and recommended it for study and action. In 1974, the Advisory Council on Church and Society (ACCS) of the UPCUSA prepared a document, "Dignity and Exploitation: Christian Reflections on Images of Sex in the 1970s," which was commended for churchwide study by the General Assembly. In addition, the 1977 UPCUSA General Assembly adopted a resolution opposing the use of pornography and violence in the media; it also urged that "Christians should make a response to such activity that will reflect their faith more than their fears." (The entire text of the 1977 General Assembly action is found in the Background Material.)

Previous Studies

The 1973 PCUS paper begins:

We worship a God who creates and loves, judges and saves human beings. Therefore we stand for the dignity and welfare of human life, and work not only for the physical and spiritual health of individuals but also social circumstances which promote it. This concern for the integrity of human life and for social conditions which support it leads us to be concerned about pornographic or obscene literature and movies.¹

The 1974 UPCUSA paper affirms three principles of the Christian tradition to be used as guidelines in studying pornography and obscenity:

1. The idea of the image of God as the source of our human dignity and of our protest against all forms of exploitation of our sexual nature;
2. Christian neighbor love, which is distinguished from but may include *eros*, the love we more commonly associate with sexual relationships; and
3. The covenant in which God gives a promise and a hope to us, and by which we are drawn into loving relationship with both God and other people.²

Both study documents examined the problems of defining pornography and obscenity, and they explored the legal "tightrope" between those issues and censorship. They recognized the difficult balance between individual freedom and community responsibility, and they presented guidelines for Christian decision making on these issues. (Guidelines from both the 1973 and the 1974 studies are included in the Background Material.)

In light of these studies in the 1970s, why did the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) direct COWAC and COWC to do additional study one decade later? Several reasons stand out:

Increased Proliferation of Pornography. In the last decade, both the amount and variety of pornographic materials have burgeoned. These materials have been marked by increasingly violent themes. It is also clear that it becomes more and more difficult to escape exposure to them.

Intensity of the Debate Over Pornography. Pornography is an issue that polarizes individuals of diverse political and religious beliefs. Disagreement over definitions, effects, and regulation divides some groups and makes unlikely allies of others. A report on pornography by a commission established by the U.S. Attorney General (sometimes referred to as “the Meese Report”) and increased anti-pornography activity by law enforcement officials have sparked vigorous reaction on all sides.

Rising Voices of Fear. The issue of pornography has become a focal point for the escalation of fear among many people—fear of violence and abuse, fear of women and children victimized and endangered, fear of vanishing values and uncontrollable change, fear of loss of spiritual authority, and fear of a culture exposed for its greed and exploitation.

Increased Denominational and Interfaith Response. Many religious bodies, including the Lutheran Council in the USA and the United Church of Canada, have developed study materials on the issue of pornography. Others have adopted statements and held educational events. In 1985 the National Council of the Churches of Christ adopted a study paper entitled, “Violence and Sexual Violence in Film, Television, Cable and Home Video.” In 1986 the Religious Alliance Against Pornography was formed to proclaim that “hardcore and child pornography, which are not protected by the Constitution, are evils which must be eliminated.” (The Background Material contains the foundational statement of the Religious Alliance Against Pornography, as well as a more detailed summary of interfaith activity.)

Thus, given the seriousness of the issue, the General Assembly has called for new resources on pornography. The task force believes that, in its call for resources, the church is looking also for new words of hope, faith, and action based on a deeper understanding of the nature of pornography.

Aware of the interconnectedness of pornography with other issues relating to women and other issues addressed later in this

report, and recognizing that no study of pornography will ever be complete, the Council on Women and the Church and the Committee on Women's Concerns has found this study to be both challenging and satisfying. Challenging because of its complexity, and satisfying because it deals with the central core of our being, our sexuality as persons. The Task Force on Pornography offered this report to the 200th General Assembly (1988) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for its consideration and approval.

IV. What Is Pornography? A Discussion of Definition

Discussion of pornography begins with the question, "What is it?" There is much debate over its definition but scant consensus on a precise set of words that adequately describes what it means.

As a result of its study, the task force recommends the following definition of pornography:

Pornography includes any sexually explicit material (books, magazines, movies, videos, TV shows, telephone services, live sex acts) produced for the purpose of sexual arousal by eroticizing violence, power, humiliation, abuse, dominance, degradation, or mistreatment of any person, male or female, and usually produced for monetary profit. Any sexually explicit material that depicts children is pornography.

A Look at Origins

While excavating near Naples in 1748, searching for the remains of three cities buried by volcanic ash from Mount Vesuvius in 79 A.D., workers found artifacts that identified one of the sites as Pompeii. Among the artifacts were frescoes and statues of an explicitly sexual nature. These paintings and statues were found not only in brothels and nuptial chambers but also on street corners and in the entry ways and living areas of private homes. Public buildings exhibited drawings of landscapes and still lifes mixed together with sexually explicit drawings and statues. The total effect confused historians of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries who were not accustomed to seeing representations of sexual acts in places to which every one had access, i.e., homes, public buildings, and the marketplace.

Social commentators and historians debated the original purpose of these works, as well as their effect upon those exposed to them. A problem developed regarding what to do with the contro-

versial artifacts, since the excavation site had become a popular tourist attraction. To prevent women and children from seeing the frescoes and statues, the works were locked inside a secret museum within the National Museum of Naples.

Once they acquired a residence and because they were authentic and rare, it was necessary to classify them. A name for this particular type of art was required. While writing about the representations in 1850, a German art historian, C. O. Muller, called the producers of the works “pornographers,” from the Greek words meaning whore and painting, or portrayal. The term caught on and, in 1864, the newly published edition of *Webster’s Dictionary* defined pornography as “licentious painting employed to decorate the walls of rooms sacred to bacchanalian orgies, examples of which exist in Pompeii.”¹

Current Efforts to Define Pornography

The 1987 *Random House Dictionary of the English Language* defines pornography as “obscene writings, drawings, photographs, or the like, especially those having little or no artistic merit.”² It also refers to the Greek derivation of the word, from *porno* meaning harlot and *graphos* meaning graph (writing or picture). In its linguistic root, pornography is linked to women, to the graphic portrayal of sexuality, and to economics (*porno* is a form of *peraymi*, meaning “to sell”).³ Pornography, quite literally, means picturing or describing prostitutes.

United States Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart uttered a memorable remark in 1964 when he said, “I cannot define pornography, but I know it when I see it.”⁴ Identifying pornography is an intensely individual experience, dependent on subjective interpretation of images and on individual values. Dr. Ann Welboume-Moglia, former executive director of the Sex Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS), stated in her testimony before the U.S. Attorney General’s Commission on Pornography in 1985:

Just as each individual’s sexual health is an integration of factors unique to him/her, so too is the meaning of pornography a very personal one, depending on the background and life experience of the individual rendering the judgement. Because pornography is based on a subjective emotional and physical response, one person’s pornography could also be another person’s art form. Thus, we have a problem in defining pornography in a way which is acceptable to all.⁵

Focusing on the economic exploitation involved in the production of pornography, Welboume-Moglia defines pornography as

“commercially available writings, pictures, films, etc., intended to arouse sexual feelings and fantasies for the purpose of monetary profit.”⁶ She acknowledges different kinds of sexually explicit material (pornography and erotica) but emphasizes the inescapable exposure to widespread commercial sexual materials.

Several terms are used to label sexually explicit material. Sometimes the intent is to separate material that is acceptable, or less offensive, from that which is unacceptable, or very offensive. A discussion of terms such as pornography, erotica, hard-core, soft-core, and obscenity is presented here in order to demonstrate opinion on the differences between sexually explicit materials.

Pornography and Erotica

Distinction is often made between the terms “erotica” and “pornography.” In 1974, the American Lutheran Church (ALC) defined pornography as “material that depicts or describes erotic behavior in ways deliberately intended to stimulate sexual excitement.” In 1985, the ALC updated its statement in an effort to differentiate between pornographic material that focuses on “physical and psychological violence against others” and erotic portrayals that “need not be demeaning,” and may be “edifying,” “therapeutic,” and “aesthetically pleasing.” The 1985 statement indicates that “some therapists now argue that stimulating sexual excitement can be therapeutic, and materials that assist that purpose need not always be classified as ‘pornographic’.”⁷

The United Church of Canada, in formulating its 1984 definition, also sought to distinguish “pornographic materials from other sexually explicit materials”:

Pornography is material that represents or describes degrading, abusive and/or violent behavior for sexual gratification so as to endorse and/or recommend the behavior as depicted.⁸

The National Organization for Women (NOW) in 1984 adopted a resolution stating that “pornography, as distinct from erotica, is a systemic practice of exploitation and subordination based on sex which harms women and children.”⁹

For many feminists, it is not the graphic image of sexuality that is objectionable so much as the content of the imagery, i.e., the systemic oppression of women that it represents. Such feminist interpretation identifies pornography as depictions of sexual violence, dominance, and conquest. This view maintains that pornography uses images of sex to reinforce power, inequality, and humiliation. On the other hand, erotic portrayals are accept-

able if they depict mutually pleasurable sexual interaction between persons of equal power. Such images may visualize egalitarian sexual relationships that communicate feelings of love and caring.¹⁰

In its 1986 report, the Attorney General's Commission did not distinguish between pornography and erotica in its working definition of pornography as "predominantly sexually explicit and intended primarily for the purpose of sexual arousal."¹¹ Although the commission "struggled mightily to agree on definitions of such basic terms as pornography and erotica, it never did so."¹²

The commission recognized that the term "pornography" is "undoubtedly pejorative" and that to call something pornography these days is to condemn it. Conversely, commission members stated that to use the term "erotica" is to describe sexually explicit material of which the user of the term approves. For some, the word "erotica" describes any sexually explicit material that contains neither violence nor subordination of women. For others, the term refers to almost all sexually explicit material and, for still others, only material containing generally accepted artistic value qualifies as erotica.¹³

Hard-Core and Soft-Core

Effort is sometimes made to distinguish between hard-core and soft-core pornography. The term "soft-core pornography" is sometimes used to identify sexually explicit material that displays nudity or suggests sexual activity. The term "hard-core pornography" may be found in reference to material that depicts or describes explicit sexual activity such as intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, or lewd exhibition of the genitals.¹⁴

The Attorney General's Commission stated that "if we were forced to define the term 'hard-core pornography,' we would probably note that it refers to the extreme form of what we defined as pornography and, thus, would describe material that is sexually explicit to the extreme, intended virtually exclusively to arouse, and devoid of any other apparent content or purpose." However, the commission acknowledged that "this definition may not be satisfactory" since application of this term to a range of material is "far broader than we would like." Commission members concluded that "careful analysis will be served if we use this term far less than more."¹⁵

Pornography and Obscenity

The terms "pornography" and "obscenity" are often used together and the difference between them is not always clear. Un-

like the word “pornography,” the word “obscenity” need not necessarily suggest anything about sex at all.¹⁶ Therefore, anything from some aspects of war to the number of people killed by drunk drivers to certain sexually explicit material may be described as “obscene,” or deserving of moral condemnation.

The Supreme Court has given the term “obscenity” legal definition for purposes of identification and regulation of objectionable materials. Intense debate exists over the adequacy of this definition, its effectiveness as applied to particular materials, and its usefulness in regulating materials regarded as pornographic. A discussion of the legal definition of obscenity and its historical development as a standard to regulate pornography is presented in the section of this report entitled “A History of Pornography Regulation in the United States.”

The Task Force’s Struggle

Throughout its work the task force struggled to find words to describe what constitutes the essence of pornography. Efforts to define pornography proved frustrating since such a definition would describe an aspect of nature that most people cannot easily articulate—sexuality, its freedoms and its limits.

As the task force discussed the diverse definitions of pornography, it was faced with countless questions, each one prompting others and compounding the dilemma:

- If pornography is defined by some as “sexually explicit material intended primarily for the purpose of sexual arousal” and if labeling something “pornography” is to cast a tone of condemnation over it, as the Attorney General’s Commission suggested, what would such interpretation reveal about our sexual values?

- What is the purpose of sexuality and sexual behavior?

- Why are negative meanings attached to materials that have no other purpose than sexual arousal?

- As Christians, what is our understanding of sexuality and its purpose?

- Considering other words associated with pornography such as “lewd,” “lascivious,” “filthy,” “prurient,” “wanton,” “lustful,” and “impure,” how can Christians interpret these words and apply them to images?

- Is all sexually explicit material lewd and filthy?

- What is the difference between healthy sexual desire and prurient lust?

- How are our perceptions regarding images influenced by our values regarding sexual behavior?
- What makes the picture different from the act? Or is it?
- Since values regarding pornography can be found in conflict across time, culture, religion, race, class, and sexual preference, whose definitions prevail in discussions of pornography?
- If pornography is not only about heterosexual relationships, but also about homosexual relationships, how does homophobia influence one's entire understanding of pornography?
- Is it possible to apply distinctions between erotica and pornography to homosexual images as well as heterosexual images?

As the task force considered these and other questions, it felt keenly the tension between the need to define pornography and the risks in defining it. Nevertheless, the task force produced a definition that reflects the following understanding of the issue:

- This definition is consistent with the theological position stated earlier, one that values human dignity and human sexuality.
- It recognizes that to label anything "pornography" is to cast a tone of condemnation over it.
- It rejects judgments that condemn all sexually explicit materials.
- It seeks to narrow the focus on those materials that deserve to be labeled "pornography."
- It affirms that pornography is essentially about power and the dehumanization of both male and female persons, including exploitation of human sexuality for economic profit.
- It affirms that sexually explicit materials that depict children (previously defined as pornography) constitute a separate category outside the debate over materials that depict adults.

The task force's definition may elicit significant disagreement when applied to particular materials and images since defining and identifying pornography involves intensely individual, personal judgment. There needs to be latitude in applying words such as "degrading," "dehumanizing," and "humiliating" to specific materials.

This definition is presented apart from the discussion of the effects of pornography or efforts to regulate it. These are separate issues that are addressed in subsequent sections of the report.

How to Recognize Pornography

The task force offers the following guidelines for applying this definition to particular material. This means that material will be characterized as pornography if it:

- includes graphic displays of sexual behavior (“graphic” meaning vivid, exaggerated, or excessively descriptive) that eroticize (make sexually arousing) self-pleasure through the exploitation of power over another person;

- involves the sexual subordination or mistreatment of women or men;

- includes material intended to be sexually arousing by depicting any of the following:

- women or men as sexual objects, things, or commodities to be used for personal gratification;

- women or men in ways that suggest they enjoy pain or humiliation;

- women or men in ways that suggest they experience pleasure in being raped;

- women or men as tied up, cut up, mutilated, tortured, bruised, or physically hurt;

- women or men in ways that communicate force, threat, or intimidation;

- women or men in ways that suggest erotic appeal in victimization and sexual submission;

- women or men penetrated by sexual paraphernalia or using penetrating objects or animals;

- women or men reduced to body parts through exaggerated exhibition of breasts and genitals;

- women or men in ways that suggest pleasure in dehumanizing acts involving urination, excretion, or any foul treatment. (The Minneapolis Civil Rights Ordinance, found in the Background Material of this report, was used as a source for developing these guidelines.)

The term “child pornography” is limited to material that visually depicts sexual conduct by real children. Any sexually explicit material depicting children is pornography in its most serious and intolerable form. There are no distinctions between pornography and erotica in material that depicts children.

V. Current Statistics on the Pornography Industry

Pornography is an \$8-billion-a-year industry.^{1, 2} Other sources indicate a \$9 billion annual estimate.³

About Motion Pictures

It costs \$30–150,000 to produce a film (\$75,000 average).⁴

Performers earn \$250–\$500 per day, famous stars up to \$2,500.⁵

In 1984 there were 400 film titles, in 1985 there were 1700.⁶

There are twenty-five national adult film production companies; 80 percent of the filming occurs in and around Los Angeles, CA.⁷

There are 10 to 15 national distributors of pornographic films.⁸

There are approximately 600 adult theaters in the United States.⁹

Motion pictures account for over \$500 million in annual receipts.¹⁰

About Videotape Cassettes

A 90-minute video takes three days to produce; average cost: \$12,000.¹¹

It was estimated in 1986 that over 2,000 new videos would be produced that year.¹²

The profits range from a minimum of \$200,000 to millions for each video.¹³

Of the 14,000 video stores nationwide, 75 percent sell pornographic cassettes, which account for 50–60 percent of all prerecorded cassette sales.¹⁴

Other sources indicate 30,000 video-rental stores in the U.S.¹⁵

In 1984 over 54 million pornographic videos were rented. In 1985 over 75 million adult videos were rented (20 percent of market).¹⁶

More than 2.5 million people view pornographic movies each week.¹⁷

About Magazines

There are between 50–60,000 adult magazine titles, hundreds of new titles each month.¹⁸

One pornographic magazine costs 25 cents to 50 cents to produce and retails between \$3.00 and \$12.00.¹⁹

The 13 most popular magazines sell 12 million copies per month: *Playboy*, *Penthouse*, *Hustler*, *Playgirl*, *Gallery*, *Club*, *Forum*, *Oui*, *High Society*, *Cheri*, *Genesis*, *Chic*, *Club International*.²⁰

Playboy and *Penthouse* have a combined readership of 24 million.^{21, 22}

Two hundred million issues of the over 800 different soft-core and hard-core pornographic magazines were sold in 1984 in the U.S., principally at newsstands, grossing over \$750 million for the industry.²³

There are an estimated 400 “skin” magazines on the market. Two of the leading ones had a monthly readership of as high as 7.6 million.²⁴

About Cable and Satellite Television

Cable is in forty million homes (available to 70 percent of all households).²⁵

In 1983 an estimated two million American households subscribed to cable television services featuring pornography.²⁶

Playboy Cable Channel is the largest pornographic service, in 700,000 homes.²⁷

Satellite networks distribute pornography to 50,000 subscribers.²⁸

About Dial-A-Porn

In 1983, the New York Telephone Company received 500,000 calls a day as a carrier of a Dial-A-Porn Message, earning the company \$25,000 a day and the supplier of the message \$10,000 a day.²⁹

The New York Telephone Company facilitated 96 million calls in 1985, generating \$56 million in income for the utility.³⁰

Problems in Using Statistics on Pornography

Statistics offered on pornography often use raw, unevaluated data as a basis for authoritative presentation. Without thorough analysis it is difficult to interpret clearly the implications of the data. For instance, books, articles, newsletters, and reports begin with statistical evidence on the proliferation of pornography; the statistic that pornography is an eight to nine billion dollar indus-

try often stands alone. In both instances, there is no indication of how the term “pornography” is being used or what kind of material is included in such a statistic. These statistics may include any material that might be considered by some to be pornographic, even though there is great diversity in the material. By grouping all commercial sexually explicit material together, the diversity is never considered, much less analyzed.

Another problem is that there is significant discrepancy in the statistics themselves. One source lists 14,000 video stores nationwide, another lists 30,000. One source lists 400 adult theaters, another lists 600. As part of a list of pornography statistics, one source notes only that cable television is available in 40 million homes, but does not reveal the critical additional statistic (found in a different source) that two million homes subscribe to cable pornography services. At first glance, the reader may think that 40 million homes subscribe to cable pornography since the statistic stands independently in a list of data. Nor is there any indication of the kind of pornography shown in the two million homes that subscribe.

Some statistics are not dated, and some sources quote outdated statistics as current data. This is particularly true of statistics related to child pornography. Increased attention to child pornography led to significant legal changes in 1982, and yet statistics from the 1970s are still presented as if they are the present reality. Often the reader can determine this only by reading the footnotes and fine print with great care.

Statistics are also frequently used to imply causal relationship between pornography and other social problems by placing statistics on rape, incest, and battering next to those on the proliferation of pornography. While the discussion of pornography must include consideration of the question of harm and the effects of pornography on human attitudes and behavior, oversimplification may result if statistics are presented in too limited a context.

Anti-pornography efforts have produced “a crackdown on adult bookstores, x-rated movie theaters, massage parlors,”³¹ and other pornographic outlets and materials in several areas. Statistics may be used to support claims that a “clean-up” of pornography bears a direct relationship to lowered crime rates. For example, one source maintains that a “crackdown” in Cincinnati “resulted in a 42 percent decrease in assaults, prostitution, and drug trafficking, and an 83 percent drop in rapes, robberies, and aggravated assaults.”³² These statistics do not indicate the year

the crimes occurred, when the crackdown began, or what is being compared. However, according to statistics of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the number of rapes, for example, in Cincinnati increased by 19 percent from 1983 to 1984 (up from 308 to 367), decreased by 1.9 percent from 1984 to 1985 (down from 367 to 360) and decreased by 19 percent from 1985 to 1986 (down from 360 to 291). Between 1983 and 1986, FBI statistics indicate that robberies decreased by 13 percent and aggravated assaults increased by 11 percent.³³ Although prosecution efforts have been directed against pornography in Cincinnati since the late 1960s, organized community activity began in 1983.³⁴

The *Uniform Crime Reports* of the FBI reveal that statistics on rape, assault, and other offenses go up and down in any given year in most areas where efforts have been made to curb the availability of pornography. The relationship between pornography and criminal activity is a complex one and many factors, other than pornography, are involved in understanding crime rates. How, then, does one take seriously the influence of pornography while not oversimplifying the consequences of its presence or absence?

Statistics reveal the magnitude of the issue and challenge the reader to ask questions and seek further analysis. Questions for consideration include: What definition of pornography is used to determine the reporting of statistical data? What particular material is included in a statistical report? Do the statistics cited here include materials that fit the criteria of the definition developed by the Task Force on Pornography? Do they include materials that would not fit the definition in this report? Is it possible to make such a distinction? What can be concluded from statistics about the relationship between pornography and human behavior? What do statistics contribute toward an understanding of our society in the 1980s? What is a faithful Christian response to such an understanding?

VI. What Are the Effects of Pornography? A Discussion of Harm

Central to the study of pornography is the issue of harm. Pornography includes a variety of sexually explicit material that finds an open market in contemporary culture. What are the influences of this material? How can its influence be measured and understood? Is the degree of harm related to the content of the imagery?

These and many other questions provoke considerable debate over both the individual and societal harms that can be attributed

to pornography. One attempt to resolve the debate is found in the report of the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography. Its findings serve *as an* introduction to the discussion.

Findings of the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography

The commission prefaced its findings on "the question of harm" with the acknowledgement that "the world is complex, and most consequences are 'caused' by numerous factors."¹ Therefore, in analyzing the influence of pornography, members concluded "that some forms of sexually explicit material bear a causal relationship to both sexual violence and sex discrimination, but we are hardly so naive as to suppose that were these forms of pornography to disappear the problem of sex discrimination and sexual violence would come to an end."²

Having defined pornography for the purpose of their report as material that is "predominantly sexually explicit and intended primarily for the purpose of sexual arousal," the commission was faced with making some distinctions in assessing the harm of sexually explicit material. Commission members presented their findings on the issue of harm by dividing the material into four categories:

Sexually Violent Material

This category features "actual or unmistakably simulated or unmistakably threatened violence presented in sexually explicit fashion with a predominant focus on the sexually explicit violence."³ Citing "virtually unanimous" clinical and experimental research, the commission concluded that exposure to sexually violent material increases the likelihood of aggression and that a causal relationship can be shown between such material and aggressive behavior towards women. Therefore, this kind of material is harmful to society.

Nonviolent Materials Depicting Degradation, Domination, Subordination, or Humiliation

This category "depicts people, usually women, as existing solely for the sexual satisfaction of others, usually men, or that depicts people, usually women, in decidedly subordinate roles in their sexual relations with others, or that depicts people engaged in sexual practices that would to most people be considered humiliating."⁴ The commission acknowledged that there is less evidence linking this material causally with sexual aggression, but

concluded that “substantial exposure ... bears some causal relationship to the level of sexual violence, sexual coercion, or unwanted sexual aggression in the population so exposed.”⁵ Furthermore, it stated that substantial exposure to material in this category is related to “the various nonviolent forms of discrimination against or subordination of women in our society.”⁶ As such, this category is subtle and dangerous, because it constitutes some of “what is currently standard fare in heterosexual pornography, and is a significant theme in a broader range of materials not commonly taken to be sexually explicit enough to be pornographic.”⁷

Nonviolent and Nondegrading Materials

This category, consisting of materials “in which the participants appear to be fully willing participants occupying substantially equal roles in a setting devoid of actual or apparent violence or pain,”⁸ gave the commissioners the most difficulty. A significant increase in sexually explicit material involves videos available for home use, reported by many couples to be a mutually pleasurable source of sexual stimulation. Acknowledging a fair conclusion from social science research, commission members stated that “there is no persuasive evidence to date supporting the connection between nonviolent and non-degrading materials and acts of sexual violence, and that there is some, but very limited evidence, indicating that the connection does not exist.”⁹ Commissioners disagreed about the general harm to society in the public display of acts traditionally regarded as private, as well as the harm to the “moral environment of society” resulting from the public display of sexual activity regarded by many as immoral. Some members believed that some of the material in this category is educational or artistic and could be seen as beneficial, especially when used for therapeutic purposes.

Nudity

While some of the commissioners found the use of nudity in art or for educational purposes to be harmful, they expressed concern about the impact that “portrayals of nudity in an undeniably sexual context” have on “children, on attitudes toward women, on the relationship between the sexes, and on attitudes toward sex in general.”¹⁰ They differed on the extent of these harms.

Evidence for Assessing Harm

Social Science Research

The value of social science research in determining causal relationship is often debated. One commission member, Dr. Judith Becker, herself a Columbia University psychologist, said, "I don't think there is in the social science data any conclusive causal relationship between this type of material and the commission of sexual crimes. The data show that in certain experiments attitudes change, and I think one makes a quantum leap from attitudinal changes to committing serious crimes."¹¹ Becker and Ellen Levine, another commission member, also contended that "studies have relied almost exclusively on male college student volunteers, which means that the 'generalizability' of this data is extremely limited."¹²

Debate continues to be spirited over the conclusions drawn from research on pornography and human behavior. While such experiments reflect limited investigation at this point, they represent valuable attempts at understanding sexually explicit material as one of many factors influencing human attitudes and actions. Significant work in this area has been contributed by Edward Donnerstein, Victor Cline, Dorf Zillmann, Jennings Bryant, and others. Brief summaries of some of their findings may be found in the Background Material of this report.

Testimony of Women and Men

Some of the strongest indictments against pornography are found in the testimony of those who have felt its influence. Women have told intimate stories of their victimization at hearings in Minneapolis and Indianapolis, before the Attorney General's Commission, and elsewhere. Their testimony bears witness to the feelings of some women that pornography has played an important role in their being coerced into sexual activities. Dr. Pauline Bart, professor of sociology, has cited the following statements of women describing what they were asked to do:

Miss C: "He'd go to porno movies, then he'd come home and say, 'I saw this in a movie. Let's try it.' I felt really exploited."

Miss F: "He'd read something in a pornographic book, and then he wanted to live it out. It was too violent for me to do something like that. It was basically getting dressed up and spanking. Him spanking me. I refused to do it."

Miss P: "My boy friend and I saw a movie in which there was masochism. After that he wanted to gag me and tie me up. ... He literally tried to force me, after gagging me first. ... I started crying and struggling, got loose, and ... ran out of the house."¹³

Witnesses before the commission made allegations about rape, forced sexual performance, battering, torture, imprisonment, murder, disease, self-abuse, and prostitution related to pornography. The commission report contains excerpts of testimony to psychological harm (i.e., suicidal thoughts, fears, shame, guilt, amnesia, nightmares) and societal harm (i.e., sexual harassment, financial loss, racism, family problems) attributed to pornography.¹⁴

Critics of victim testimony observe that these are often “truly pathetic glimpses of lives lost—drug abuse, bad marriages, child molestation, beatings, forced sex, and incest.”¹⁵ For these individuals, pornography may be simplistically identified as a cause, rather than an accessory, of their pain.

Victim testimony stands as a collection of intimate stories told with profound conviction. For centuries, women’s testimony about rape, battering, incest, and harassment has been silenced and repudiated. Women’s stories (and in lesser numbers, those by men) reveal, in stark description, individual perceptions about the harmful power of pornography in their lives. As a record of personal witness, they stand as evidence that must be heard.

General Discussion of the Question of Harm

In addition to experimental research by social scientists and the personal testimony of individuals, further insight is provided by those who have studied this issue. Discussion of these views is divided into three areas: harm to women and men, harm to persons in the pornography industry, and harm to children.

Harm to Women and Men

Much debate centers on the role that pornography plays in influencing the attitudes and behavior of people. Some analysts draw direct connections between pornography and the lives of real people. Catherine MacKinnon, speaking for some feminists, writes:

Everything you see in pornography is being done to a real woman right now. Look at the data on rape, child sexual abuse, sexual harassment, forced prostitution, and battery. ... Now go look at the pornography again. If you don’t see rape, battery, sexual harassment, child sexual abuse, and forced prostitution there, it is because you have accepted these treatments as the nature of women, as the nature of sex, as our sexual fulfillment, as what sexual equality really looks like.¹⁶

John Stoltenberg confronts the power of pornography to damage the sexual identity of men and, consequently, their relationships with women:

Pornography institutionalizes the sexuality that embodies and enacts male supremacy. Pornography says ... men are masters, women are slaves; men are superior, women are subordinate; men are real, women are objects; men are sex machines, women are sluts. ... When equality is an idea whose time has come, we will perhaps know sex with justice, we will perhaps know passion with compassion, we will perhaps know affection and ardor with honor.¹⁷

While acknowledging that offensive, sexist images are presented in pornography, other writers, such as Dierdre English, regard such images as fantasy, not behavior. She contends that fantasy is multidimensional and symbolic, and that through fantasy, people imagine acts that they would not perform because they are socially banned sexual expressions. In this way, society allows a refuge from repression and a means for venting aggression in a non-harmful way.¹⁸ Supporters of English's view believe that pornography is not directly correlated to acts of sexual coercion, and conversely, many acts of coercion occur apart from pornography.

Dr. Gordon C. Nagayama Hall, a Presbyterian elder in Seattle and a clinical psychologist with the Sex Offender Program at Western Washington State Hospital, wrote an article for the newsletter of the Presbyterian Health, Education and Welfare Association entitled, "Pornography: A Cause of Sexually Aggressive Behavior or an Effect of a Sexist Society?" Citing the work of psychologist Martha Burt, he reports that "sexist attitudes, in assumedly normal persons, [are] associated with an acceptance of sexual aggression against women Thus, persons with sexist attitudes may be more accepting of sexual aggression than are persons with more egalitarian attitudes concerning gender roles."¹⁹

Nagayama Hall's most compelling analysis involves the role of the Christian church in the relationships between pornography, sexist attitudes, and sexually aggressive behavior. Maintaining that the church has long propagated sexist attitudes, he contends that some fundamentalist Christians appear to "emphasize the possibly equivocal relationship between pornography and sexual aggression, while ignoring the evidence of a relationship between sexism and the acceptance of sexually aggressive behavior." He concludes:

Many sexual offenders are not the immoral beasts depicted by the media, but often have been very active church participants and have been exposed to church doctrine. While sexual offenders have ostensibly violated church doctrine in their sexual aggression, in another sense such aggressiveness against women may be supported by church doctrine. ... The exploitation of women that occurs both in pornography and sexual aggression may only be the effects of the more general problem of the unequal status of women in our society, and it is to this broader issue that the Christian church should address itself.²⁰

Harm to Persons in the Pornography Industry

In discussing harm to women and men, attention also needs to be directed toward the effect of pornography on those in the pornography industry. The Attorney General's Commission describes its impact on the lives of women who participate in its production:

It may very well be that degradation led a woman to being willing to pose for a picture of a certain variety, or to engage in what appears to be a non-degrading sexual act. It may be that coercion caused the picture to exist. And it may very well be that the existing disparity in the economic status of men and women is such that any sexually explicit depiction of a woman is at least suspect on account of the possibility that economic disparity is what caused the woman to pose for the picture that most people in this society would find embarrassing.²¹

The commission report provides lengthy discussion on the quality of the lives of people in the industry. Victims are most often girls in their late teens from broken homes, who have experienced sexual abuse, frequently incest. Unable to find work, they may respond to "modeling" ads and discover that the job involves posing nude or acting in a sexually explicit film. They may or may not be coerced into performing, and if they continue this work, it is often with no guarantees, no benefits, long hours, the risk of disease, and the escape to drugs.

Reports of the victimization of women (and men with similar histories) are often countered with the contention that these people are free adult persons who are satisfied with their choice. To the argument that these are merely "women with the freedom to bargain ... simply exchanging the use of their bodies for money," an article in the *Harvard Women's Law Journal* counters that "this attitude is refuted by those involved in the industry who are often victimized and exploited by photographers, producers of films and the men they have relationships with."²²

Harm to Children and Youth

One of the overriding concerns related to the effects of pornography is the harm it has on children and youth. Young people in this culture are exposed to sexually explicit material of all kinds before they are emotionally able to understand and evaluate it. Other concerns focus on the use of pornography by adults to coerce children and youth into acts of sexual abuse. Three examples of its harmful influence on children and youth include rock videos, Dial-a-Porn, and "slasher" movies.

1. *Rock Videos*. A study of "Violence and Sexual Violence in Film, Television, Cable and Home Video," conducted by The National Council of the Churches of Christ, reported testimony that

heavy viewing of music videos may significantly increase violence in our society because it closely links erotic relationships with violence performed not by villains, but by teenage idols. These programs, which combine the attraction of music, dancing, and exotic and creative backgrounds, become a powerful “selling” of violence.²³

2. *Dial-a-Porn*. Since deregulation of the telephone company in 1982, Dial-a-Porn services have become increasingly available. Sexually explicit material of all kinds is offered, either in conversation with a paid performer (credit card billing) or prerecorded messages, usually one minute in length (charged on the phone bill). Children, some very young, reportedly find Dial-A-Porn phone numbers in such places as school bathrooms. Many people are concerned that distorted sexual messages in these calls produce a harmful effect on children. Blocking devices, costing about \$100, are available to prevent such calls.

3. “*Slasher*” *Movies*. Horror films, often popular with teenagers, combine images of sexuality and violence that present powerful messages to young people. Some people argue that such films are escapist; others contend that themes linking sexual pleasure and violence, particularly towards women, create and reinforce harmful attitudes that affect behavior.

Dr. Ann Welbourne-Moglia, referred to earlier, contends that most exposure to pornography is by choice and that both teenagers and adults use pornography to obtain sexual information. Unfortunately, most of these materials depict sexuality primarily in physical-genital terms, and their understanding is greatly distorted. Young people learn from many sources in society that women are sexual objects, and that men are physically driven, violent, uncaring creatures. She concludes that

we have no choice as to whether children and youth will be exposed to erotic or pornographic material. It is virtually impossible to shield them from sexual stimuli today. What we need to do is give children, young people, adults, and parents the information and skills they need and are asking for, so that their sexuality will be healthy.²⁴

VII. A History of Pornography Regulation in the United States

Early Regulation of Pornography and Obscenity

The development of laws to regulate obscenity began in England.¹ Although there were no established standards for identifying obscene materials or acts, a current dictionary definition indi-

cates moral assumptions that have influenced the identification of obscene materials and acts:

Offensive to modesty or decency; indecent; lewd, as obscene pictures. Causing, or intended to cause, sexual excitement or lust. Abominable; disgusting; repulsive; an obscene exhibition of public discourtesy.²

The first reported obscenity decision in England involved Sir Charles Sedley in 1663, who was convicted of obscene exposure for disrobing in front of a crowd and urinating on them. In 1727, nakedness was found to be a breach of the peace, and in 1770 a man was jailed for publishing an obscene poem entitled, "Essay on Women."

Prior to the American Revolution, only one state had an obscenity law. Since the First Amendment to the Constitution guarantees that "Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press,"³ any regulation of pornography and obscenity challenges the constitutionally allowable limits of these freedoms. Obscenity laws have repeatedly tested the meaning of constitutional rights.

In 1711, censorship laws in Massachusetts were extended to include the "wicked, profane, impure, filthy and obscene."⁴ The earliest reported American case to confront obscenity was in 1815, when it was declared an offense to exhibit for profit a picture of a nude couple. Beginning in 1821, states began to pass obscenity statutes and this trend accelerated after 1868, when New York adopted an obscenity law.

While nineteenth century Victorian drawing rooms espoused a vast array of rules and regulations designed to keep everyone and everything in their proper places, a small select group of upper-class men pursued their investigation into the profane and pornographic.⁵ In secret these men collected erotic and esoteric memorabilia, built libraries and debated the nature of pornography. Some believed that all representations are potentially harmful because they distract from the real world. Others thought that representations are a self-contained experience and do not influence real life.

As long as this debate remained within the select privileged group, concern about pornography's ill effects on society did not arise. Generally the powerful of that era believed that poor people, all women, and children could not understand the world of grand passion. To expose them to it would be harmful and would engulf their lives, creating chaos. Therefore they had to be shielded from such literature.

In the late 1800s, pornography regulation was largely due to the efforts of one individual, Anthony Comstock. In 1873, he organized the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice and started a movement that succeeded in enacting laws that, with some modification, remain in effect today. Also in 1873, President Grant signed "An Act for the Suppression of Trade in, and Circulation of, Obscene Literature and Articles of Immoral Use," better known as the "Comstock Law." This law targeted materials sent through the mail, from information on contraception and abortion to lewd books and advice on sexuality.

In his role as a special agent for the Department of the Post Office, Comstock took a direct hand in the arrest and conviction of many people, including Margaret Sanger, who came to his attention because of her birth control pamphlets and other materials. Sanger fled the country after being indicted for nine charges of obscenity, but she returned to assist her estranged husband, who was arrested when he distributed a pamphlet to a man working for Comstock. Shortly after she returned, Comstock died, and the movement appeared to collapse without his zeal. Public opinion shifted away from censorship and charges against Sanger were dropped.

Comstock's death in 1915 reduced the vigorous suppression of materials, but prosecutions continued on a sporadic basis. In 1879, U.S. law had enacted a British legal principle, that "a publication could be banned solely because of the sexual content of isolated passages." This principle held until the 1930s when a federal court ruled against suppression of a book that would become a modern classic, *Ulysses*. This ruling maintained that "obscenity must derive from a reading of the work as a whole," and the law must look at the work's effect "on a person with average sexual instincts, not a young or especially susceptible reader."⁶

Other books and magazines, such as *Lady Chatterly's Lover*, *An American Tragedy*, and *Esquire*, were prosecuted as obscenity. Courts labored to separate materials of literary and scientific merit from those written merely to excite lust. Panels of experts gathered to judge the value of questionable literary pieces.

At the same time, courts declared that juries must set the standards, and contradictory decisions were found from one jurisdiction to another. Cases were referred to the Supreme Court in the search for standardized interpretation of the law regarding obscenity.

Current Obscenity Law

In 1957, the Supreme Court was confronted with the tension over constitutionally allowable limits on First Amendment guarantees. In deciding the case of *Roth v. United States*, the Court issued a landmark pronouncement delineating obscenity regulation.

Roth—a distributor of unauthorized and slightly altered books, including *Ulysses* and *Works in Progress* by James Joyce and Balzac's *Contes Drolatiques*—appeared before the Supreme Court to appeal his conviction for mailing obscene circulars and books. The Court upheld Roth's conviction, ruling that it was illegal to mail "obscene, lewd, lascivious, or filthy" materials or "other publications of an indecent character."⁷ In another 1957 case, *Albert v. California*, the Supreme Court upheld a law banning the publication, advertising, sale, or distribution of "any obscene or indecent" material.⁸

Establishing new judicial precedent in the Roth opinion, the Supreme Court ruled that obscene materials are those that are "utterly without redeeming social importance," which meant that some material was outside protection of the First Amendment.⁹ Material was held to be legally obscene if "to the average person, applying contemporary community standards, the dominant theme of the material taken as a whole appeals to prurient interest."¹⁰ Prurient interest was defined as a "shameful or morbid interest in nudity, sex or excretion which goes substantially beyond customary limits of candor in description or representation."¹¹

This decision did not serve to end the debate. The phrase, "utterly without redeeming social importance," opened the door to repeated challenges. In the decade following the Roth decision, books that had previously been declared obscene were reexamined for traces of socially redeeming qualities.

Writers not only wrote pornography; they wrote about pornography—analyzing it, defining it, condemning it:

- It is fantasy writing, wish-fulfillment writing, differing from other forms of fantasy writing, such as romantic fiction by being explicitly sexual. ... Pornography is transcribed masturbation fantasy.¹²
- Pornography is the representation of directly or indirectly erotic acts with an intrusive vividness which offends decency without aesthetic justification.¹³
- Pornography, then, is a certain kind of obscenity—it is sexual obscenity in which the debasement of the human dement is heavily accentuated, is depicted in great psychological detail, and is carried very far toward its utmost logical conclusion.¹⁴

In their 1959 book, *Pornography and the Law: The Psychology of Erotic Realism and Pornography*, Eberhard and Phyllis Kronhausen added a new phrase to the discussion of pornography:

In pornography [hard-core obscenity], the main purpose is to stimulate erotic response in the reader. And that is all.¹⁵

In the opinion of some, hard-core pornography fits the criterion of the Roth decision by being “utterly without redeeming social importance.” Furthermore, it was regarded as infantile. The warnings to protect children from Satan, issued earlier by Anthony Comstock, shifted to warnings about the individual who read pornography, characterized as mentally defective and probably a lower-class male. This kind of individual was assumed to be immature, to have no taste for art or literature and to live in a fantasy world that would be twisted to suit reality. Opinion was expressed that these individuals had to be restrained and their access to pornographic representations controlled.¹⁶

Following the Roth decision, books that had previously been banned or available only “underground” began to surface. *Fanny Hill* by John Cleveland, *Tropic of Cancer* and *Tropic of Capricorn* by Henry Miller, *Lady Chatterly’s Lover* by D. H. Lawrence, and *The Story of O* by Pauline Reage all found their way onto community bookshelves and public libraries. Community standards appeared to be changing as pornography, and obscenity boundaries, were repeatedly tested.

Throughout the 1960s the Supreme Court heard repeated challenges to obscenity law. In 1973 two cases added to the Court’s interpretation and have since undergirded obscenity law opinion. The ruling in *Paris Adult Theatre I v. Slaton* established that speech which is obscene may be regulated if there is merely a “rational basis” for the regulation, and not according to the more stringent legal standards of “clear and present danger,” or for “compelling interest,” which apply to speech protected by the First Amendment.¹⁷

The ruling in *Miller v. California* set the standards for a test of whether material is legally obscene. In order to be judged obscene, and regulated as such, material must fit all three of the following criteria:

1. The average person, applying contemporary community standards, would find that the work, taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest [in sex]; and
2. The work depicts or describes, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct specifically defined by the applicable state [or federal] law; and

3. The work, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.¹⁸

The Supreme Court also gave examples of the types of sexual conduct that could be defined and regulated as obscenity under part two of the standard:

- a. Patently offensive representations or depictions of ultimate sexual acts, normal or perverted, actual or simulated.
- b. Patently offensive representations or descriptions of masturbation, excretory functions, and lewd exhibition of the genitals.¹⁹

Subsequent to these opinions, the Supreme Court has required that this legal definition of obscenity be used only under “close judicial scrutiny” in order “to insure that non-obscene material is not erroneously determined to be obscene.”²⁰ A leading case involved the Supreme Court’s overturning a Georgia conviction against the film *Carnal Knowledge*. In its ruling, the Court made clear that the First Amendment prohibits any community from finding against a movie such as this, regardless of its standards.²¹

Because of this concern, subsequent cases have been limited to those involving “hard-core” material, that which is “devoid of anything except the most explicit and offensive representations of sex.”²²

In 1982, the Supreme Court ruled in *New York v. Ferber* that the standard of obscenity bears no relevance to child pornography. Since child pornography involves the sexual abuse of real children, the Court upheld a New York statute “prohibiting the distribution of material which depicts children engaged in sexual conduct without requiring that the material be legally ‘obscene.’”²³ In so ruling, the Court made a significant exception to the obscenity formula by placing children in a protected category.

Several laws related to obscenity and pornography have been passed by Congress. Federal statutes make it a criminal act to mail obscene material, to import or transport obscene material in interstate or foreign commerce, to broadcast obscene language, or to transport obscene material for the purpose of sale or distribution.²⁴

The U. S. Customs Service, the U. S. Postal Service, the Federal Communications Commission, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation are responsible for enforcement of these obscenity statutes. In 1984, Congress added “dealing in obscenity” to the federal Racketeer-Influenced Corruption Organizations law

(R.I.C.O.), which covers racketeering activities involved in murder, extortion, gambling, narcotics, bribery, robbery, and kidnapping.²⁵ As of October 1987, two obscenity cases have been filed by the Justice Department under this provision.²⁶

While there is broad consensus on the regulation of child pornography by government and law enforcement agencies, opinion is divided over the identification and regulation of material depicting adults by use of the obscenity standard. Furthermore, new court opinion continues to be written, as additional cases test existing obscenity standards. Two challenges were made in 1987.

The Constitution of the State of Oregon sets forth in plain language that no law shall be passed restraining the free expression of opinion, or restricting the right to speak, write or print freely on any subject whatever; but every person shall be responsible for the abuse of this right.²⁷

Following seizure of the inventory of an adult bookstore and a subsequent jury trial in which the owner was found guilty of disseminating obscene material, the Oregon Supreme Court rejected the precedent established in *Miller v. California*, and overturned the conviction. In its January 1987 opinion, the Oregon Court disagreed with previous United States Supreme Court rulings and declared that “although the Miller test may pass federal constitutional muster ... , the test constitutes censorship forbidden by the Oregon Constitution.”²⁸ The Oregon Court further argued that “obscene speech, writing or equivalent forms of communication are ‘speech’ nonetheless . . . it may not be punished in the interest of a uniform vision on how human sexuality should be regarded or portrayed.”²⁹ In its ruling, the Oregon Court challenged United States Supreme Court opinion, which the Oregon Court argued violates both the Oregon Constitution and the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

In a case decided May 4, 1987, the Supreme Court altered its three-tier test for judging obscenity. While presumably continuing to allow community standards to determine whether a work appeals to the prurient interest and is patently offensive, it shifted the third criterion by ruling that the proper inquiry in determining obscenity is not whether an “ordinary member of any given community” would find serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value in the work, but whether a “reasonable person” would find serious value.³⁰ Opinion on this ruling suggests that the standard for determining a work’s value has been shifted from one based on a community’s values to one based on the values of

an individual not necessarily in the community.³¹ This adjusted definition, according to columnist James J. Kilpatrick, succeeds in “obscuring the already obscure.”³²

Alternative to Obscenity Law: The Civil Rights Ordinance

In 1983, the city of Minneapolis held hearings on a new zoning regulation to curb the sale of pornography in certain neighborhoods. Attorney Catherine A. MacKinnon and author Andrea Dworkin, feminists who were teaching a course on pornography at the University of Minnesota Law School, were asked by neighborhood groups to testify. Neither MacKinnon nor Dworkin believed that zoning regulations or existing obscenity laws would address their major concern: the harm of pornography to women.³³ In their opinion, zoning regulations seemed to legitimize pornography as long as it was kept out of specified areas.

As a result of their testimony, the City Council of Minneapolis hired Dworkin and MacKinnon to draft an ordinance to amend the Minneapolis Civil Rights Ordinances to include pornography as sex discrimination. Under this new law, trafficking in pornography, coercion into pornographic performances, forcing pornography on a person, and assault or physical attack due to pornography would be defined as violations. Rather than as a criminal law, which depends on police action and state prosecution, the ordinance was drafted as a civil law in which an aggrieved person may enforce its provisions by means of a civil action or suit. After hearing testimony, primarily by women who believe themselves to be harmed and victimized by pornography, the City Council adopted the ordinance, which defined pornography as “the sexually explicit subordination of women, graphically depicted, whether in pictures or in words.” The ordinance is prefaced with the following findings on pornography:

The council finds that pornography is central in creating and maintaining the civil inequality of the sexes. Pornography is a systematic practice of exploitation and subordination based on sex which differentially harms women. The bigotry and contempt it promotes, with the acts of aggression it fosters, harm women’s opportunities for equality of rights in employment, education, property rights, public accommodations and public services; create public harassment and private denigration; promote injury and degradation, such as rape, battery and prostitution, and inhibit just enforcement of laws against these acts; contribute significantly to restricting women from full exercise of citizenship and participation in public life, including in neighborhoods; damage relations between the sexes; and undermine women’s equal exercise of rights to speech and action guaranteed to all citizens under the constitutions and laws of the United States and the state of Minnesota.³⁴

Immediately following approval of the ordinance by the City Council, the mayor vetoed it, holding that it conflicted with First

Amendment rights and would be overturned by the courts. A second, slightly amended ordinance was adopted by the Council, and was also vetoed by the mayor.

In 1984 and 1985, the City of Indianapolis struggled with a different version of the ordinance. Indianapolis legislators narrowed the definition to concentrate on violent, “hard-core” pornography, excluding action against “soft-core” pornography. This ordinance was passed by the city, signed by the mayor, and immediately became the target of a suit filed by a coalition of book-sellers, distributors, and publishers.³⁵ Both a federal district court and the U.S. Court of Appeals upheld the suits, ruling against the ordinance. The Supreme Court declined to review the case.

In its opinion, the Court of Appeals held that the ordinance’s definition of pornography was its essential flaw:

The ordinance discriminates on the ground of the content of the speech. Speech treating women in the approved way—in sexual encounters “premised on equality”—is lawful no matter how sexually explicit. Speech treating women in the disapproved way—as submissive in matters sexual or as enjoying humiliation—is unlawful no matter how significant the literary, artistic, or political qualities of the work taken as a whole. The state may not ordain preferred viewpoints in this way. The constitution forbids the state to declare one perspective right and silence opponents.³⁶

The Court of Appeals sympathized with the contention that “pornography is not an idea; pornography is the injury.”³⁷ The fact that “depictions of subordination tend to perpetuate subordination . . . simply demonstrates the power of pornography as speech.”³⁸ However, the court contended that “the image of pain is not necessarily pain,” and “depictions may affect slavery, war, or sexual roles, but a book about slavery is not itself slavery, or a book about death by poison a murder.”³⁹ Even though the ordinance, as civil law, did not include prior restraint (a hallmark of censorship), the court ruled that “a law awarding damages for assaults caused by speech also has the power to muzzle the press.”⁴⁰

Pending Legislation: The Pornography Victims Protection Act

Currently pending in the Congress is legislation entitled “The Pornography Victims Protection Act” (H.R. 1213, which is included in the Background Material of this report). The purpose of this proposed legislation is to provide legal means for prosecuting those who engage in specific harmful behaviors related to the production of pornography. The legislation would make it “a crim-

inal offense for any person to coerce, intimidate, or fraudulently induce any person, adult or minor, to engage in any sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of such conduct.”⁴¹ Sponsor of the House bill, Representative Bill Green, has maintained that this legislation “will effectively combat such sexual exploitation, particularly of women and children in the United States, while giving victims the opportunity to recover significant compensation for their injuries.”⁴²

VIII. Government Studies of Pornography

The 1970 Report of the Presidential Commission on Pornography and Obscenity

An eighteen-member commission, appointed in 1968 by President Lyndon B. Johnson to study the issue of pornography and obscenity, submitted its report to the Nixon administration in 1970. The highly controversial report, which followed two years of study funded by a two million dollar budget, was fully endorsed by twelve of the seventeen voting members. Two members accepted the content of the report but disagreed with the legislative recommendations. Three members rejected the majority decision and filed sharply worded minority dissents.

The majority report concluded that there is no causal relationship between sexually oriented material and criminal or anti-social behavior. It called for a repeal of laws forbidding the sale of erotic material to adults, which were found to be a source of entertainment and information for substantial numbers of adults. The report was rejected by the Nixon administration, and the United States Senate rejected the commission’s finding that government interference in the sale of pornography to adults was unjustified.¹

The 1971 yearbook of *Collier’s Encyclopedia* presented comparative data that are helpful in seeing the differences between majority and minority views of commission members:

Legislation

The Majority Report

... The commission recommends that federal, state, and local legislation should not seek to interfere with the right of adults who wish to do so to read, obtain, or view explicit sexual materials. On the other hand, we recommend legislative regulations upon the sale of sexual materials to young persons who do not have the consent of their parents, and we also recommend legislation to protect persons from having sexual materials thrust upon them without their consent through the mails or through open public display.

Minority Objections

The commission's majority report is a Magna Carta for the pornographer ... The commission leadership and majority recommend that more existing legal barriers between society and pornography be pulled down. In so doing, the commission goes far beyond its mandate and assumes the role of counsel for the filth merchant—a role not assigned by the Congress of the United States. (Hill, Link, Keating)

Sex Education

The Majority Report

The commission believes that accurate, appropriate sex information provided openly and directly through legitimate channels and from reliable sources in healthy contexts can compete successfully with potentially distorted, warped, inaccurate, and unreliable information from clandestine, illegitimate sources. ... The commission recommends that a massive sex education effort be launched.

Minority Objections

Sex education, recommended so strongly by the majority, is the panacea for those who advocate license in media. The report. ... notes that three schools have used "hard-core pornography" in training potential instructors. ... Will these instructors not bring the hard-core pornography into the grammar schools? (Hill, Link, Keating)

Public Opinion

Majority Report

There is no consensus among Americans regarding what they consider to be the effects of viewing or reading explicit sexual materials.

Minority Report

Credit the American public with enough sense to know that one who wallows in filth is going to get dirty. This is intuitive knowledge. Those who will spend millions of dollars to tell us otherwise must be malicious or misguided, or both. (Keating)

Antisocial Effects of Pornography

Majority Report

Extensive empirical investigation ... provides no evidence that exposure to or use of explicit sexual materials plays a significant role in the causation of social or individual harms such as crime, delinquency, sexual or nonsexual deviancy, or severe emotional disturbances.

Minority Objections

... Data from a number of studies which show statistical linkages between high exposure to pornography and promiscuity, deviancy, affiliation with high criminality groups, etc., have gone unreported. This suggests a major bias in the reporting of results. ... (Hill, Link, Keating)

Morality

Majority Report

The commission is of the view that it is exceedingly unwise for government to attempt to legislate individual moral values and standards indepen-

dent of behavior, especially by restrictions upon consensual communication. ... Governmental regulation of moral choice can deprive the individual of the responsibility for personal decision which is essential to the formation of genuine moral standards.

Minority Report

Not only does every individual reflect a certain moral character, but so does every group of individuals ... the essence of which is determined by a general consensus of individual standards. ... It is this level, this distillation, this average, this essence, which the state has an interest in protecting. . . . The obvious morals protected are chastity, modesty, temperance, and self-sacrificing love. The obvious evils being inhibited are lust, excess, adultery, incest, homosexuality, bestiality, masturbation, and fornication. (Hill, Link, Keating)

The 1986 Report of the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography

In May of 1985, Attorney General Edwin Meese III announced the appointment of an 11-member commission, with a \$500,000 budget, whose stated objective was to determine the nature, extent, and impact on society of pornography in the United States, and to make specific recommendations to the Attorney General concerning more effective ways in which the spread of pornography could be contained, consistent with constitutional guarantees.²

In his press statement announcing creation of the commission, Attorney General Meese declared that "reexamination of the issue of pornography is long overdue. Its impact upon society was last assessed fully fifteen years ago. Since then, the content of pornography has radically changed, with more and more emphasis upon extreme violence. Moreover, no longer must one go out of the way to find pornographic materials. With the advent of cable TV and video recorders, pornography now is available at home to anyone—regardless of age—at the mere touch of a button."³

For one year the commission gathered information, including testimony presented at public hearings in Washington, D.C., Chicago, Los Angeles, Miami, and New York City. In July of 1986 the commission released its report, published in one volume by Rutledge Hill Press for public distribution. This edition, entitled *Final Report of the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography*, begins with an introductory discussion of the issue of pornography and its definition. Although commission members acknowledged the futility of their attempt to define pornography, and minimized use of the word throughout their report, they also indicated that their reference to material as "pornographic" meant "only that the

material is predominantly sexually explicit and intended primarily for the purpose of sexual arousal.”⁴

The report continues with a history of pornography and a discussion of the constraints of the First Amendment, including an analysis of obscenity laws as established by the Supreme Court. While concluding that there are First Amendment concerns created by obscenity regulation, the Commission supported efforts to regulate sexually explicit material according to established obscenity law standards.⁵ (Thorough discussion of obscenity law regulation may be found in the section of this report entitled “A History of Pornography Regulation in the United States.”)

The commission’s report represents the most recent governmental effort to document evidence of the proliferation of pornography in the 1980s. Introductory comments to the chapter on “The Market and the Industry” state that “More than in 1957, ... more than in 1970, ... more than just a year ago in 1985, we live in a society unquestionably pervaded by sexual explicitness.”⁶

Because of this proliferation, the commission precedes its discussion of the pornography industry with a survey of other forms of sexually explicit material that “are usefully contrasted with the more unquestionably pornographic.”⁷

The Market for Sexual Explicitness

The Motion Picture Industry. Sexuality, in varying degrees of explicitness or offensiveness, is part of many mainstream motion pictures. The rating system has no legal force, but it is designed to provide information on the content of films. “R” rated films are restricted to viewing by persons over the age of seventeen, unless accompanied by a parent or guardian. Such films may be devoted to themes of sex or violence, including scenes of nudity, but they do not contain explicit sexual activity. If a film is sexually explicit or has extreme amounts of violence, it is rated “X,” and no one under the age of seventeen may be admitted.

The rating system is virtually ineffective in categorizing pornographic films. Only rarely are such films even submitted for rating. Many of these are self-labeled “XXX” for promotional purposes. Furthermore, many of the films that receive an “X” rating are intended for adult viewing but are not commonly considered to be pornographic.

Sexually Explicit Magazines. Most magazines with sexual content are directed to the attention of men, although some varia-

tions have recently been aimed at a female audience. Some combine sexual content with a substantial amount of nonsexual material. Some limit sexual content to photographs of female nudity, while others show significant amounts of simulated or actual sexual activity. Commission members believed that virtually all of the magazines they categorized as “sexually explicit” contain at least some material considered to be “degrading,” and some magazines contain large amounts of degrading, as well as sexually violent, material.

Television. The advent of cable and satellite television added a new availability for sexually explicit material. Under current law, cable and satellite television are not subject to the same range of Federal Communications Commission content regulation and are, therefore, more free to offer sexually explicit material than is broadcast television. This may include films, talk shows offering sexual advice, and music videos with stronger sexual and violent themes. What is available varies according to area and channel.

The commission classifies videotape cassettes as a form of television, since that is the means by which they are viewed. Video cassettes may encompass anything from standard motion picture fare to material that might be shown in an “adults only” theater. The commission acknowledged that material found in video stores tended in the past to be “more on the conventional end” and reflected desires of patrons to be offered a full range of video material. More recently, however, “less conventional material has become available in some full range of video outlets.”⁸

The Pornography Industry

The commission contends that in the past ten to twenty years, there has been “a dramatic increase in the size of the industry producing sexually explicit materials that would generally be conceded to be pornographic.”⁹

While the industry is not as clandestine as it was in earlier years, the production of pornographic materials is still a substantially underground business. Although the commission indicates that 80 percent of the production of pornographic motion pictures and videos is done in and around Los Angeles, members maintain that “there is virtually no overlap between this industry and the traditional motion picture industry.”¹⁰

The production of standard pornographic magazines and books also operates according to a partially clandestine process.

The method of distributing films is rapidly changing as “adults only” theaters decrease in popularity and video tape cassettes become an increasingly popular medium. Videotapes that could *be* considered pornographic are often available at regular video stores, as well as at “adults only” pornographic outlets, or sex shops. Entry to “adults only” establishments is usually limited to those over eighteen years of age. “Peep shows” are often available and provide booths that allow some degree of privacy for patrons to masturbate or engage in sexual activity with others while viewing films or live sex acts (male-female, two men, two women, more than two people). Anonymous sex acts are also possible through holes in the walls of the booths.

Books and magazines are available at these outlets, although many magazines are sold through the mail. Magazines that in the recent past sold for \$10 to \$20 each are discounted, a reflection that videotapes are becoming the preferred medium. Sexual paraphernalia and newspapers are also for sale.

Dr. Park Elliott Dietz, associate professor of law, behavioral, medicine, and psychiatry at the University of Virginia and a member of the Attorney General’s Commission, summarized in his personal statement the extremes that pornography may depict:

A person who learned about human sexuality in the “adults only” pornography outlets of America would be a person who had never conceived of a man and a woman marrying or even falling in love before having intercourse, who had never conceived of two people making love in privacy without guilt or fear of discovery, who had never conceived of tender foreplay, who had never conceived of vaginal intercourse with ejaculation during intromission, and who had never conceived of procreation as a purpose of sexual union. Instead, such a person would be one who had learned that sex at home meant sex with one’s children, stepchildren, parents, stepparents, siblings, cousins, nephews, nieces, aunts, uncles, and pets, and with neighbors, milkmen, plumbers, salesmen, burglars, and peepers; who had learned that people take off their clothes and have sex within the first five minutes of meeting one another; who had learned to misjudge the percentage of women who prepare for sex by shaving their pubic hair, having their breasts, buttocks, or legs tattooed, having their nipples or labia pierced, or donning leather, latex, rubber, or child-like costumes; who had learned to misjudge the proportion of men who prepare for sex by having their genitals or nipples pierced, wearing women’s clothing, or growing breasts; who had learned that about one out of every five sexual encounters involves spanking, whipping, fighting, wrestling, tying, chaining, gagging, or torture; who learned that more than one in ten sexual acts involves a party of more than two; who learned that the purpose of ejaculation is that of soiling the mouths, faces, breasts, abdomens, backs, and food at which it is always aimed; who had learned that body cavities were designed for the insertion of foreign objects, who had learned that the anus was a genital to be licked and penetrated; who had learned that urine and excrement are erotic materials; who had learned that the instruments of sex are chemicals, handcuffs, gags, hoods, restraints, harnesses, police badges, knives,

guns, whips, paddles, toilets, diapers, enema bags, inflatable rubber women, and disembodied vaginas, breasts, and penises; and who had learned that except with the children, where secrecy was required, photographers and cameras were supposed to be present to capture the action so that it could be spread abroad.¹¹

The Role of Organized Crime

After spending “a considerable amount” of time “attempting to determine whether there is a connection between the pornography industry and what is commonly taken to be ‘organized crime,’” the commission concluded that “such a connection does exist.”¹²

Although there was disagreement about the involvement of organized crime, much of it involved varying assessments of what constitutes organized crime. Some people believe that “organized crime” means organizations directly related to the elaborately structured system known as La Cosa Nostra. For others, it is any well-organized enterprise that engages in criminal activity.

The commission felt there was “strong evidence that significant portions of the pornographic magazine industry, the peep show industry, and the pornographic Film industry are either directly operated or closely controlled by La Cosa Nostra members or very close associates.”¹³ While its lack of resources made it impossible to investigate these matters directly, the commission felt sufficiently persuaded by the work of federal and state authorities.

Child Pornography

The Attorney General’s Commission subtitles its discussion of child pornography “That Special Horror.” It establishes at the outset that “the distinguishing characteristic of child pornography, as generally understood, is that actual children are photographed while engaged in some form of sexual activity.” To understand child pornography is to understand its “special harm [which is] largely independent of the kinds of concerns often expressed with respect to sexually explicit materials involving only adults.”¹⁴

During the 1970s, increasing amounts of sexually explicit material involving children began to appear in adult bookstores and other channels of distribution. Testimony before Congress in 1977 revealed that “child pornography and child prostitution have become highly organized, multimillion dollar industries that operate on a nationwide scale.”¹⁵ At that time, over 200 different mag-

azines were produced each month. Thousands of children were being sexually exploited, and witnesses before Congress told of pornographers who kidnapped children and parents who sold them.

The commission acknowledged that drawings of children engaged in sexual intercourse with adults and written descriptions of children engaged in sexual activity can be dated from ancient civilization. Even though these portrayals and accounts may offend modern sensibilities, they are not “child pornography” in the current legal and clinical sense. In 1982 the Supreme Court, in its *New York v. Ferber* decision, wrote that child pornography is “limited to works that visually depict sexual conduct by children below a specified age.”¹⁶ The commission makes clear that the court’s language defines “child pornography” as appropriate only if it describes material depicting real children.

Because real children are involved in the actual production, the Supreme Court ruled that child pornography is a special category of material that may be regulated apart from obscenity standards used to regulate adult material. In 1977, Congress passed “The Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation Act,” which was a beginning effort to prohibit the production of sexually explicit material involving children. Enforcement of this act was of limited practical value, and Congress later passed the Child Protection Act of 1984. The commission declared that “virtually every state . . . now prohibits by its criminal law the production, promotion, sale, exhibition, or distribution of photographs of children engaged in any sexual activity.”¹⁷

Title 18 of the United States Code prohibits the use of any minor in sexually explicit conduct for the production of any visual materials, as well as the transportation, distribution, or reception of any visual depiction of a minor engaged in sexually explicit conduct. A “minor” is defined as any person under the age of eighteen and “sexually explicit conduct” as sexual intercourse, oral or anal sex, bestiality, masturbation, sadistic or masochistic abuse, or lascivious exhibition of the genitals or pubic areas.¹⁸

In the late 1970s, increased public attention and concern had a significant impact upon law enforcement initiatives against child pornography. Those efforts accelerated after the Supreme Court ruling in 1982, and the commission reports that these law enforcement efforts curtailed “substantially the domestic commercial production of child pornography.”¹⁹ However, the domestic industry still continues as does a significant foreign industry.

This material is not available openly, but it may be obtained “under the counter.”

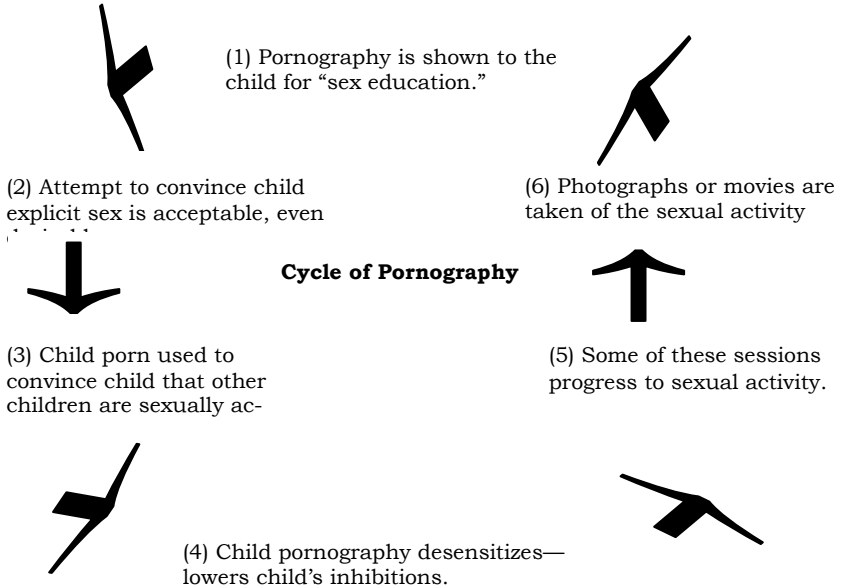
Child pornography is produced not only through commercial channels. The commission contends that the greatest amount is produced non-commercially in a kind of “cottage industry.” Many children suffer from sexual abuse, and when photographs are taken, child pornography is the photographic record of that abuse. Child pornography often involves photographs taken by child abusers who either share them or distribute them informally to other child abusers. It is very difficult to determine the size of this trade because this network is so clandestine.

The commission report uses a diagram to show a cyclical pattern by which children become engaged.²⁰

(Note: the use of the words “Sex Education” in step one of the following figure does not refer to competent sex education that is factually accurate and sensitive to personal responsibility.)

Cycle

One of the most common questions asked from a public that knows very little about child pornography is: “How does child pornography begin?” This diagram explains one of the most common ways a child is introduced to pornographic activity:



Source: S. O’Brien, *Child Pornography*, 89, (1983).

The report declares that, while “the legislative assault on child pornography drastically curtailed its public presence” and the “sexual exploitation of children has retreated to the shadows, ... no evidence before the commission suggests that children are any less at risk than before. The characteristics of both perpetrators and victims, combined with the extremely limited state of professional understanding, make it unlikely that child pornography is a passing phenomenon.”²¹

Findings and Recommendations

1. The commission rejected the First Amendment interpretation that holds that all sexually explicit material involving consenting adults, no matter how offensive, should be protected from regulation according to principles of freedom of speech and the press. It upheld interpretation of the Supreme Court in defining obscenity and permitting its regulation.²²

2. The commission advanced ninety-two recommendations for stricter enforcement of existing obscenity law, including those for the justice system and law enforcement agencies, for the regulation of child pornography, for victims of pornography, for civil rights legislation, and for regulation of “adults only” pornographic outlets.

The commission addressed the relationship between pornography and behavior in a section entitled “A Question of Harm.” Findings by the commission on this aspect of the pornography issue are presented in the section of this report entitled, “What Are the Effects of Pornography? A Discussion of Harm.”

IX. What Should Be Done About Pornography? Four Divergent Views

The debate over the definition of pornography and its effects culminates in debate over what should be done about it. Efforts to regulate it confront the delicate balance between individual freedom and public welfare, between personal decision making and community responsibility. Regulation also challenges the rule of law and calls for interpretation of the most basic legal principles. Both the 1973 PCUS statement on “Pornography, Obscenity, and Censorship” and the 1974 UPCUSA study of pornography address the challenge that this balance between individual and society presents for Christians:

Both the Christian faith and the democratic philosophy of government emphasize the freedom of the individual person from compulsory conformity of belief, thought, and lifestyle. On the other hand, both the Christian and dem-

ocratic traditions recognize that individual freedom is limited by, and in fact only fulfilled in, the requirements of a just and orderly community. A free society is not only a society which promotes the independence of individuals, but a society in which individuals live in mutual responsibility for each other and for the welfare of the community as a whole. (1973 PCUS statement)

Most ethical discussion affirms the balance between rights and responsibilities, between concern for the individual and concern for the community. The reason is simple; we believe two complementary realities: Jesus said, "...without your Father's leave, not one [sparrow] can fall to the ground. As for you, even the hairs of your head have all been counted." Along with God's care for the unique individual, we also affirm our inescapable corporateness. "Now you are in Christ's body, and each of you a limb or organ of it."

As Christians therefore, we are required to deal intelligently and faithfully with the two sometimes conflicting civil interests of individual freedom and public welfare. We cannot, on the one hand, simply declare that our freedom as Christians makes legislative issues [that bear on the exploitation of sex] of no interest or consequence for us; nor can we, on the other hand, impose our views on others without regard to the integrity of their interests, even when they may be in conflict with our own. (1974 UPCUSA study)

The same tensions between individual freedom and community regulation confront Christians in the 1980s. A review of the history of pornography and obscenity in American society reveals continuing debate over approaches to regulating pornographic material.

The agendas for addressing the issue of pornography reflect widely divergent value systems and goals. They constitute radically different views of sexuality, freedom, legality, morality, history, and the status of women and men. Because the issue is set into such divergent frameworks, conflict exists in analysis of both the problem of pornography and the solution to it. Furthermore, there is fundamental disagreement even among those who appear to be on the same side of the issue.

For Christians studying the issue of pornography, all approaches need to be examined through theological values about sexuality, morality, individual freedom, legal restraint, and male-female relationships. Presbyterian Christians also look at these various analyses through their particular Reformed theology and history. Religious values are clearly articulated in some of these perspectives, but they are not mentioned in the essential framework of others. However, all of them reflect theological values, and each of them challenges Presbyterians to examine their faith in relationship to the issue of pornography.

In an effort to give shape and understanding to this complex issue, Dr. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese of Emory University has categorized four different "camps" into which views on pornography

and its regulation can be placed.¹ Two can be labeled “opponents” of pornography; two can be labeled “tolerators.” Two advocate or support governmental regulation through the legal system; two reject any governmental regulation.

Advocate Regulation: A Morality View

Fox-Genovese distinguishes the first “camp” as primarily “conservatives of various persuasions who view pornography as certain testimony to the degradation of our moral life. ... For the conservatives, moral decency is at stake, and behind moral decency, the institutions, notably family and church, that have sustained it in the past. With varying degrees of enthusiasm, they are willing to risk the perils of censorship, which some view less as perils than as the reimposition of minimal social and political order.”²

The Rev. Dr. Jerry R. Kirk, pastor of the College Hill Presbyterian Church in Cincinnati, OH, and the organizing president of the National Coalition Against Pornography (N-CAP), entitles his book on pornography *The Mind Polluters*. In the first chapter he describes his realization that “the moral behavior of the nation has shifted” and that the problem that confronted him as a pastor was having “no answer for the avalanche of immorality that was crushing my people.”³ In his view, “the new American lifestyle” has turned us “away from the sanctity of the home, the security of marriage, from modesty and chastity.” Kirk says, “When did those words become trite, humorous, old-fashioned? What happened to the innocence of youth, to blushing young brides, to heroes who were admired for faithfulness and self-control?”⁴

William A. Stanmeyer, in his book, *The Seduction of Society*, describes his view of America’s changing society:

In retrospect, it is clear that our national morals have changed considerably since World War II. Prior to 1940–1945, the country as a whole adhered to the Judeo-Christian ethic of self-control. Generally speaking, our sexual relations were monogamous, our music wholesome, our films unobjectionable, our adolescent entertainments innocuous.

There was no open display of sexual materials. The calendar “pin-up” pictures of athletic girls on gas station walls were tame enough, and surely not obscene by any reasonable standard.

Whatever went on in private, public sexual morality (save perhaps among some indiscreet members of the movie industry) was uniformly straight-laced and even virtuous. Even in the mid-60s, people wondered out loud whether Nelson Rockefeller, an otherwise-qualified candidate for President, would lose too many votes because of his divorce.

Departures from basic morality caused scandal, not invitations onto the talk show circuit.

The moral tone of society was fairly high. During World War II people's energies focused on economic struggles and the national battle against the Axis powers. Immediately after the war, our national energies focused on economic expansion, building families in the suburbs, and acquiring that second car. There was a discipline in building one's assets even as, during the Depression years, there was a discipline in fighting to preserve one's assets. Whatever else they do, depression and war and subsequent economic growth bring austerity and demand stamina, not dissipation and hedonism.

Looking back, it seems that for about fifteen to twenty years, from the end of the war till around 1960–65, society remained on a moral plateau. We built a marvelous highway network. Much of the middle class fled the cities for the sprouting suburbs. Population expanded. Incomes went up. Despite the perceived Soviet threat, people came to take domestic tranquility and material advancement for granted. Moral problems did not especially preoccupy us. If they existed in any serious way, they lay below the surface of our national public life.⁵

According to Kirk, Stanmeyer, and those who share their views, something happened in the 1960s and 1970s to shift American society radically from an essentially moral culture to an immoral one. "The social consensus on moral values was shattered" and "public decency began to collapse."⁶

Promiscuity, drugs, and divorce are seen as evidence of a society that has lost its moral authority. Consensus among those who hold this view targets pornography as responsible for society's moral collapse. The "source of immorality" that is "shattering people's marriages and slaughtering our young people" is pornography.⁷

Stanmeyer cites numerous examples of what pornography is: exploitation films involving graphic sexual acts, magazine photos dehumanizing women, live sexual performances, adult bookstores with peep shows and sexual paraphernalia, films that mix sex and violence, films and photos of explicit sex by children, and magazines depicting rape, which serve as technique manuals.⁸

Examples of pornography by proponents of this view include the whole range of sexually explicit material: child pornography, men's magazines, cable television movies, videotapes, Dial-A-Porn phone messages, films, and everything in adult book stores.

While there is some recognition of the debate over definition and the distinction between hard-core and soft-core pornography, all sexually explicit material is believed to contribute to the immorality of society and is only less dangerous by degree. Kirk quotes the conclusions of researchers Park Elliott Dietz and Barbara Evans that "sadism and masochism, in the broadest sense, play a part in all pornography."⁹

Child pornography and pornography's influence on children constitute a primary focus of this approach. Quoting Matthew 18:5-6, Kirk holds pornography's producers, actors, models, purchasers, advertisers, tolerators, and defenders responsible for the "millstone" fastened around the necks of our children.¹⁰

The *Playboy* philosophy, advertising, rock lyrics and videos are linked to child molestation, incest, teen-age pregnancy, drugs, illicit sex, and suicide. Child pornography is a special concern, but all pornography is the target. According to Bruce Taylor of Citizens for Decency Through Law, "You'll never get rid of child pornography until you get rid of the general pornography industry. It's the same people producing it. If the federal government is serious about wiping out kiddie porn, it ought to put the producers and distributors in jail."¹¹

Proponents of this approach believe not only that pornography has a connection to the evils of society but that it is the primary identifiable source. Statistics on the proliferation of pornography are accompanied by statistics on the sexual abuse of children, rape, abduction of children, runaway children, sexually transmitted diseases, and homosexuality.¹²

James Dobson, president of Focus on the Family and a member of the Attorney General's Commission, identifies pornography as the target in "combating the darkness," since "what is at stake here is the future of the family itself."¹³ Broken families, violence, and abused children are seen as consequences of pornography's wickedness.

This view takes a protective approach to pornography's consequences for women. It acknowledges the "devastation" and "exploitation" of women that result from both the production of pornography and the impact of its images on all women.¹⁴

Pornography is labeled a "male obsession" that women find "offensive." Feminists such as Andrea Dworkin and Susan Brownmiller are cited in establishing the relationship between pornography and violence toward women. Pornography is held responsible for the "desensitization of men" and the distorted images men have of women.

However, this is essentially a "morality view" and not a feminist one. While appearing to support the feminist argument, closer examination reveals a departure from feminist analysis. Kirk, in contrasting "the pit and the pedestal," attacks the pit of violence and abuse that pornography creates for women, while implying

that the pedestal is the ideal place for women. Feminists reject the pedestal (supra-human elevation) as well as the pit.

In spite of expressed protective concern for women who are victimized by pornography, women are ultimately viewed as the seducers, the source of male victimization. Kirk appears to be addressing a male audience when he refers to the book of Proverbs, warning of the danger of “constant exposure to pornographic material” and the lure of the *Playboy* bunny and her associates:

Do not desire her beauty in your heart,
and do not let her capture you with her eyelashes;
for a harlot may be hired for a loaf of bread,
but an adulteress stalks a man’s very life.

for many a victim she laid low; yea all her slain
are a mighty host.
Her house is the way to Sheol,
going down to the chambers of death. (Prov. 6:25–26; 7:26–27)¹⁵

Stanmeyer further distances this approach from feminism. While feminists are affirmed for recognizing the anti-female essence of pornography, they are charged with overlooking “the fact that it also degrades children of both sexes and degrades young men as well (homosexual pornography).”¹⁶ Feminists are suspected of tolerating pornography that does not involve women and are accused of not discerning the “common thread” of “predatory hedonism,” or the exploitive pleasure without moral and cultural restraint that “connects all forms of pornography.” Because “sexual liberation” appears to him to be part of the feminist program, he contends that “a by-product of feminism is the notion that women should have the same opportunity as men to be sexually promiscuous.” Feminist views are rejected because they “have not embraced a traditional view of public morality and public decency.”¹⁷

Because this “camp” is convinced of pornography’s evil influence on society, an extensive agenda is advocated for regulating and eliminating it. It sees a legal difference between hard-core and soft-core pornography and accepts the established definition of the Supreme Court on obscenity. Pornography is seen as unprotected, obscene speech since it is “nothing more than a means whereby one is titillated or sexually stimulated.”¹⁸ The essence of regulation is the strict legal enforcement of current obscenity law.

Kirk, however, recognizes the difficulty of regulation by means of existing laws and proposes an ultimate solution:

While the current law clearly does permit effective action to be taken, *Miller v. California* contains phraseology that often has been exploited to wriggle free

from the law. This is why our job would be greatly facilitated if legislation were enacted forbidding the distribution through interstate commerce, whether by printed material or filmed material, by air waves or by wireless communication, of any *visual* portrayal of ultimate sexual acts for purposes of commercial entertainment”¹⁹

Kirk’s National Coalition Against Pornography (N-CAP) states the following as its focus:

As a coalition, we are in unanimous agreement that hard-core and child pornography, which are not protected by the Constitution, must be eliminated. ... N-CAP encourages and supports the enactment and the full, fair enforcement of constitutional laws prohibiting obscenity and child pornography, and effectively regulating indecency and sexually explicit material that is harmful to minors.²⁰

N-CAP prepares materials and sponsors events that present information and rationale for governmental enforcement of obscenity laws, as well as extensive suggestions for individual and community involvement against pornography. In 1987, a two-year “community-by-community crusade across America” was launched to Stand Together Opposing Pornography (STOP).²¹

Supporters are being trained and encouraged to build a team of community leaders to assess the problem in their communities, work with law enforcement officials and the media, and raise funds.²² Suggestions from the Attorney General’s Commission regarding citizen and community action are recommended, such as education about pornography, economic boycotts and picketing, advocacy for antidisplay and zoning laws, conducting a Court Watch to monitor obscenity cases, patronage of antipornography businesses, parental monitoring of rock music, and working to limit availability of pornography in taxpayer-funded institutions, particularly schools. With regard to schools, these suggestions allow that “content-based restrictions ... need not be limited to the legally obscene.”²³

This approach is represented by a wide diversity of individuals and groups. The Religious Alliance Against Pornography (RAAP), an organization of Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish leaders of both conservative and liberal views, have united around a narrow focus: “That hard-core and child pornography, which are not protected by the Constitution, are evils which must be eliminated.”²⁴ (The foundational document and list of organizing leaders of RAAP is in the Background Material of this report.)

Supporters of this view are found in largest numbers among a variety of both theologically and politically conservative organizations. In a brochure accompanying materials describing *Porno-*

graphy: A Winnable War, the 1987 film produced by James Dobson and Jerry Kirk, identification is made of organizations that are “dedicated to the preservation of traditional family values”: American Life Lobby, Christian Action Council, National Right to Life Committee, Christian Legal Society, Concerned Women for America, the Eagle Forum, Family Research Council, Morality in Media, National Association of Evangelicals, National Coalition Against Pornography, National Federation for Decency, the National Pro-Family Coalition, and Focus on the Family.²⁵

Proponents reject charges that “those who oppose the spread of obscene material in our society are ... grim, scissor-happy reactionaries who bludgeon their opponents with the Bible.” In an editorial criticizing the media’s depiction of this approach, Steve Hallman writes, “We are liberals and conservatives, women and men, Christian, Jew, and nonbeliever who, with a genuine concern for the Constitution and the danger of excessive zeal, have yet become very alarmed over the proliferation of pornography.”²⁶

In their view, the most traditional values of society are being assaulted by a “flood of pornography” and the battle against it is nothing less than a “war against impurity.”²⁷

Advocate Regulation: A Feminist View

The second “camp” that Fox-Genovese identifies consists of “militant feminists who view pornography as one of the principal weapons in the systematic oppression, objectification, and degradation of women. ... For the militant feminists, pornography should be understood exclusively as a powerful support of men’s brutalization and oppression of women, which they frequently equate with male sexuality in particular and mandatory heterosexuality in general.”²⁸

The issue of pornography is a divisive one for feminists. Sexism is a reality that feminists understand and articulate with some degree of consensus. However, on this particular issue, feminists divide sharply on both analysis of the problem and its solution.

For feminists in this “camp,” pornography cannot be understood as simply pictures, images, and words. Pornography is completely interwoven with behavior. It is the image, but the image is also the act. One feminist slogan sometimes seen on buttons is “Pornography is the theory, rape is the practice.”

Andrea Dworkin, one of the foremost articulators of this approach, entitles one of her books *Pornography: Men Possessing Women*. In her first chapter, she introduces the feminist analysis

of sexism, which is fundamentally rooted in the power that men have over women. Male power is embodied in seven tenets of male-supremacy ideology:

1. Men have power of self which women lack.
2. Men have power of physical strength.
3. Men have the power to terrorize, from rape to war.
4. Men have the power to name and define experience.
5. Men have the power of owning.
6. Men have the power of money.
7. Men have the power of sex.²⁹

Dworkin contends that “male sexual power is the substance of culture” and that a man’s sexual power over women “illuminates his very nature.”³⁰ All of these tenets of male-supremacy ideology are the essence of pornography. Pornography is the representation of male power in both the image and in the actual lives of real women. For Dworkin and others, image and behavior are one. In her testimony before the Attorney General’s Commission, Dworkin said,

I am a citizen of the United States, and in this country ... every year millions of pictures are being made of women with our legs spread. We are called beaver, we are called pussy, our genitals are tied up, they are pasted, makeup is put on them to make them pop out of a page at the male viewer. Millions and millions of pictures are made of us in postures of submission and sexual access so that our vaginas are exposed for penetration, our anuses are exposed for penetration, our throats are used as if they are genitals for penetration. In this country where I live as a citizen real rapes are on film and are being sold in the marketplace. And the major motif of pornography as a form of entertainment is that women are raped and violated and humiliated until we discover that we like it, and at that point we ask for more. ... When your rape is entertainment, your worthlessness is absolute. You have reached the nadir of social worthlessness. The civil impact of pornography on women is staggering. It keeps us socially compliant; it keeps us afraid in neighborhoods; and it creates a vast hopelessness for women, a vast despair. One lives inside a nightmare of sexual abuse that is both actual and potential, and you have the great joy of knowing that your nightmare is someone else’s freedom and someone else’s fun.³¹

Catherine MacKinnon, feminist legal scholar, writes extensively in explaining this view. She describes the impact that pornography has, not only on the women who produce it, but on all women:

What pornography does goes beyond its content: It eroticizes hierarchy, it sexualizes inequality. It makes dominance and submission sex. Inequality is its central dynamic; the illusion of freedom coming together with the reality of force is central to its working. Perhaps because this is a bourgeois culture, the victim must look free, appear to be freely acting. Choice is how she got there. ...

From this perspective, pornography is neither harmless fantasy nor a corrupt and confused misrepresentation of an otherwise natural and healthy sexual situation. It institutionalizes the sexuality of male supremacy, fusing the ero-

ticization of dominance and submission with the social construction of male and female. To the extent that gender is sexual, pornography is part of constituting the meaning of that sexuality. Men treat women as who they see women as being. Pornography constructs who that is. Men's power over women means that the way men see women defines who women can be. Pornography is that way. Pornography is not imagery in some relation to a reality elsewhere constructed. It is not a distortion, reflection, projection, expression, fantasy, representation, or symbol either. It is a sexual reality.³²

Because feminists who support this view see pornography as inseparable from behavior, they regard regulation as the only effective means of ending the systematic oppression of men over women. Pornography and women's powerless status, in their view, are mutually reinforcing of each other. Regulation is the only means to break the cycle.

Yet, Dworkin and MacKinnon speak perhaps for most feminists in rejecting obscenity law as a method for regulating pornography. The problem with pornography is not sexual pleasure but misused power. Obscenity legislation regulates material that has no other purpose except sexual arousal, usually of men. Dworkin explains in unmistakable language feminist criticism of obscenity law:

To be obscene, the representations must arouse prurient interest. Prurient means itching or itch; it is related to the Sanskrit for "he burns." It means sexual arousal ... empirically, prurient means causes erection. ...

What is at stake in obscenity law is always erection: under what conditions, in what circumstances, how, by whom, by what materials men want it produced in themselves. Men have made this public policy. Why they want to regulate their own erections through law is a question of endless interest and importance to feminists. Nevertheless, that they do persist in this regulation is simple fact

Pornography, unlike obscenity, is a discrete, identifiable system of sexual exploitation that hurts women as a class by creating inequality and abuse. This is a new legal idea, but it is the recognition and naming of an old and cruel injury to a dispossessed and coerced underclass. It is the sound of women's words breaking the longest silence.³³

Women have organized to fight pornography through groups such as Women Against Pornography (WAP), Women Against Violence in Pornography and Media (WAV/PM), Feminists Against Pornography (FAP), and Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW). They conduct tours of establishments that market pornography in order to educate and sensitize people to the issue. They organize protests, boycotts, and marches, sometimes under the banner "Take Back the Night."

The National Organization for Women (NOW) has endorsed the civil rights ordinance approach to regulating pornography and

has affirmed its support for the Pornography Victims Protection Act currently pending in Congress. In a statement following release of the Attorney General's Commission report, NOW expressed support for the commission's findings that pornography harms women and children. However, NOW rejected the commission's emphasis on obscenity law enforcement and repudiated the "undertone" in some commissioners' statements that suggested that pornography is any "sexually explicit material that does not reflect 'traditional family values.'"³⁴

Proponents of this approach believe that support for civil remedies and other protest tactics are all within constitutional guarantees. A statement by Women Against Pornography maintains that:

Women can protest pornography without violating the First Amendment as long as they do not invoke or advocate the exercise of government authority. Only the government, by definition, can violate a First Amendment right. The First Amendment does not apply to interactions between two private parties; for example, feminists promoting a boycott of a pornographic movie. We are working hard, in the exercise of our own First Amendment rights, to develop strategies for effective private action against the pornography industry. We are working to make people aware of the implications of the violent misogynist pornography that has become an accepted part of our culture. Our movement against pornography is an anti-defamation movement against the perpetuation of negative and destructive images of women in the media.³⁵

These feminists not only believe that they can oppose pornography within the limits of the First Amendment but also challenge the patriarchal foundation in which the First Amendment is rooted. MacKinnon maintains that the Constitution and the Bill of Rights were conceived by white men who had power and wrote the First Amendment to make sure that Congress would not take away the freedoms they wanted to protect. Those who did not have those freedoms (women and racial ethnic persons) didn't get them. MacKinnon asks the questions: If the First Amendment is a guarantee of free speech, whose speech is protected? Who has the power of speech and of the press? Whose voices are silenced by that unlimited power and "freedom?"³⁶

Feminists who support the regulation of pornography recognize the difficulties that are involved. An article in the *Harvard Women's Law Journal* prefaces a discussion of regulation with three reminders: Feminists cannot rely on patriarchal society to enforce laws on behalf of women; the suppression of pornography cannot cure all sexism even if it stops one means of perpetuating it; any regulation of speech presents a potential for unacceptable censorship of ideas.³⁷ Methods other than obscenity law are proposed by some feminists for regulating pornography: wider en-

forcement of laws against rape, statutory rape, slavery, and prostitution; criminal statutes under a feminist definition of pornography rather than the current obscenity standard; public civil nuisance statutes; zoning laws; tort suits and libel suits; taxation; and corrective funds to aid victims of pornography.³⁸

This approach is centered in a concern for the harm pornography does to women. It does not ignore the harm done to children and men; it includes them as potential victims in proposed civil rights ordinances. However, pornography is at its core a graphic representation of male power over women, which many feminists regard as not imagery but the real-life brutalization that women experience in our society. Poet Adrienne Rich has written:

but when did we ever choose
to see our bodies strung
in bondage and crucifixion across the exhausted air
when did we choose
to be lynched on the queasy electric signs
of midtown when did we choose
to become the masturbator's fix
emblem of rape in Riverside Park
the campground at Bandol the beach at Sydney?

...

I can never romanticize language again
never deny its power for disguise for mystification
but the same could be said for music
or any form created
painted ceilings beaten gold worm-worn Pietas
reorganizing victimization frescoes translating
violence into patterns so powerful and pure
we continually fail to ask if they are true for us.³⁹

Oppose Regulation: Libertarian and Feminist Views

Elizabeth Fox-Genovese describes third and fourth “camps” which advocate tolerance for pornography because of strong opposition to its regulation. The third “camp” consists of radical individualists or libertarians, from the far left to the far right of the political spectrum, who celebrate the lifting of sexual repression and the rights of individuals of any age to participate in the sexual expression of their choice.⁴⁰ Fox-Genovese’s fourth “camp” consists of “uneasy liberals who fear the consequences of censorship in any sphere and perhaps also fear being dismissed as sexual prudes. ... The liberals resemble the libertarians in their mistrust of censorship, but they remain queasy about whether it would be possible to place some limits on the spread and escalating violence of pornography.”⁴¹

The lines of the libertarian and liberal camps are not as easily distinguished as those of the morality and feminist camps. For

both libertarians and liberals, whom Fox-Genovese terms “tolerators,” pornography is not the primary issue in this debate. What is at stake is freedom—of individual sexual expression, of speech, and from censorship.

In describing her own conflict with this issue, Fox-Genovese writes:

To avoid confusion, let me begin with the end. I abhor pornography. It represents an obscene degradation of women, increasingly of children, and of our conception of ourselves as a society. In principle, I would ban it without a second thought, and with precious few worries about the expressions of healthy sexuality that might be banned along with it. But we live in a society that is based on individualist principles that do not easily permit action in the name of the collectivity. ... Abuses of individual right have riddled our history, but, however heinous those abuses, individual right has survived as the cornerstone of our most positive visions of justice and order.⁴²

The opponents of regulation articulate their views through the leadership of a variety of individuals and groups. The first can be classified as liberal or libertarian legal opinion, most visibly represented by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC). The second is comprised of alternative feminist opinion, which radically divides itself from feminist views that advocate regulation of pornography. Both of these approaches share a belief that consensus is impossible to find and that any problems related to pornography should not be used as license to curtail individual freedom.

A Civil Liberties View

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) maintains that “all forms of expression, no matter how objectionable or offensive they may be to some or even to most of us, are protected by the First Amendment’s guarantees of freedom of speech and press.”⁴³ Its supporters hold the view that pornography, because it is material composed of words and images, is speech and, as such, is guaranteed protection to the full extent of the First Amendment. This opinion rejects any attempt to regulate pornography through legislation or any form of government action, whether through use of the Court’s definition of obscenity or through civil rights ordinance. It opposes all forms of pressure or harassment on producers or distributors of pornography, out of the fear that such measures function to muzzle and silence freedom of speech and press.

The civil liberties view supports the legal opinion that ruled Indianapolis’ attempt at a civil rights ordinance unconstitutional. Pornography, in this opinion, may influence behavior, but it is not

itself behavior. It is imagery, and regardless of how vile the images or the idea expressed, a free society that guarantees individual freedom of expression faces unacceptable risk in curtailing any form of speech. “The ‘civil rights’ approach to pornography may seem novel, but it amounts, as every other antipornography measure does, to giving the state the power to control speech—a power which will not be limited to the kinds of racist, anti-Semitic or sexist speech we may abhor.”⁴⁴ (See further discussion of the civil rights ordinance ruling elsewhere in this report.)

In material prepared by the ACLU, pornography is argued to be entitled to constitutional protection because it is most often sex-related publications that are the targets of obscenity law.⁴⁵ In the past, materials related to birth control, abortion, women’s bodies, reproduction, and homosexuality have all been labeled obscene and their removal from many communities has been sought. Even though the courts have held that not all forms of expression are protected by the First Amendment, the ACLU works “as much as possible to limit the scope of obscenity laws, to mitigate penalties, and to assure that they are implemented only with full attention to due process of law.”⁴⁶

The issue of harm to women and children is given consideration by proponents of this view. They question the causal links between exposure to pornography and subsequent criminal behavior, but they reject any censorship of books, magazines, and films because of the effect they might have on some people. They maintain that violent images are found in the Bible, Shakespeare, and countless other sources, and “if we hold images or words responsible for the stimulus they might provide to some disturbed people, there is no reason to stop with pornography.”⁴⁷

Regarding child pornography, this approach contends that “sexual exploitation of children is a crime” and “it is criminal acts which should be vigorously prosecuted, not the books or films which depict the criminal event.”⁴⁸ Any effort to restrict accessibility of material to minors is seen as an invariable restriction on adult access as well. It is believed that such monitoring should be a matter for parental, not governmental, regulation.

The ACLU is a member organization of the National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC), an affiance of groups concerned about the threat to First Amendment freedoms. Highly critical of the Attorney General’s Commission report and its findings, Leanne Katz, NCAC director, challenged the commission’s process and what it failed to consider:

Restrictions on sexually related expression invariably affect literature and the arts, communication and entertainment, education and intellectual inquiry. ... So it is a real scandal that the commission has made no attempt on its own to invite testimony from, for example—not a fiction writer, a journalist, or a reporter—nor so far as I am aware, a single artistic group, or any writers' organization in this entire country. In fact, the American Society of Journalists and Authors issued a statement charging that the preoccupation with attacking pornography distracts us from efforts to deal with the real causes of serious problems; and the Society urges sexuality education rather than sexual repression.⁴⁹

Suggestions in a newsletter to members of NCAC on ways to “combat censorship” include a reminder that “stopping sexually explicit expression in this day of the Xerox machine and VCR” are no more effective “than Prohibition was in stopping bootlegging and bathtub gin.”⁵⁰ Members are encouraged to enlist individuals and groups in the “fight against censorship”⁵¹; to write letters to magazines and newspapers; to keep alert for local, state and national efforts to regulate; and to oppose harassment of community merchants who are pressured to remove offending materials. The same newsletter lists the following groups as participating organizations of the National Coalition Against Censorship:

Participating Organizations (Partial listing)

Actors' Equity
American Association of School Administrators
American Association of University Professors
American Civil Liberties Union
American Ethical Union
American Federation of Teachers
American Jewish Committee
American Library Association
Modern Language Association
National Council of the Churches of Christ
National Council of Jewish Women
National Education Association
People for the American Way
Union of American Hebrew Congregations
Unitarian Universalist Association
United Church of Christ
United Methodist Communicators, United Methodist Church

A Feminist View

Sharp disagreement divides the feminist community on this issue. Taking a position in direct opposition to anti-pornography feminists are other feminists who evaluate pornography differently and reject its regulation. Such persons share a deep concern

for sexual violence. Feminists have spent decades raising society's consciousness about rape, battering, sexual harassment, and all forms of behavioral violence toward women. However, as Dierdre English writes: "Opposing violence against women is obvious. Opposing pornography is not as easy—because pornography is fantasy, not action, and because no one seems to be able to define pornography satisfactorily."⁵²

Gloria Steinem writes for many feminists in trying to make distinctions between pornography and erotica. "Erotica," she says, "is rooted in eros or passionate love, and thus is the idea of positive choice, free will, the yearning for a particular person. ... Pornography begins with a root meaning 'prostitute' or 'female captives,' thus letting us know that the subject is not mutual love, or love at all, but domination and violence against women!"⁵³

The problem, as English continues, is that "the line between pornography and erotica is hopelessly blurred. Such intangibles as intention, experience and context are everything in this. ... Women Against Pornography define pornography as that which is violent and degrading to women, [but] ... degradation, after all, is highly subjective. Without a reasonable effort to separate negative from positive sexual images, the movement will inevitably begin to see everything that is sexually suggestive as something that is tending toward rape."⁵⁴

Other feminists, such as Ellen Willis, reject the stereotypes inherent in distinctions between erotica and pornography: "The view of sex that most often emerges from talk about 'erotica' is as sentimental and euphemistic as the word itself: Lovemaking should be beautiful, romantic, soft, nice, and devoid of messiness. ... This goody-goody concept of eroticism is not feminist but feminine. It is precisely sex as an aggressive, unladylike activity, and a specific genital experience that has been taboo for women."⁵⁵ The ideas of Willis and others challenge centuries of patriarchy in which female sexuality has been narrowly defined and restricted and represent the affirmation of the newly discovered freedom of women to experience fully their own sexuality.

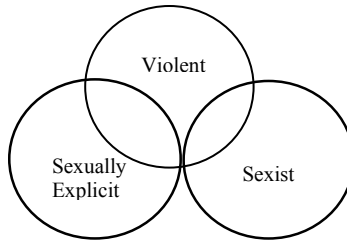
Because of this commitment to sexual liberation for women, groups such as the Feminist Anti-Censorship Task Force (FACT) "view the free speech accorded to pornographers as a necessary bedfellow to free speech for feminists and to the creation of [their] own erotica."⁵⁶ As with other liberals and libertarians, these feminists fear that anti-pornography efforts will ultimately be directed at their efforts to find new sexual expression. Barbara

Kerr, FACT member and filmmaker, contends that “feminists trying to create an erotica concurrently with the anti-porn movement have been very beleaguered,”⁵⁷ and worries that their attempts at creativity will be increasingly silenced.

While some feminists accept studies suggesting that exposure to depictions of sexual violence does promote aggression, they do not support efforts to regulate pornography as a solution to such violence. English calls for an understanding of the complex motivations of male violence towards women and repudiates the “hope that by changing pornography [women] can reform the sexual nature of men.”⁵⁸ She continues with a scenario:

A man and a woman look at a sexually explicit picture. The woman is horrified. The man is delighted because the woman is horrified. The woman is horrified because the man is delighted. But the issue is not the picture they view. This issue is them.⁵⁹

Not only is the feminist community divided over the analysis of pornography and its effects but also over specific attempts to regulate it via the feminist-inspired civil rights ordinance. The Venn diagram below has been used as a means of challenging the assumptions behind such laws:



The Venn diagram above illustrates the three areas targeted by the [Minneapolis] law, and represents a scheme that classifies words or images that have any of these characteristics: violence, sexual explicitness, or sexism. Clearly, a text or an image might have only one characteristic. . . . Areas can also intersect, reflecting a range of combinations of the three characteristics.⁶⁰

These feminists believe the diagram reveals the flaws in regulating only material that is sexually explicit and violent or sexually explicit and sexist while ignoring material that is violent and sexist, only violent, or only sexist.

Betty Friedan, founder of the National Organization for Women (NOW), addresses another concern when she writes, “Get off the pornography kick and face the real obscenity of poverty.” She also fears that banning books and movies for sexually explicit content will be far more damaging than beneficial to women. Furthermore, Friedan contends:

The pornography issue is dividing the women's movement and giving the impression on college campuses that to be a feminist is to be against sex. ... I think the secret this obsession with pornography may mask for women alone, for aging women and for women still more economically dependent on men than they would like to be, is fear of poverty, which is the ultimate obscenity for Americans. . . . I sat at a dinner table recently with several women, ... and could not believe their venom against the young rock star Madonna. I suggested that teenagers identified with her gutsiness, strength and independence as well as her not-at-all-passive sexuality, which to me was not a retreat from women's liberation, but a celebration of it. Whoever said that feminism shouldn't be sexy?"⁶¹

Many feminists, like Betty Friedan, fear any alliance on the issue of pornography with conservatives and the Religious Right, those who have a long history of opposition to other significant women's issues, such as battered wives' legislation and shelters, pay equity, child care, abortion rights, textbook images of women, and the Equal Rights Amendment. Fear exists that radically different goals—for feminists an end to sexism and sexual violence, for conservatives a return to traditional moral and family values—cannot be compromised or pursued apart from otherwise competing agendas for social change. For many with such fears, tolerance of pornography is preferable to being co-opted by a movement that is fundamentally antifeminist.

Comparative Analysis of These Views

The Task Force on Pornography believes that pornography can be understood in all of its complexity by examining the divergent approaches that individuals and groups advocate for addressing it. Each approach is shaped by its emphasis on certain values and principles. We have seen the strengths of each reflected in the concerns of its supporters and the sense of caring that motivates their involvement in this issue. While we believe that classification of opinion into four "camps" is useful to understanding the debate over pornography, we also believe that these divisions should not be seen as rigid groupings into which individuals can easily be placed. The opinion of any person can move in and out of these four "camps," and all four inform the issue of pornography. Furthermore, the task force believes that all of these approaches are, to some degree, single-minded and incomplete. Analysis reveals fundamental differences in values, goals, and methods. As Presbyterians who are seeking to understand the whole of this issue and to develop an ethical approach that reflects the values of our faith, we have examined each of these approaches and present what we believe are their strengths and weaknesses.

Regulate Pornography: A Morality View

Strengths

- Serious attention to moral climate of nation and personal moral responsibility of individuals.
- Sincere religious motivation by many holding this view.
- Willingness to risk labeling—anti-sex, prudish—to confront issue of pornography.
- Early recognition of the exploitation and dehumanization of pornography; leadership in promoting study and education about the issue, including in the PC(USA).
- Intensive focus on children, both child pornography and pornography's effects on all children.
- Demonstrated ability to organize concerned individuals and groups for government and interfaith efforts to address pornography issue.
- Concern for effect of pornography on women, men, and family values; commitment to preserving the “goodness” of traditional society.

Weaknesses

- Attention to moral values fails to take seriously the lack of moral consensus in contemporary society.
- Religious motivation can be insensitive to moral pluralism of society. •Uncritical acceptance of traditional sexual mores.
- Appears to have an uncritical acceptance of causal effects of pornography on behavior; simplistic belief in elimination of pornography as solution to immorality.
- Emotional appeal on issue of child pornography can be distorted and used to simplify what are complex issues involving adult pornography.
- Dangers of “crusade” on this issue; unintentionally contributes to climate of repression; excessive reliance on legal means without attention to potential legal abuse; insufficiently critical of obscenity law as a means of regulating pornography today; leadership overwhelmingly reflects a white male cultural and theological view.
- Limited understanding of role of traditional family and oppression of women; blindness to traditional society's history of

sexism, racism, economic evils; focus on current moral issues of pornography ignores its systemic history and meaning.

Regulate Pornography: A Feminist View

Strengths

- Serious attention to the centrality of women to pornography issue; fundamental analysis of sexism in sexual history of men and women; focus on pornography as exploitation and abuse of both some women and all women.

- Supporters include men who oppose sexism and who address the ways in which men exploit women through pornography, and are themselves exploited.

- Willingness to risk pejorative labeling—militant, prudish, anti-sex—to confront issue of pornography.

- Creativity in developing civil rights ordinance; serious recognition of the failure of legal tradition to guarantee justice for women.

- Consciousness-raising efforts to sensitize people to the issue of pornography; powerful impact of tours to sex shops.

- Women organizing for women's issue and highly motivated to end victimization of women; empowerment for powerless women; attention to class, race and homosexual issues.

- Willingness to confront attitudes on both the "left" and "right" that exploit women in traditional roles, as passive wives, mothers, and sex objects.

Weaknesses

- Lines are not easily drawn between sexual imagery that is exploitative and that which is consensual; imbalance in view that women are essential victims of male sexual power; lack of attention to women's increasing understanding of their own sexuality and their own power in making sexual decisions.

- Loss of credibility; alienates more moderate views, including other feminists.

- Fundamental conflict of ordinance with historical precedent in interpreting First Amendment rights; inherent conflict in interpreting speech as behavior.

- Perception, if not the reality, of separatism intent on goals; sees women only as victims of abusive male sexuality; refusal to include men in some organizations and activities.

- Divisiveness of challenging political and feminist credentials; single-minded zeal lacking serious recognition of alternative concerns.

Oppose Regulation: A Civil Liberties View

Strengths

- Fundamental attention to protection of every individual's First Amendment rights, regardless of the offensiveness of the idea or image; guardians of a pluralistic society that tolerates all speech.

- View is defined with clarity; all speech is protected.

- Represents history of legal efforts to protect the voices of political dissidents and those likely to be silenced by regulation efforts.

- Broad ecumenical support for these principles among denominations in closest communion with Presbyterians.

- View stimulates understanding the complex web of influences and patterns in society; seeks deep-rooted solutions rather than the simple prohibition of materials; promotes sexuality education as a solution to disempowering pornography's influence.

Weaknesses

- Unwillingness to compromise protection of ideas for protection of persons alleging harm from the ideas; uncritical tolerance for the marketing of all ideas regardless of their consequences or effects; exaggerated emphasis on freedom of individuals; inattention to issues of community and social welfare.

- Clarity can be insensitive to other concerns; too easily dismisses historical precedent for constitutionally restricting speech.

- Legal history one of failure to give inclusiveness to women's equality and justice; women's speech is often the voice of the powerless with inadequate legal protection.

- Inadequate attention to pornography as a powerful influence, even if it is not the only influence or even the most important influence on society's ills; refusal to address pornography as a contributing influence.

Oppose Regulation: A Feminist View

Strengths

- Understands the dangers and risks of censorship, particularly for potentially dissident views; recognizes the threat to publica-

tions and films of feminists, racial ethnic persons, and homosexuals.

- Suspicious of sex-role stereotyping in regard to sexuality; affirms possibility of new behaviors by men and women; refuses to see women only as victims of male sexual power and men only as oppressive in their treatment of women; affirms egalitarian sexual relationships between women and men as desirable and possible.

- Early attention to uneasy alliance with antifeminists on this issue; concern for co-optation of feminists by those who oppose their other goals and values; concern that pornography is a diversionary strategy against feminist goals of economics and reproductive rights.

- Emphasizes raising status of women as a solution to power of pornography; focus on comprehensive strategy rather than simplistic one; analysis of complex web of issues.

- Exposes the double standard of targeting sexually explicit material while tolerating material that is exclusively sexist or violent.

Weaknesses

- Attention to protection of materials more than to actual harm to persons.

- Lack of focus on actual women who are victimized by pornography industry and women who continue to exist in unequal power relationships with men.

- Fears of alliance with antifeminists prevents attention to pornography issue that it deserves by feminists; implication that it is better to ignore the issue than find common ground with political opponents; perception that women cannot maintain their values; denial of pornography as a legitimate women's issue and not a diversionary one.

- Attention to complex web of issues obscures the importance of this particular issue; raising the status of women dependent on many strategies, including serious attention to the issue of pornography.

X. Pornography and Culture

In her paper addressing this issue, Fox-Genovese writes, "Pornography is ... obscene, not so much because it exposes naked flesh, but because it exposes our society naked."¹ Indeed,

pornography is not an aberration; it is the expression of mainstream cultural attitudes and realities in an exaggerated, distorted, and extremely vivid form. Looking at the pictures in a pornographic magazine is somewhat like seeing American culture in a carnival funhouse mirror. The image reflected is a vision of dominance and subjugation. It is consonant with a highly individualistic culture in which people compete with each other for power, prestige and possessions.

Whatever else it may tell us, pornography offers irrefutable evidence that this culture is patriarchal. Not only the materials themselves, but the industry that supplies them and the market that consumes them, are built on an inequality of power between men and women. It is primarily men who produce and consume images that, at best, depersonalize and objectify women and, at worst, encourage violence and brutality against them. The task force believes that pornography both reflects and magnifies a range of cultural phenomena, including the following:

- a mystification of sex based on ignorance of human sexuality;
- the association of sex with sin and evil;
- the use of sex as an instrument of power;
- economic discrimination against women;
- the acceptance of violence as natural and inevitable;
- desensitization to images of horror;
- the commercialization of human needs;
- widespread addiction to obsessive-compulsive behavior;
- unequal responsibility for human relationships.

Mystification of Sex

Published erotic or pornographic materials are the most accessible, and, for many, the only source of information about sex. Most of us respond with familiarity to stories of young boys hovering over an issue of a “girlie” magazine, or of girls reading aloud to each other the juicier passages of a romance novel. The silence that our cultural institutions—church, school, and family—have long practiced about sexual matters has bred an intense curiosity about sex and unleashed an explosion of sexual information and misinformation in the commercial media. Misleading ideas are not confined just to pornography; they easily become governing assumptions in many people’s private sexual relationships. The be-

lief that women are naturally passive and are sexually stimulated by domination gives men the privilege of initiating and controlling sexual activity. As women begin to break their silence about sexuality, many of them realize that their sexual expression has been inhibited by this myth.

Theologian Mary Pellauer writes, “In our society, let alone in our theologies and churches, we have barely begun to explore women’s sexuality from the inside out. Ignorance about the simplest facts of female biology is rampant, and our culture spreads strange ideas about women’s sexuality in many more ways than in pornography.”² Candid discussions of female sexuality, of what women truly enjoy in sexual relationships, can do much to challenge the myths about women that pornography perpetuates.³ Equally open and honest testimony about male sexuality can debunk the myth that men must be aggressive to be sexual and can free young men from the pressure to tally up sexual conquests. Responsible education about sexuality, drawing on the way people experience it in loving and committed relationships, might well diminish pornography’s appeal. For example, Ann Welbourne-Moglia, in her testimony, cites studies that show that “young people who obtain sexual health information and education from their parents are less likely to use pornography.”⁴

Ironically, some of the voices raised in alarm over pornography also oppose sex education. Many fear that removing sexuality from the realm of the secret and private will bring on a flood of pornographic images and will lead to rampant practice of sexual behaviors labeled “deviant.” On the contrary, recognizing sex as a basic human longing and discussing it publicly would allow us as a society to attain a more compassionate understanding of human sexuality and the kinds of sexual behavior that contribute to people’s health and well-being. A society that does not claim that right forfeits sexuality to those who profit from its distortion.

Association of Sex with Sin and Evil

Christians partake in a long heritage of sexual shame, dating at least as far back as the Patristic Period, when the Fall from Paradise was interpreted as a sexual sin, a notion preserved in the phrase “carnal knowledge.” This notion is derived from a dualistic world view that associates the spirit, reason, cultural restraint, and maleness with good, while the body, emotion, unbridled nature, and femaleness are associated with evil. To attain the good, human beings must overcome the longings of the flesh. The secular counterpart of this religious belief is known to us as “Victorian

morality,” a double standard of behavior that confines sex to marriage while tolerating prostitution as a necessary outlet for men’s baser instincts.

There were no such tacitly approved outlets for women, because healthy women were not supposed to feel sexual desire. Women were divided, on the basis of their sexual behavior, into two categories, often denoted “Madonnas” and “whores.” “Fallen women” were subject to social control through laws prohibiting prostitution that were almost never enforced against their male customers. Even after the “sexual revolution” of the 1960s, this Madonna-whore dichotomy remains. Many women have internalized it, so that they feel shame when they behave as sexual beings. This dichotomy is certainly prevalent in pornography. A common scenario shows a prim and prudish woman or a child-like, innocent one, being exposed as savage and lustful by the sexual skills of a man who can then claim victory over her.

This view of sexuality as the sin lurking in otherwise respectable people is implicit even in some of the anti-pornography literature that the task force read in both Christian and feminist sources. Proceeding from the belief that sexuality is a gift of creation to be affirmed, the task force is uncomfortable with anti-pornography appeals that warn against the spectre of temptation, often in female guise, or that arouse fear of sex as a male instinct for oppression.

Cloaking sex in secrecy and shame would probably be counterproductive as a tactic to eliminate pornography. This legacy of shame, perpetuated by both church and society, is what gives pornography its power. Calling this legacy “the ancient but still popular heresy that human sexuality is dirty,” the authors of the 1973 report to the General Assembly of the PCUS maintained that greater emphasis on “the beauty and goodness of the human body and its functions” could be pornography’s undoing. “Pornography or obscenity then loses its power and fascination as it is exposed for what it really is: not some tremendous and delicious evil which is secretly relished even as it is righteously opposed but a stupid, trivial and boring parody of the real joy, excitement, pleasure, and wonder of authentic human life as God has willed and created it.”⁵

Use of Sex as an Instrument of Power

Organizing Against Pornography, a grassroots network in Minneapolis, makes the claim that “pornography eroticizes inequality.”⁶ Subduing women with physical strength or the force of

social privilege is shown to be sexually exciting in itself. Sex is commonly depicted as an adversarial relationship. Even where the people involved seem to be enjoying the act mutually, this is often prefaced by a scene in which the man subdues the woman. Mary Pellauer writes, “The basic plot of many kinds of porn is the overcoming of a woman’s resistance so thoroughly that she is gratefully orgasmic.”⁷ Some pornography depicts acts that are clearly hostile and have little to do with mutual pleasure, such as a man ejaculating in a woman’s face.

Sexism is not the only injustice that pornography “eroticizes.” A special genre of openly racist magazines and films simulates Nazi concentration camp scenes or shows white slavemasters laying claim to black or Oriental slaves. Child pornography depends for its very existence on adults’ ability to manipulate children.

As shocking as it may be to look at images of sexual subjugation for the first time—the experience of some of the task force members—there is still something frighteningly familiar about them. Pornography that celebrates men’s sexual dominance over women offers a graphic reminder of women’s condition in the world at large. It tells us just why women are afraid to go out alone at night or why women feel strangely vulnerable when they are the only woman in a roomful of men. One woman on the task force, for example, told of stopping at a doughnut shop on her way to work one morning and then driving away out of a self-protective instinct when she saw that there were only men inside.

This is a culture where harassment by sexual innuendo and intrusive touching is commonplace and rape is epidemic, where the four-letter word describing sexual intercourse is often used to offend or degrade another person. It is sobering for women to think that “ordinary” men enjoy images of dominance and concur in this view of women and sexual relationships.

Marie Fortune, a United Church of Christ minister who has studied sexual violence, contends that “male dominance has become eroticized as has its corollary, female submission. . . . The belief is that together dominance and submission and power and powerlessness create the formula which sparks erotic desire in both men and women.” Fortune looks forward to an eroticization of equality, in which “both women and men will find erotic pleasure in approaching each other as equals, sharing both proactive and receptive sexual activity.”⁸

The patriarchal attitudes and habits that pornography illustrates so graphically are, like sexual shame, of ancient origin.

There has been no time in recorded history when men and women were free to define and live out sexual relationships based on social equality without interference from the culture around them. Attempts to eliminate pornography by returning to previous codes of moral “decency” fail to challenge the deeply embedded assumption that men have a right to wield power over women.

Some Christians suggest that a restoration of the nuclear family, with the father as head of household and the mother in the role of housewife, would counter the impact of pornography on sexual attitudes and behavior. This would replace a risk-filled liberation with fatherly protection. Lisa Duggan and Ann Snitow offer a succinct argument against that view: “Protection and respect are not substitutes for the power to protect ourselves, to control our lives. If men are allowed to ‘protect’ us, then we are also at their mercy.”⁹

The task force did not find the patriarchal family to be a safe refuge for women; it is a place where sexual power can be exercised in private. As more women have begun talking about the sexual abuse they experienced in childhood and adolescence, or as battered wives, it has become evident that incest and marital rape are not rarities, nor are they confined to obviously decadent families. Recent studies show that at least 25 percent of adult women in the United States, and 10 percent of adult men, were sexually molested as children, mostly by relatives or other trusted adults.¹⁰ In some studies, nearly 40 percent of women reported child sexual abuse.¹¹ As far as women’s safety is concerned, there is no “golden age” to return to.

There is sound reason to speculate that many of the women who work in the pornography industry have previously been subject to sexual abuse. This is certainly true of women leaving the practice of prostitution and of female criminals.¹² No thorough census can be taken of a subculture as evanescent as that which produces pornographic materials. Nevertheless, testimony from former models and actresses, and other anecdotal evidence suggest that many of the women who perform in scenes of sexual dominance and hostility come to the job believing that sex has to do with power and that they themselves are powerless.¹³

Economic Discrimination Against Women

Another way in which women today experience powerlessness is economically. Previous reports to the General Assembly have described the structure of economic inequality and the practice of sex discrimination.¹⁴

The pornography industry also profits from this inequality. The daily wage for an actress in an adult movie may sound good, but the films are shot fairly quickly, and the wage represents a minute percentage of the film's earnings. Performers in live peep shows may earn wages somewhat higher than those earned in other unskilled and disproportionately female jobs, but they do not get rich. They move, rather, from poverty to subsistence or from subsistence to a modicum of comfort.

When the task force visited a Times Square sex shop, its members were struck with how ordinary and unexotic the women seemed. The same women might well be seen behind the counters in the fast food restaurants, and that sort of low-wage work may be their other best option.

Masturbating behind a screen in a sex shop is surely safer than street prostitution, which poses constant dangers to health and safety. The Dial-A-Porn telephone outlets offer an even safer work environment for women. One task force member interviewed a former clerical worker for the Presbyterian Church who worked as a telephone "fantasy girl" so that she could provide a home for herself and her young daughter. (The interview is in the Background Material of this report.) In sum, the pornography industry draws from a populous labor market of unskilled and economically needy women whose other options are not especially promising.

Rumors of big money may, nevertheless, be an enticement for women to take part in the production of sexually-explicit films and videos. The million dollars that *Playboy* allegedly paid Jessica Hahn for baring her breasts and telling about her sexual encounter with television evangelist Jim Bakker is more money than she could hope to make in a lifetime as a church secretary. Such expectations, however, usually prove to be illusory. According to a recently broadcast television documentary, the will to do pornographic modeling or acting is often sustained by drug use, since the work itself is arduous, risk-filled, and perceived as demeaning. Even the relatively highly paid stars may find themselves destitute because of chemical dependency.¹⁵

The distribution of pornographic materials has a race and class dimension that affects women differentially. It is quite easy for middle-class suburban families to insulate themselves from pornographic imagery. Adult bookstores and movie theaters tend to be located in low-rent neighborhoods populated by racial ethnic persons and by single parent families, most of which are headed by women.¹⁶ The women who live in these neighborhoods

report that they are frequently harassed on the street or solicited for sex by men patronizing the bookstores and theaters. Some of the grassroots efforts to change zoning laws and relocate pornography outlets in nonresidential areas have been initiated by women who cannot afford to move out of the neighborhoods themselves.

The Acceptance of Violence as Natural and Inevitable

One of the most controversial aspects of the report of the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography was its emphasis on sexual violence, which, its critics argue, leaves the impression that all or most sexually explicit material also has violent content. The bulk of the material that the task force viewed consisted of redundant "plumbing shots"—close-ups of genital organs. Dehumanization—the reduction of sex to a mechanical bodily function with no emotional dimension—seemed more prevalent than violence, and its impact was more boring and disheartening than frightening. The task force found cause for alarm in some of the violent images that appeared in films we viewed, especially those that linked sex and violence in such a way as to make them seem synonymous. A particularly horrifying image, from which some members looked away, was a film of a woman being forced to suck the end of a pistol as though she was performing fellatio on it. It is not easy to dismiss such blatantly violent pornography as simple fantasy when real women are being raped and murdered in equally bizarre ways. The news accounts in August 1987 of an apartment in Philadelphia strewn with female corpses and pornographic magazines should certainly give pause to all.

Much of the debate about pornography has focused on the question of harm. Attempts have been made to prove and disprove the contention that specific images of sexual violence result in specific acts of sexual violence. It is a difficult proposition to test since it often relies on the testimony of people convicted of sexual crimes, who are not generally credible witnesses. For obvious ethical reasons, the test cannot be replicated in a laboratory by showing subjects violent images and then sending them off to act them out if they choose. Pursuing the question of harm seems fruitless as long as it focuses on specific cause-and-effect relationships and postulates that pornography is the immediate cause. There are many other contributing factors.

American society tolerates violence as inevitable, and it condones sexual violence as intrinsic to male nature. Rape is not the exclusive province of hardened criminals; it is practiced by gangs

of teenagers testing their sexual prowess, by soldiers in wartime, by fervent suitors frustrated by their dates' resistance. "Boys will be boys" is the proverbial justification for such behavior.

Images of rape are not, however, the exclusive province of pornography. In an episode of the television drama *Hunter*, police sergeant Dee Dee McCall was raped. When the producers decided to have her raped again, the actress who portrays her, Stefanie Kramer, threatened to leave the show. The first rape was dramatically justified, but the second was, in her words, "pure exploitation."¹⁷

Vicarious violence is, indeed, a high grossing form of entertainment, as the box-office success of movies such as *Rambo* and the *Dirty Harry* series illustrate. The horror movie genre popular with teen-age audiences has been transformed in just a decade or two from suggestive tales of the supernatural to realistic simulations of gross and bizarre violence, much of it with sexual connotations. Dr. Edward Donnerstein, whose psychological research demonstrates that depictions of violence, not of sex, make men aggressive toward women, offers this example of how the "slice and dice" movies work:

This type of film usually has a sexual scene preceding a very graphically violent scene. For example, one film, *Toolbox Murders*, has a very beautiful bathtub scene. A woman in a bathtub is masturbating; a beautiful song is playing in the background. It goes on for about three minutes when a killer comes in and chases her around with a nail gun.

Then this song comes back on, and he puts the gun to her head and blows her brains out. But it's interesting that when a clip of the movie is shown on television, the woman's breasts will be covered up because you can't show anything sexual. Yet they will show the entire scene to the point of the nail being driven through her head. ... The problem with this is that kids watching this movie are being told you can't see a woman's breasts on television, but it's fine to see her blown apart, mutilated, or raped.¹⁸

Stanley Kubrick's movie about the Vietnam War, *Full Metal Jacket*, gives female viewers a rare, instructive, and frightening look into how men entering the United States military forces are trained to think of violence as sexually exciting. The soldier's ditty, "This is my weapon, this is my gun; one is for business, the other for fun," is only one of many examples of a military folklore that links sex and violence. Even at the highest levels of military strategizing, more subtle but equally phallic imagery is used to describe the "thrust" of a missile or its "penetration" capability.¹⁹

Violent imagery is so deeply embedded in popular culture that rooting it out of the public consciousness would take far more than restricting publication and distribution of violent pornogra-

phy alone. Yet, whether or not pornography causes violent sexual behavior, it does help purvey an ideology of violence that encourages toleration of an extraordinarily high incidence of violent crime. But television and Hollywood movies, because of their wider distribution and the stamp of legitimacy they carry, do even more to support the belief that violence is natural and inevitable. Regardless of what conclusions psychologists draw about actual one-to-one harm, women seem to know instinctively, by the fears aroused, that depicting acts of violence for their entertainment value, in whatever medium, keeps women at risk of rape and murder.

Desensitization to Images of Horror

In November 1963, millions of Americans, without expectation, became witnesses to an actual murder. Those who saw it will never forget seeing Lee Harvey Oswald walking quietly but reluctantly alongside the guard escorting him, then suddenly doubling over, his face contorting into a grimace. His shock and pain were so vivid that the television audience could almost feel them. But then the scene was played again—and again and again, until we could anticipate every little change in his facial expression. The more it was shown, the less real it seemed. Some people grew accustomed to watching it without feeling horror.

Over the next several years, television viewers watched the Vietnam War up close, in their living rooms—even in their kitchens and dining rooms while they ate their meals. After the news was over, they could watch Westerns or crime dramas in which people were routinely shot and killed. This daily blending of reality and fantasy could have had a desensitizing effect on some adults and cause confusion in children, who could not distinguish the actual violence from the feigned.

Every age has had its version of pornography, but recent technological advances have led to greater arousal of physical responses without emotional inhibitions. Film and television have so inundated us with realistic images of horror that we have been conditioned to respond with indifference, perhaps in self-protection. Those who seek to shock or arouse, as some of the producers of pornography do, must invent fresh and exciting images. In the case of violent pornography, this means moving far beyond the knife-at-the-throat rape to slicing off nipples or showing scorpions into vaginas. Frequent, routine exposure even to these images soon dulls their impact.

When the space shuttle Challenger exploded on the television screen, ending the lives of the seven human beings aboard, the television commentator maintained his professional objectivity and reported flatly: "A major malfunction has occurred." This makes a glaring contrast to the tearful cry of the radio reporter at the crash of the dirigible Hindenburg in 1937: "Horrible! Horrible! Oh, the humanity! Oh, the humanity!"²⁰ One response to violent pornography that might motivate public activism would be to look at the human beings pictured and cry "Oh, the humanity!" on their behalf.

Commercialization of Human Needs

It is by now commonplace to think of advertising as the manipulator, for profit, of human desires. In recent years, as the United States has changed from an industrial to a service economy, the creation of new "needs" has been considered crucial to economic stability. These needs have become seemingly more psychological than utilitarian and as new needs are created, new products are offered to fill them. For example, teenagers buy expensive designer jeans not for their sturdiness or comfort but for the image they convey. A significant element of this desired image is sex appeal. Thus, advertising offers the subtle promise of sexual fulfillment.

What advertising only hints at, pornography makes vivid. For \$10, a customer can nourish fantasies of sexual fulfillment by looking at a magazine full of color photographs of people he does not know, personally engaged in any conceivable sexual activity. For \$2 a minute, the patron of a live sex shop can stand in a private booth and "command" an anonymous woman behind a plastic screen to take off her clothes and act out his fantasies.

The danger here is not the sex itself but the risk that a manufactured need for instant, no-strings-attached sexual gratification will reduce the complex gift of human sexuality to a purely physical response. Pornography is, as one movie title puts it, "not a love story." The PCUS statement of 1973 describes it as "the intrusion of a stranger who neither knows nor cares about the people involved in intimate physical processes and thus reduces what is happening to bare physical functions without meaning or personal involvement."

In offering photographs or films of real women and men as anonymous sex objects, pornography reduces these human beings to commodities. The compassion that pictures of sexual abuse would ordinarily arouse is undermined, because there is nothing to be known about the reality behind the visual image.

In contrast, Mary Pellauer writes, “I will never be able to see another item of pornography without being flooded by questions about the women pictured: Was this one an incest victim? Was that one coerced into this by violence or poverty? What was it like for her to be filmed chained, smiling, with a knife at her genitals? What was her pay? What percentage of the profit was that? Does she have colitis as a result of the nervous stress? When I go into a porn shop to investigate, the questions multiply: Who are the men in this shop? Why do they look so furtive? Why do they scamper away from me and my companions?”²¹ Having the answers to these questions would make the image ineffective, because caring would negate the promise of disengaged, noncommittal gratification.

Widespread Addiction to Obsessive-Compulsive Behaviors

The objectification or abuse of women is not the only troubling aspect of pornography. What it suggests about the state of males and their sexuality is quite alarming. A forty-eight billion dollar industry has to draw from the pockets of a very large number of income-earning men. It cannot rely solely on a sleazy underworld. The clientele the task force members saw on the trip to Times Square included men who would fit easily into our home neighborhoods. Why do men choose to spend their money this way? What do they get out of anonymous, vicarious sex that they do not get from a committed relationship? What psychological needs does pornography serve, and how else might those needs be met?

The authors of the best-selling study of contemporary American culture, *Habits of the Heart*, claim that, “American cultural traditions define personality, achievement, and the purpose of human life in ways that leave the individual suspended in glorious, but terrifying, isolation.”²² Astonishing numbers of people soothe that terrifying isolation through obsessive-compulsive behavior with alcohol, drugs, food, and abuse of their spouses and children.

Many new “Twelve Step” treatment programs have sprung up on the model of Alcoholics Anonymous, which establishes a community of recovering peers in which individuals can safely admit their powerlessness over the addiction, surrender control of their lives to God or a “higher power,” and make “a searching and fearless moral inventory” of themselves.²³ One of these, Sex Addicts Anonymous, posits that people who are obsessed with sex have unmet, essential human needs that have nothing to do with sex per se. Women with feelings of inferiority may rely on sexual

attractiveness as a measure of their worth and seek out constant validation from different sexual partners. Some women pose nude or perform in sexually explicit films as a quicker route to male approval.²⁴ Some men constantly test sexual prowess in an attempt to boost a poor self-image. Physical intimacy with a prostitute may allay fears of emotional intimacy with wives or mothers or daughters. Frequent orgasm may produce a euphoria that eases the stresses of life.

It is often said that pornography itself is addictive, but this confuses cause and effect. Certainly, pornography can be used in compulsive ways, creating and facilitating masturbatory fantasies as an outlet for emotional frustration or a cure for loneliness. The impulse to masturbate is natural and can be used positively in maintaining a healthy sexual life. But when it or any other human activity—even work or church attendance—becomes obsessive, filling a void left by lack of self-esteem, the failure of relationships, or a sense of meaninglessness, there is cause for concern. Such concern should be expressed compassionately, with attention to the person's human condition. Finding fault with the images themselves misses the point and leaves suffering people unhealed.

Unequal Responsibility for Human Relationships

Over the last thirty years, with improvements in contraception and increased affluence, American women have begun to exercise greater sexual and economic independence. While this has brought about significant changes in their expectations of men and male-female relationships, most women still measure the value of life in relational terms. Many men, on the other hand, seem to be backing away from intimacy with and commitment to women.²⁵

In *The Hearts of Men*, Barbara Ehrenreich claims that American men have been rebelling since the 1950s against the obligations of marriage and family. She traces this tendency in popular culture, particularly through the rapid growth of Hugh Hefner's *Playboy* enterprises. Many men, of course, insist that they read *Playboy* for its high-quality writing and that the nude photographs are only incidental.

Whether or not they are deliberately fleeing from responsibility for human relationships, there is measurable evidence that millions of men are, at least, avoiding the consequences of their sexual behavior. Late Census Bureau data indicates that currently, 8.8 million American mothers of minor children are raising child-

ren in the absence of their fathers. Only 2.1 million of these women, less than a quarter, receive child-support payments in the amount ordered by the court. Another 1.1 million are receiving part of the support due, leaving 5.6 million who are getting no financial support at all from the fathers.²⁶

Some public concern is aroused by the extremely high incidence of teen-age pregnancy, but the focus is still on the girls' sexual behavior, rather than the responsibility of the boys, who abandon their pregnant partners about ninety percent of the time.²⁷

The quest for "free" sex is, of course, not new. Pornography has not brought it about, but it does give it vivid ideological expression. Despite the availability of contraception, which is still neither entirely effective nor entirely safe, there is no such thing as free and unencumbered sex for women. It has costs: possible pregnancy, loss of esteem, the risk of abuse and violence. The AIDS epidemic has brought new risks to both sexes.

Yet the greatest human cost of a commercialized, dehumanized, and abusive sexual ideology may be the loss of complex and challenging human relationships. Some opponents of pornography appear to offer solutions to the crisis in male-female relationships by restoring women to their traditional roles, at the cost of gains made in freedom and equality since the 1950s. The task force, however, agrees with Elizabeth Fox-Genovese that "the chasm between men and women results from the breakdown of an old society, not from the birth of a new one."²⁸

Summary

The consensus of the task force is that pornography is primarily a symptom of problems that are very deeply embedded in our culture. Pornography is an extreme variation on common attitudes and beliefs. It reflects and reinforces certain injurious stereotypes:

- that women exist to serve men's needs;
- that sex is an adversarial relationship in which one person exercises power over another;
- that violence is natural, acceptable and sexually stimulating;
- that commitment to human relationships threatens individual freedom;
- that self-gratification is the highest good.

The proliferation of pornographic materials and the raging debate about their propriety and impact provide an opportunity to address these underlying issues from the perspective of the Christian faith. Perhaps the problems of today's culture can best be summarized as the denial of the compassionate community in which Christians profess to believe. A right relationship with God depends on a right relationship with each other. In this culture, such community is fractured by exaggerated individualism, undergirded by sexism, and fostered by competitiveness that may lead to exploitation.

Fox-Genovese concludes her paper on pornography by indicting the "failure of individualism," while recognizing that in American culture, community values based on equality and mutuality between women and men do not in fact exist. To reverse destructive individualism and the further polarization between women and men, she claims that "... we need collective principles and yes, a collective vision, on the basis of which we can demand respect for women on a new basis and as the necessary foundation for our society's respect for itself."²⁹

Christians themselves are a diverse community and the church must examine its own history to understand its role in shaping cultural values. Is it naive to think that Christians can create a compassionate community—a healthy, whole community that models in its own life the values by which it hopes to transform society?

Karl Barth wrote that what seems to be unnatural from the perspective of the world becomes natural for the follower of Christ.³⁰ Believers are the body of Christ—a body rent even unto death by compassion. Faithfulness to Christ's doctrine of love and equal regard for women and men as being created in God's image are necessary and effective antidotes to the degradation and abuse that pornography represents.

XI. Findings

The Task Force on Pornography has examined this issue from as many perspectives as it could identify. Not only has it probed psychological, sociological, legal, historical, and feminist opinion on pornography but, throughout the process, it has also sought to look at this complex issue within a biblical and theological framework. Its worship and study have led it to a deeper understanding of the integral relationship between our faith and issues of pornography, sexuality, and human history. It presents the following findings with the hope that others in the Presbyterian

Church (U.S.A.) will share what it believes about the significance of this difficult issue for the church in our time.

1. *Pornography is both a symptom and a cause of human alienation, reflecting the failure of human sexual relationships to fulfill God's intended creation.* Pornography in our culture reflects nothing new in human history, but it exposes in graphic sexual images the systemic distortion of power in human relationships. It not only reflects a historic pattern of dominance and submission in sexual relationships, but it also serves as a reinforcing agent to perpetuate that pattern in human behavior. Pornography's images of sexuality violate God's images of human dignity and sexual pleasure based on mutual love and respect.

2. *Pornography is not simply the display of human flesh or sexual behavior.* There is nothing inherently sinful or dirty in our physical bodies or sexuality. Neither is there anything inherently evil or offensive in images of our bodies or of sexual behavior. Human beings are created with the possibility for joy and celebration in sexuality; images that convey love, caring, warmth, commitment and genuine mutual pleasure between equals should be seen positively. Such images may be therapeutic and may stimulate healthy, constructive, egalitarian sexual relationships.

3. *Understanding the historic oppression of women is central to understanding the issue of pornography.* Pornography will continue its appeal as long as sexual arousal is stimulated by images of power over another person, usually male over female. Energy needs to be directed, not only toward confronting pornographic materials that eroticize the subordination of women but also toward raising the status of women in every way possible. This includes education offering alternative images of mutual respect, dignity, and justice in all human relationships, as well as support for economic, legal, and educational programs to empower women.

4. *Pornography victimizes men as well as women.* By perpetuating the erotic image of power, violence, and abuse, men remain vulnerable to the false standard of masculinity. Pornography represents male sexuality as selfishly brutal, contributing to attitudes that deprive men of full human dignity and prevent them from experiencing the ultimate pleasure found in relationships of loving mutuality. Educational efforts, while exposing the historical pattern of male dominance and female subjugation, should avoid polarization between women and men and seek to restore wholeness in all persons and relationships.

5. *Pornography must be understood as an issue of people and not only materials.* Pornography is inseparable from the women and men who play a role in producing it, many of whom also become its victims. Increased attention also should be paid to the testimony of those who have been historically silent on this and other issues of sexuality—women, people of color, homosexuals, people with disabilities, and the economically disadvantaged who often live in areas most influenced by pornography. The gospel of grace, forgiveness, and acceptance should be communicated in welcoming anyone who seeks help from the church.

6. *Other broad issues of sexual morality—such as sexual activity between persons not married to each other, homosexuality, and specific sexual practices—need to be addressed in their own right and in terms other than pornography.* A task force established by the 199th General Assembly (1987) is at work examining the wider issues of human sexuality, including its moral dimensions.

7. *Pornography eroticizes power through both heterosexual and homosexual images and affects the lives of women and men of both sexual orientations.* Homophobia should not motivate our concerns and actions regarding pornography.

8. *Because sexual themes elicit responses that are very personal and intensely subjective, disagreement is to be expected when applying any definition of pornography to specific materials.* Discussion of the pornography issue provides Christians with the opportunity to explore their attitudes toward positive and negative sexual images. Diversity of opinion should be encouraged within a climate of trust and openness.

9. *Child pornography is the photographic record of actual child sexual abuse. Laws to prohibit its production and distribution need to be supported and vigorously enforced.* The term “child pornography” accurately applies only to material that depicts actual children. It should be restricted to this legal interpretation, which has broad consensus. We may have legitimate concerns about the influence of pornography on children, but our language should not refer to the entire spectrum of these influences as “child pornography.” The picture of an actual ten year-old engaged in sexual behavior is called pornography; a ten-year-old child calling Dial-A-Porn is not.

Increased attention must be paid to all forms of sexual violence, including incest, marital rape, and abuse that occurs in families. Education and support services must be strengthened to

empower children, women, and men to resist all forms of sexual coercion. Our concern for abused and exploited children in this society must extend to children around the world who continue to be victims in the production of child pornography.

10. *Efforts to address the issue of pornography should not rely primarily on the use of law and governmental regulation.* Current methods of regulating pornography depend on existing obscenity law, an approach that is subject to conflict over interpretation that often paralyzes action. Reliance on obscenity law, while calling attention to the issue, requires the tedious examination and prosecution of materials, involving lengthy court hearings and questionable use of limited resources.

Risks of using the law to regulate pornography are serious ones. Christians in the United States live in a democratic society that places high value on the rights and freedoms of individuals. In a culture rich in diversity, such a value inevitably leads to conflict of rights. The First Amendment to the Constitution guarantees not only freedom for Christians to promote the good news of God's love in Jesus Christ, but also guarantees freedom for others to espouse all manner of ideas that Christians find offensive. Christians live in a pluralistic society that is often disturbing in its lack of common values. However, a review of history reveals that attempts by some to control the speech and writing of others can result in a climate of repression and censorship. The most vulnerable targets are often voices of change. Freedom of expression is a precious right which deserves the strongest constitutional protection from governmental regulation.

11. *The harm caused by pornography is best understood as part of a complex relationship of human dynamics. The fundamental harm of pornography lies in its influence to perpetuate distorted sexual images and behaviors.* Honest debate is appropriate in trying to determine the effect of pornography on human behavior. It is virtually impossible to ascertain a conclusive correlation between the use of specific pornographic materials and any specific behavior, since human beings act in response to complex sociological, psychological, and biological factors. Pornography may be a contributing catalyst in acts of violence, such as rape, battering, and incest, but it is overly simplistic to identify it as a singular target. The strongest correlation to violent or abusive behavior is a personal history of having been abused. Patterns of violence are often learned and perpetuated apart from any connection to pornography. The destructive power of pornography is in providing imagery that produces and reinforces models of sexual violence,

exploitation, and dominance. The use of pornography, by an individual or a society, ensures that attitudes toward sexuality will continue to be influenced by images that negate human dignity and mutuality. On many levels, pornography contributes to alienation in human relationships and distorts the sexual integrity of both women and men.

12. *Widespread sexuality education provides the greatest hope for disempowering pornography.* Sexually explicit materials of all kinds permeate our society and bombard children and young people with negative images of sexuality. Those who attempt to protect children from materials need to recognize legal conflict over the interference with adult rights. Efforts to control the display of sexually explicit materials and to provide technical methods for limiting home access to television programs and telephone services are entirely appropriate. However, since it is virtually impossible to escape exposure to all kinds of distorted sexual images, massive educational efforts need to be undertaken. Children, youth, and adults need opportunities to discuss sexuality and sexual materials in families, churches, and schools. Positive Christian values affirming the goodness of human sexuality foster personal feelings of self-esteem and acknowledge respect and dignity of all people.

13. *Pornography is an issue of profound significance that Presbyterians should seek to understand.* The issue of pornography is one that Presbyterians may be inclined to avoid or regard as irrelevant to themselves and society. Those Presbyterians who called for this study were wise to recognize the need for a thorough investigation of the significance of the pornography issue. A proper study of pornography leads to examination of the broad fabric of society and of the values that affect all intimate human relationships. It provides opportunity for Christians to deepen their understanding not only of pornography, but also of their calling to proclaim God's intended wholeness for individuals and for society.

14. *The report of the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography should be seen as a valuable educational resource on pornography.* Careful reading of the report reveals the struggles of commission members to define pornography, examine First Amendment issues, investigate current data on the industry, and assess the effects of pornography on children, youth, and adults. Valuable insight is provided in the personal testimony of some of those who appeared before the commission and in the different analyses expressed in each commissioner's personal statement.

However, the commission's report is best understood when studied in conjunction with the opinion of its critics, who question the commission's findings on the causal relationship between pornography and behavior and its recommendations for increased regulation of pornography under existing obscenity law.

15. *The study of pornography provides a unique opportunity for the church to examine its own history and use of images, particularly its language.* For centuries, religious tradition authorized and perpetuated the dominant rule of men and the subordinate weakness of women. For centuries the church has also used images that are exclusively masculine in reference to both humanity and God. Through such images, Christians have internalized powerful verbal and visual messages that women are not fully human and not fully created in the image of God. Efforts to address the dehumanizing power of pornographic images should be matched with continuing efforts to promote full human dignity through male and female religious images.

16. *Valuable understanding is found in the study of the pornography issue by other religious bodies.* Exploration of this issue by Jews and Christians of many denominations reveals both a unity of concern about the destructive influence of pornography and a diversity of opinion on the role of religious institutions in addressing it. Interfaith study and activity should promote opportunities for the people of God to affirm their common faith in the goodness of God's gift of sexuality and reject attempts to distort it.

17. *Two previous studies of the issue of pornography serve as valuable continuing resources for study.* The following theological affirmations are reflected in both the 1973 PCUS statement on "Pornography, Obscenity, and Censorship" and the 1974 UPCUSA study on "Dignity and Exploitation" and are affirmed by this study as well:

a. Human physical life is willed and blessed by God and should be accepted and used with thanksgiving, joy, pleasure, and responsibility.

b. There is nothing inherently dirty, obscene, or sinful about any aspect of our physical existence or relationships.

c. Human beings are created for living together with respect for the dignity and value God gives every human life.

d. Male and female are equally created in the image of God and attempts to provide any intrinsic superiority of the male

by referring to masculine language about God are “wrongheaded” and “biblically unsound.”

e. Even though dominance and subordination were uniformly the cultural pattern in biblical times, as well as our own, Scripture as a whole does not support a mandate for the suppression of anyone.

f. The image of God contains a mandate for human freedom, self-determination and fulfillment, and we must be alert to all forms of human exploitation.

g. The point of tension between *agape* and erotic love is not to put the spiritual and the sensual dimensions of our humanity in opposition but to keep us from self-serving rationalizations that make love a bargain rather than a gift.

h. Covenant love should be a basis for our judgments about sexual materials, measuring both materials and approaches toward them by the intentions expressed and the goals served, not by the degree of explicitness of sexual imagery.

XII. Recommendations

The 200th General Assembly (1988) adopted recommendations to:

1. Receive the report with deep appreciation for the work of the Task Force on Pornography and recommend it for study throughout the church.

2. Direct the Office of General Assembly to print this report as a study document (including study guide and response form) and send it to every congregation, presbytery, and synod.

3. Direct the Women’s Unit to compile responses to this study (as provided for in the study guide and response form) by congregations, presbyteries, and synods and, with the Committee on Social Witness Policy, to submit a report and recommendations for public policy to the 203rd General Assembly (1991). Recommendations adopted by the 200th General Assembly (1988) for action by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its members are to be regarded as interim policy until recommendations are prepared for the 203rd General Assembly (1991) in response to study of this report.

4. Reaffirm that the 200th General Assembly (1988) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) opposes pornography as stated by previous General Assemblies (1984, 1985, 1986, and 1987) and as defined in this report (refer to Section IV, What Is Pornography?).

5. Affirm that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) stands opposed to both pornography and censorship and encourages Presbyterians to participate in organizations committed to protecting First Amendment rights, as outlined in this report (refer to Section IX, A Civil Liberties View).

6. Urge Presbyterians to develop personal and group strategies for action, including:

a. Writing letters to the media with views in opposition to pornography;

b. Communicating with television networks and cable services about opposition to programming considered to be pornographic;

c. Communicating with store owners about opposition to the inappropriate display of pornographic materials;

d. Boycotting materials and companies which market or produce pornographic materials.

7. Encourage Presbyterians to participate in interfaith efforts which study and address the issue of pornography.

8. Encourage Presbyterians to offer support and counsel to persons who believe they have been victimized in any way by pornography and to communicate with members of Congress in support of Pornography Victims Protection legislation. (A copy of this bill, H.R. 1213, is found in the Background Material.)

9. Encourage Presbyterians to study the issue of child pornography, become aware of state and federal laws prohibiting it, and support legal authorities in the full enforcement of these laws.

10. Address the systemic roots of pornography through the following actions related to the status of women in society and in the church, since sexism is perceived as a fundamental cause of pornography:

a. Reaffirm the statement of the 196th General Assembly (1984) which advocated "passage of the Equal Rights Amendment" based on the support of the Assemblies of both former denominations in 1970, 1972, 1974, 1975, 1977, 1978, and 1982, and recommend that Presbyterians communicate with the President and U.S. senators and representatives regarding the need for the passage and ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment;

b. Reaffirm support for the United Nations Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women approved by the 199th General Assembly (1987), and direct that the Stated Clerk communicate this action to all U.S. senators, urging ratification;

c. Reaffirm the policy of previous General Assemblies regarding the use of inclusive language in the entire life of the church.

11. Direct the Committee on Justice for Women to review and update previous studies adopted by the General Assembly on issues of women and sexual abuse (rape, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation of women) and to recommend ways of increasing the effective usage of the resources related to those studies by the church.

12. Request the Education and Congregational Nurture Unit to:

a. Complete the work now in process in developing and producing a proposed sexuality education curriculum for junior and senior high school young people;

b. Review the *Bibliography of Religious Publications on Sex Education and Sexuality* included in the Background Material of this report and prepare a recommended list of resources which are currently available;

c. Gather and (or) develop (1) materials for pastors on counseling children, youth, and adults on sexual abuse and (2) materials for children on how to resist sexual abuse.

13. Direct the Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee to investigate the relationship between business and the pornography industry, including ownership of non-pornography firms by people in the pornography industry and corporate profits generated by pornography, such as tele-

phone services, and determine if appropriate stockholder action should be recommended to the 201st General Assembly (1989).

14. Direct the Women's Unit to request funding up to \$10,000 for the Ecumenical Decade for Solidarity with Women, a major effort of the World Council of Churches to address the issues of violence against women.

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XV. Background Material

Section XV includes a number of items found to be valuable in the study of the task force. It includes opinions that are not necessarily in agreement with positions taken by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA.) and are not to be taken as its policy.

A. THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

1. “Thoughts on Pornography” by Aurelia T. Fule Associate for Faith and Order Ministry Unit on Theology and Worship

The theme reminded me of an earlier, seemingly unrelated experience. Three children, five, seven, and nine years olds, came to stay with friends of ours while we also were guests. Their parents had to be away from home and arranged for the children to stay four days with this family. After last minute instructions by the mother—to be good, to behave themselves, to be quiet—the parents left. The oldest child then turned to the hostess: “What are the No-Nos?” We all laughed, but it was not a joke. When you have no choice about the land, the lay-out is defined by prohibitions. The children’s question haunted us, because in a nutshell this is what Christian ethics means to many people. The No-Nos define the lay of the land of religion.

The story is not unrelated after all. The concern before us is one that we adults often approach by seeking the No-Nos. I suggest that we try a different route.

The study clearly notes the difficulty and necessity of distinguishing obscenity from pornography. I share the affirmations that guide the study (see Introduction), and the definition of the Task Force on Pornography as to what constitutes pornography: “... sexually explicit ... for profit ... for sexual arousal by eroticizing violence, power ... dominance ... of a person. ...” I deeply appreciate the work of the task force and the result of its work.

“The Hebrew idea of personality,” in the rightly famous words of the British scholar, Dr. Wheeler Robinson, “is an animated body, and not an incarnated soul.” (*The People and the Book*, ed. A.D. Peake, p. 362), or in the words of J. Pedersen, “The body is the soul in its outward form” (Israel, I-II, p. 171). This is strangely true, strangely because Hebrew had no word for “body.” The idea, nevertheless, was communicated.

In the New Testament, the writer who thought through this matter was the apostle Paul. J. A. T. Robinson clearly showed that in Paul’s writing, body “is the nearest equivalent to our word ‘personality’ “ (*The Body, A Study Pauline Theology*, SCM Press, p. 28). The body is not something external to me that I may use or misuse; it is not something I have, it is what I am. What happens to my body happens to me, to the whole of me.

The creation story in Genesis, Chapter I, speaks of human beings as “created ... in the image of God ...; male and female ...” (v. 27). Although no body is alluded to and the image is not physical resemblance, concrete human beings are assumed. Chapter 2 is more specific: “The Lord God formed the human (*adam, masc.*) of the dust of the ground (*adamah-fem.*) (v. 7). When this chapter recounts the creation of the woman from the rib of the human, women are acknowledged as similar and different: “Bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.” We are the same substance, equal to each other, says Adam: “she shall be called Woman (*ishshah*) because she was taken out of Man (*ish*)” (v. 23). Yet we are different. The blessing on both of them (1:28) is similar to that of the animal creation: “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth ...” (v. 22) but with added responsibilities for the rest of creation.

The text presents these two persons as the forbears not of a particular people but of humanity. What is said about these two is said about all human beings. We are formed by God—male, female, then and now, here and everywhere. We are formed to reflect the image of God so that looking at the other we may glimpse God’s image. We are created for God and for each other, to love in community. We are created as sexual beings. To fill the earth is not said about the fall, it is part of the blessing. Male and female are equal in value and dignity, they are equally valued by God. We are created for responsibility and for freedom. We are to make choices and live with (some of) the consequences of our choices.

When I consider my own body, I do not need convincing that I do not have a body; I am a body. Who I am has to do with my body. A body twenty years older or younger, a foot taller or shorter or twenty pounds lighter would be a person very different from who I am. My self-identity is tied to this body. Would you recognize me tomorrow in another body? This body and I are one. Self-expression is limited by the body, but it is possible only with the body. Body is needed for relationship, for enjoyment—of music, food or love, for engendering or carrying new life. Sexuality partakes of all the above blessings that are given to us by being created as “animated bodies.”

For the Christian community, body takes on a hallowed meaning. God comes to us in the person of the Messiah who becomes one of us by being carried in his mother’s womb, by sharing the experience of birth with all mothers and all infants. He not only takes on “flesh,” he takes a body. For centuries we have recited the creed speaking of Jesus Christ “who ... under Pontius Pilate was crucified, dead and buried.” There is here no soul freed from the body, he was crucified. God’s gift of redemption was brought through the body of the suffering, dying redeemer.

“The third day he rose again,” we continue. What happened? What does it mean? To believe that “bodily” resurrection means reviving or re-animating a dead body and that this is the miraculous intervention of God is to miss the miracle. The point of the body is identity, self-expression, relationship, touch, feel, love. The gospels assert that the same Jesus who journeyed with and taught the disciples, who was put to

death, was alive in their midst. The same Jesus could be recognized by the lakeside and at supper in Emmaus.

Christ's resurrection leads to the concluding promise of the gospel so that we say, I believe "in the resurrection of the body and life everlasting." Each of us carrying the divine image is created for eternity. Identity, self-expression, sharing in community is understood by the early church in terms of the body. And not just as individual bodies, but the community of faith is spoken of as the body of Christ. The self-expression, though not exclusively, we pray, of Christ here and now is in and through that body.

We who were brought to know God in the face of Jesus Christ have learned that God in Christ has assumed our body and the risen Christ's ascension in some way carried the body—the human person—into the Godhead. These are the Yes-Yes notes of being human, and of belonging to the Body of Christ.

These are my thoughts after reading the report of the task force. I first read the report before it was completed and my response came in terms of the body. On re-reading the completed report, I found myself thinking in these terms still.

Why? I ask myself. Is it that being a woman I live with greater awareness of my body than men do? And as a woman, I am more likely to carry the consequences of my choices than men do. Some women stop menstruating because their diet is faulty or insufficient, while there is no corresponding change in men. Women's biological cycle is evident, we cannot but be conscious of our body. We can carry new life; we watch what we do, what we eat to protect that life; we give birth and nurse babies—all natural to our body, to our deepest self, natural even if we do not in fact become mothers. My body is not external to me; what happens to my body, happens to me.

What pornography does to the body of those photographed, filmed, or watched on stage and to those who watch is done to persons. Dominance, submission, violence, degradation that is suffered by the physical body is suffered by persons. In this way, pornography violates the body and thereby violates the person.

Pornography is not wholly divorced from reality. It is a distorted, exaggerated mirror image of activities fantasized by people who cannot love their own body, because they cannot love themselves. What is fantasized is also a distorted and exaggerated image of social relationships in contemporary society: inequality, exploitation, oppression and violence.

What we need to do about pornography are not simply isolated acts or prohibitions. It is not wholesome—or successful—to treat a symptom and leave the illness. The No-Nos do not work on their own. We—in this land—need to attend to the deep roots of social sickness that burst into violence of many forms. We in this church need to highlight the Yes to life and body, community, and love, and live it in and out of home and church, gratefully, before God.

2. “Women of Color and Pornography” by Elizabeth B. Haile Consultant to Native American Studies

As women of color, we are willing to express the following thoughts to serve as a guide to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in understanding the perspective of racial ethnic women on the subject of pornography. We believe it is important to relate our feelings to both our Christian heritage and our cultural traditions.

A common factor in all of our racial ethnic cultures is the significance of images. The use of imagery has been essential in transferring the story and the values of a people. So it is not surprising that some manifestation of a god and that god's creations would be expressed. Despite the widespread belief that non-Western people were heathens before being introduced to Christianity, a critical look might produce some surprising results. The traditional religions of non-Western people often contained parallelism with Christianity in religious concepts, rituals, and symbolism. Thus, not only can we intellectually understand the necessity for a creation story but express it through our senses of seeing and feeling.

The sacredness of all human life is an essential understanding in all our racial ethnic communities. Being “created in God's image” establishes a divine spark in each of us but shows only a reflection of the Divine. The relationship between the Creator and created beings undergirds our perception of “being.” God is Spirit and is not limited; we are flesh and are limited to being created male and female.

The biblical story informs us that God intentionally created male and female; moreover, God made them to be sexual beings—not asexual. In the creation story about man and woman being created separately (Gen 2:7–23), there is a distinctly graphic reference to their bodies. Genesis 2:25 tells us, “And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.” Therefore, what God has created is good—that is, our body is not in itself a reason for us to be ashamed or embarrassed. Unfortunately, it is sometimes what we do with our bodies that is cause for regret. We use our bodies in ways that cause alienation in ourselves and in our relationships with others.

Another way to say this is to examine a section from the Confession of 1967. In *A Commentary on the Confession of 1967: An Introduction to the Book of Confessions*, on page 72, Edward A. Dowey, Jr., of Princeton Seminary writes:

Male and female are a work of the love of the Creator. Sexuality is not a disaster, although it suffers probably more than most other aspects of the lives of humans from the condition of REBELLION, DESPAIR, and ISOLATION.... The twoness of man and woman, the three-and four-and more-ness of the family group, which leads into a wide complex of social relations, has the blessing promised of the Creator. (Refers to Sections 9.12 and 9.47)

God has endowed male and female with capacities to make the world serve their needs and to enjoy its good things. This has been corrupted

so that humans exploit each other, personally as well as one group over another. When sexuality is exploited, that is, when one uses his or her body or another's body for selfish use, then that person has misused the intent of her or his sexuality.

Pornography is one manifestation of sexual exploitation. Pornography, as defined by the Rev. Sandra Mangual of Puerto Rico in an essay for this paper, is "the exploitation of human sexuality utilizing images that are distorting the intrinsic value of human beings, reducing them to objects of pleasure. It is in this process of exploitation that women become the instruments of others' maneuvers, experiencing a loss of control over their lives and therefore a lack of freedom. The ultimate consequence of this disempowerment is the absence of resources to affirm their authentic humanity."

Pornography is a justice issue for women and especially for women of color. In our racial ethnic communities, we are informed about human sexuality by the traditions of our cultures. According to traditional values, it is understood that the individual does not have absolute rights if these violate the integrity of the community. The multitude of generations which preceded us have shaped our consciousness of who we are and of our values. The stories of our peoples also inform us as we respond to issues about injustice against the well-being of our communities.

Pornographic images are destructive because, in the best sense of our traditions, the individual is not the most important; instead the good of the community is primary. For example, both biblical and traditional African theology stress the value of belonging to a community of believers. (When we refer to African traditional religion or theology, we mean the indigenous beliefs and practices on the continent before the advent of Christianity and Islam.) Many African theologians agree that in traditional African religion, humanity is conceived as "being-in-relation." Writing in "The Origins and Development of African Theology," (G.H. Muzorewa, Orbis Press, p. 17), Mercy Oduyoye says:

Africans recognize life as life-in-community. We can truly know ourselves if we remain true to our community, past and present. The concept of individual success or failure is secondary. The ethnic group, the village, the locality, are crucial in one's estimation of oneself. Our nature as being-in-relation is a two-way relation: with God and with our fellow human beings.

Being-in-relation is seen over and against individual gratification. The relationships that lead to *shalom* in its fullest theological sense are based on *agape* or *phileo* connectedness. This can be seen in covenantal relationships as described in Scripture and reinforced through traditional cultural values. The welfare of persons is a concern of the God who acts in history.

Women of color are beginning to reexamine the Bible for passages which contain both racist and sexist exploitation. A prominent example is the treatment of Hagar by Abraham and Sarah. Sarah and Abraham

are credited with being the spiritual ancestors of the peoples of the Old and the New Testaments. They were given a direct promise by God but they attempted to expedite it. And as often happens, the powerless woman, Hagar, became a pawn as Abraham and Sarah played the game of fulfilling their desires.

Sarah's treatment of Hagar portrays the victimizing of the black woman by the slave owner's wife. Hagar, the Egyptian slave, was never to be the equal of the wife, yet was permitted to become the breeder for Sarah and Abraham's first child (Gen. 16:1-16). Nevertheless, the exploited woman of color was "disposable" when no longer sexually useful to the master.

God, however, made a promise also to Hagar and her son, Ishmael; Hagar's worth to God was more than how she could be used sexually. God was merciful and supportive of Hagar when she suffered from her captivity and lack of options (Gen. 21:14-21). God heard her prayers and was present in Ishmael's life as well.

Hagar's story illustrates how being reduced from full personhood to a mere sexual object is destructive. However, the power of one sex or one group over another is often justified by distortion of the reference to dominion in Genesis 1:26,28. For women of color, this is exacerbated by the misunderstanding of the intent of Genesis 2:16. People must be informed again and again that the concept of male dominance-female subjugation is a result of sinful humanity and not God's intention for being-in-relation.

Whenever human dignity is disregarded, it provides an environment for destructive images. Images have a way of redefining reality; injustice can be created through imagery. For example, harlotry in the Bible is frequently associated with non-Hebrew or foreign women. The cultures of those women were denounced as morally inferior. Therefore, women of a non-dominant culture have been victimized by this image.

The story of Ruth shatters some of the unhealthy images. In patriarchal systems, one of the precious few places a woman has authority is in the management of the home. There she is mother, mother-in-law, and grandmother. Our cultures teach us who we are as we go into another's home. Each culture has specific expectations of the bride and mother-in-law relationship. Ruth agreed with Naomi that "your people shall be my people and your God my God" (Ruth 1:15-18). This equality of status afforded to each woman a commitment to fairness in their relationship regardless of the dangers and challenges they would confront in the future, traveling alone without male protection. Ruth, as a foreign, single woman, was vulnerable, particularly to unsolicited sexual advances.

Looking at the parallels between these two women and the modern situation, we women of color need to be the Naomis for our own young women, by guiding them into using whatever skills they may have to assure their independence without being sexually exploited. We include in our concern our foreign sisters who are victimized by the tourism industry.

The Bible has harsh language about the “mighty” who victimize the widows, the orphans, and a variety of “humble and meek” who were perceived as powerless in the secular society described in the Old and New Testaments. Still, church systems have produced damaging images of women and have even looked the other way when these images resulted in violent acts against women of color. Thus, it is not enough simply to hear the gospel. The gospel message needs to be understood, and skills are needed to transfer the relevance of the particular people in a particular time and place.

The Rev. Sandra Mangual-Rodriguez, in an essay written for this paper states:

I reject pornography for being an exploitation of sexuality which mainly legitimates women as objects of pleasure. This action violates women and denigrates their personhood. The gospel, at the core of its message portrays Jesus denying any reduction to the fulfillment of humanity. He says, “I came so that they might have life and might have it abundantly” (John 10:10). Any Christian discourse that denies this dimension of Jesus’ praxis falls short of understanding the depth and value of the christological message.

The abundant life to which Jesus is referring is not a life filled with material things nor satiating our erogenous senses. The abundant life which Jesus promises comes through our relationship with Jesus and through our response to his commandment to love one another as he has loved us. In the abundant life, racial stereotypes are not perpetuated in sexual imagery.

The biblical calling to abundant life is a challenge to Christians living in the United States. America allows the right to create pornography but it does not take responsibility for dealing with the effects of it. The church must affirm its calling because society has not taken responsibility for the social problems it has created. In claiming a division between church and state, corporate America can profit from pornography yet wash its hands of any moral responsibility.

Basic pornographic ideology permeates the rest of society in general. This can be seen in Western understanding of utilitarianism, a private property mentality and a social, economic, and class structure. It reflects a patriarchal construction in social-class and economic format which delineates the role of women as subservient to men.

Today, pornography has become a lucrative business for individuals and small “corporations” that try to maintain or increase their existing capital. At the same time pornography becomes an open door for individuals (men and women) who are trying to meet their financial and existential needs in an unjust society characterized by a profound gap between the rich and the poor, a society that stresses individualism and the need for self-realization.

Our opposition to the profiteers of pornography is not to be equated with censorship. We affirm the separation of church and state which our Constitution maintains. Moreover, we do not unconditionally condemn sensual arousal, since sensuality in itself is a part of human sexuality. This applies to what is written in very erotic terms. For example, The

Song of Songs, which is replete with sensuous imagery, is poetry that does not promote sexual behavior but acknowledges the strong feelings of love, binding the lovers in-relation.

We do, however, object to using the media to demean the human body for profit. "Pornography" comes from two Greek words: *porne* meaning "harlot" and *grapho* meaning "writing." *Porne* is derived from a root word which means "to sell." The emphasis of pornography, as the name indicates, is on material gain and not on relationships between people. Pornography is the antithesis of community because it promotes consumerism for individual gratification.

A pornographic home video game, "Custer's Revenge," which features the rape of an Indian woman as entertainment, was discontinued due to protest by feminists, Native Americans, and the American public. Money is clearly the key motivating force behind "Custer's Revenge." A Hispanic woman doing research on the pornography industry has observed "a hierarchy of sexual imagery. The more violent the pornography, the more images there are of racial ethnic women."

Such pornographic "entertainment" defines women of color as not worthy of being created in God's image. The church must not be silent on this issue, and by its silence seem to say "amen." The church must acknowledge the sacredness of the life of people of color. The sacred and the secular are closely related in traditional non-Western cultures.

Our racial ethnic experience tells us that the sacred way is the will of God. But our experience also tells us every day that anger, violence, greed, and every evil passion surround us. Except where lewd pictures and advertisements of pornographic entertainment are allowed to be displayed, there is little evidence of the pornography industry. Inner city dwellers find objectionable material within their home neighborhoods. Often these are racial ethnic families whose options for homes, workplaces, and schools are limited. The impact of the pornographic trade on racial ethnic communities is divisive as well as dehumanizing. Reflections voiced among Asian parents, teachers, and clergywomen in Los Angeles on the prevalence of pornography in public places reveal that they feel victimized because of their helplessness to do anything of significance about these conditions.

Women of color live with the reality that the theology of the church has been better than its practice. We desire the church to be an agent of empowerment for us as we respond to the pornography which is undermining the values in our communities. The vision which begins to take form is one of mobilizing women and men who believe in wholesome sexuality, pledged to the protection of an environment that would be healthy for young people to grow up in and in which all women would be safe from oppression. The unity of church-related women committed to one such goal would be like giving each other a valuable look of sisterhood. This single agenda would be that of speaking out whenever the principles of personhood are violated. The market for pornography could decline,

forcing profit losses if Christians themselves would stop purchasing and renting and selling pornographic materials.

3. “Pornography and Language” by Isabel Wood Rogers, Moderator, 199th General Assembly (1987)

For some time, we in the Presbyterian Church have been struggling with questions about the language we use—language used to talk about ourselves and about God. We have come to understand the power of language, how it not only reflects our picture of reality but also shapes and perpetuates that picture.

As people of faith, we have had a particular concern for the power of religious language. Our language about God affects not only the way we “image” God but also the way we think about women and men. We have tended to ascribe to men and to God language which conveys images of power, dominance and authority and to withhold these attributes from women. Furthermore, we have not historically associated femaleness with Godness. So when we speak of God only in male language, and refer to human beings corporately as “he,” we are in danger of placing women outside the realm of the fully human. The images of male-exclusive language have ascribed to women a status of inferiority, weakness and “otherness.”

What we now need to face is the reality that pornography is also language—language about sexuality. And like all language, it has the power to shape our perceptions and experiences. It not only reflects the historic power relationship of dominance and submission in human sexuality, but it also reinforces, shapes and perpetuates such images as normative in our minds.

All of this means that there is a disturbing link between pornography and religious language that is exclusively masculine. Pornography’s images of power and dominance in sexuality are replicated and reinforced by our traditional religious language about people and God. When we learn through religious imagery that “God” and “men” mean power and authority, while “women” means inferiority and invisibility, then the stage is set for accepting sexual images of dominance and submission in human relationships. Disturbing as it may be, images of power are connected throughout all of society’s institutions, including the church, and they have reinforced the patterns of violence toward women that for too long have been unexamined and even condoned by Western society.

All forms of distorted power images in human relationships are a violation against the biblical image of God and God’s intent for equality and mutual respect between people. We need to look carefully at the destructive impact of pornography in our society and at our own images of faith. We Presbyterians can be grateful to the Task Force on Pornography for making the reality clearer for us.

4. “Freed to Be Lovers, Freed to Be Friends”
by Paul Spalding, Ph.D., Co-pastor
First Presbyterian Church, Elba, New York

The New Yorker magazine appeared recently with a cartoon by J. J. Sempe on its front cover.¹ It showed four long rowboats in a lake, their sterns meeting in a hub and their bows pointing out like spokes in different directions. At the hub were four vivacious women in gaily colored swimsuits, chatting happily with one another. But isolated on the far ends of the boats, facing outwards and fishing quietly, wearing drab clothes and expressionless faces, were their husbands.

I could appreciate this scene drawn by another male, for how well it depicted what it often feels like to be a man. Conditioned to act independently and competitively, we usually find it difficult to establish relationships with other people outside the world of work and its standards of performance, standards which creep even into our pastimes. It is hard enough to relate to other men with any real intimacy, let alone to women, that erotically attractive breed on the other end of the boat. So often our experience gives anything but support to the claim of Genesis 2, that God gave human beings their sexuality because “it is not good that the earthing [*adam*, a nongeneric term for “human being,” from *adamah* or “earth,” “soil”] should be alone” (v. 18; see vv. 20b–24; 5:2).

One still safely distant way for us men to deal with women is through pornography. As the display of one human being (usually a man) dominating another (usually a woman) sexually, pornography allows us to maintain that safe distance in the darkness and anonymity of a movie theater or the privacy of our home, to feel *in* control even if vicariously, to simplify another human being from being a “Thou” with all of her mysteries to being another “It” among innumerable others we act upon so self-evidently in the male world. But pornography still leaves us men *as* lonely as ever.

The Genesis story of Eden’s fall tells us that one of the God-defying fissures in life is precisely that existing between male and female, which together were meant to be “in the image of God” (1:27; 5:1–2). The relationship of male and female is the original human one, in which all other relationships are involved.² Their estrangement from one another is dramatized in the shame of the primeval man and woman in Genesis, which drives them to cover themselves with aprons of fig leaves (3:7). It takes a concrete form in male domination (3:16). It proves to be the spore of social rupture, mushrooming into stories of violence within the family (4:1–16), beyond the family (4:23–24), and throughout the world (6:11). In light of Eden’s story, all biblical representations of society as hierarchical and violent (including sexual exploitation of women and violence against them) stand under a general condemnation.

Still, the damage of Eden’s fall is divinely contained and circumvented. History is ruled not only by human confusion but also by God’s providence.³ God’s graceful healing of the sexual rupture appears in

touching accounts of mutuality and companionship between Abraham and Sarah (Gen 23:1–2), Isaac and Rebekah (24:62–27), Jacob and Rachel (29:9–12), Moses and Zipporah (Ex 2:15–22), Ruth and Boaz (Ruth 2:1–4:12). Central for any male reader of these stories must be, in each case, how a woman has filled the void of a man’s loneliness.

The Song of Songs offers the most fleshed-out biblical depiction of mutual, erotic heterosexuality. Two lovers, a man and a woman, are in sexually intimate dialogue with one another, including extensive praise of each other’s bodies.⁴ Along with the eroticism, the male calls the female literally, and uniquely in the Hebrew Bible, “my (female) friend” [rayah] (1:9, 15; 2:2, 10, 13; 4:1, 7; 5:2; 6:4). She is not a sex object, but a sex subject. She is different, wonderfully different, but also equal; a person from whom he can receive love and companionship as well as a person to whom he can give it.

The feeling is clearly mutual: Indeed, most of the lines in the Song are hers rather than his. “This is my beloved” says the woman, “and this is my friend” [rea] (5:16, RSV)! She stresses the reciprocity of their love in inverted statements: “My beloved is mine and I am his” (2:16); “I am my beloved’s and my beloved is mine” (6:3). Elsewhere, a chorus breaks into a shout of blessing on them as “friends” as well as “lovers” (5:1).⁵

It is as if Eden had returned: The world is young and green again, a man related to a woman on equal terms, and neither gender rules over the other. Granted that separation, violence, and chaos exist now even in the garden of the Song (examples are 2:6, 15; 3:1–3; 4:8; 5:6–8; 6:1; 8:1–3), the mutual, heterosexual companionship shared here represents a challenge to their eventual triumph: “For Love is strong as Death; Passion fierce as Hell” (8:6).⁶

While the description of the sexes’ creation for the sake of companionship gives Genesis 2 claim to being “the Old Testament Magna Carta of humanity,” the Song of Songs joins it as “a second Magna Carta.”⁷ It models the sexual friendship God intends between man and woman, that frees males from their characteristic loneliness and the related, counterfeit sexiness of pornography, for the erotic intimacy they were made to enjoy.

Notes

¹63/29 (Sept. 7, 1987).

²Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics III/2*: 292–293.

³Barth, *Church Dogmatics IV/3.2*: 693.

⁴A clinical translation is that by Marvin Pope: *Song of Songs: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary, Anchor Bible 7C* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1977). Note, however, criticisms of it by Jack Sasson: “On Pope’s Song of Songs,” *Maarav* ½ (1979): 177–196.

⁵In the Gospel According to John, Jesus calls his disciples his “friends” [*philioi*] (15:13–15)—which includes women. This Gospel recognized women to be “first-class’ disciples” of Jesus: “In researching the evidence of the fourth

Gospel, one is still surprised to see to what extent in the Johannine community women and men were already on an equal level in the fold of the Good Shepherd. This seems to have been a community where in the things that really mattered in the following of Christ there was no difference between male and female—a Pauline dream (Gal. 3:28) that was not completely realized in the Pauline communities” (Ramond Brown, “Roles of Women in the 4th Gospel,” *Theological Studies* 36/4 [1975]: 699). It may be noted in this connection that Jesus’ famous comment on the looks men give other men’s wives, in Matthew 5:28, concerns considerate treatment of one’s female neighbor. Correctly translated, it demands that men resist aggressive behavior toward women beginning with the snide looks: “Whoever so looks at a married woman that she becomes desirable, has already misled her to adultery in his heart.” On this, see Klaus Hacker, “Der Rechtsatz vom Jesus zum Thema Ehebruch (Mt. 5,28),” *Biblische zeitschrift* 21/1 (1977): 113–116.

⁶The translation is that of Pope, *Song of Songs*.

⁷Barth, *Church Dogmatics* III/2: 291, 293. Taken together, Genesis 2 and the Song of Songs represent for Barth “this Magna Carta in its twofold form” (p. 296).

**5. “Human Sexuality: Dualistic and Holistic Paradigms”
by Wilson Yates, Ph.D., United Theological Seminary
of the Twin Cities, New Brighton, Minnesota**

Margaret Sanger, the birth control reformer of the first part of this century, began one of her books with the sentence: “Sex is the Pivot of Civilization.” Perhaps she was given to hyperbole. But few of us in the latter part of this century would deny that sexuality is a central human force that can exploit and destroy or enhance and enrich personal life and the human community. We have come to appreciate Sanger’s insistence that the power of sexuality is a profound and an ever-present power. As Anthony Kosnick writes:

Sex is ... a force that permeates, influences, and affects every act of a person’s being at every moment of existence. It is not operative in one restricted area of life (that is, simply physical intercourse) but it is rather at the core and center of our total life response.¹

Precisely because sexuality is so important a part of life, the church has been expected to deal with its morality and meaning, and this the church has done. It has given shape to sexual ethics and theologies of sexuality down through the ages. In our own day, however, the church finds itself in a quandary, for the way it has defined and interpreted sexuality in the past is being challenged by forces and groups within the church and outside of it, and it is being forced to rethink what it has said in the past, what it is saying now and what it ought to say in and for the future. In effect, when we pull the curtain on the church’s own stage, we find that its actors—its theologians, its congregations, its leaders, its denominations—are very much involved with the question of sexuality. Further, they are often in sharp disagreement with one another, with some busy defending old scripts, others busy revising them, and still others writing new scripts. Needless to say, there is some confusion regarding the plot and message, though one could hardly say there is an absence of excitement and, I should add, anxiety about the outcome. It is these scripts of the church that I want to consider in this discussion. In so

doing, I hope we will gain a better sense of where the church has been and, more importantly, where it might be going.

In undertaking this task, I want to frame my approach in terms of a paradigm analysis. I need to begin, therefore, with a note on what such an approach involves. Thomas S. Kuhn, a historian of science, in his work *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*² developed the idea of paradigm analysis in an effort to understand changes in scientific perspectives or theories. He maintains that a scientific theory develops out of particular historical context as a way of understanding some aspect of scientific reality. In turn, the theory or perspective or paradigm changes when it is no longer able to satisfactorily explain that reality—a situation that arises in the face of new questions or discoveries. When such a theory or paradigm is first posed with new data that the paradigm cannot respond to in an adequate fashion, there is usually an attempt to modify or revise the paradigm so that it is able to incorporate such information and answer the questions being raised—respond to the anomalies that have presented themselves. If such revisions fail, however, the anomalies precipitate a search for a new paradigm. If a new paradigm emerges then a paradigm shift has taken place—a revolution occurs. In the period when such a shift is occurring, there is often uncertainty—the old paradigm which made us comfortable in its ability to make sense out of reality is breaking down and we experience ourselves living in a period of crisis, a time between the times when a secure way of understanding that particular reality eludes us. During this period many options may present themselves before one becomes dominant and we are forced to explore a range of new possibilities whether we desire to do so or not. When a paradigm shift does take place, the new paradigm often draws on ideas and insights that existed in the past but were given little credence or significance in the old paradigm. What has gone before, therefore, is of value; indeed, often of much greater value than was recognized in the past as it is blended with fresh insight to form the new paradigm's tapestry. Using this thesis, Kuhn traces the rise and fall of scientific theories or paradigms as they have emerged to provide us a way of viewing scientific reality, have been called into question, and have finally collapsed in the face of anomalies that they could not explain.

Now what I want to suggest is that Kuhn's scheme can be helpful in making sense out of changes that are emerging in the church's understanding of sexuality. Using Kuhn's model, I want to suggest the following scenario. The church helped give rise to a major paradigm regarding the morality and meaning of sexuality which has dominated Western civilization down to the twentieth century. It was not unchallenged, for different periods ranging from the Old Testament to New Testament periods, from Patristic to Medieval, from the Reformation to the eighteenth century posed new questions and issues, but the old paradigm was reshaped in such a way that it remained viable and dominant. For example, a sharp revision occurred in the movement from biblical times to the neoplatonic period of the early church regarding how the body-spirit relationship was to be understood and during the Reformation regarding significance attached to celibacy, but accommodations were made with-

out a major paradigm shift occurring. By the nineteenth century, however, forces were taking place that began to stretch the old paradigm beyond its limits. The threat of overpopulation, processes of urbanization, medical breakthroughs that brought down the infant mortality rate, technological developments regarding birth control, changes in our psychological understanding of the human, new views of human nature and the rise in the importance of love and sentiment in marriage and the family—all posed questions and issues that the old paradigm, while defended with great zeal by some, had broken down for others and the shaping of new theories had begun. By our own time—the end of the twentieth century—new ideas and perspectives have been set forth and the question has become one of whether a new paradigm is emerging that shall become a new and dominant way of viewing human sexuality. My judgment is that a new paradigm is emerging and while it is radically new at points, its radicalness stems in part from seeds planted long ago. Thus, the church is not having to forsake its past so much as draw upon different strands that have been long ignored or denied validity. The new, therefore, is, in part, the child of the old, as it envisions a new paradigmatic way of perceiving the purpose and meaning of human sexuality.

Given these theoretical comments, I want to focus on a description of the old paradigm, which I shall call the *dualistic paradigm*, that I am maintaining has been breaking down over this century and on the new paradigm which I shall call *a holistic paradigm* that has been emerging as a primary paradigm for the church.³

In speaking of the older paradigm or dualistic perspective, I am speaking of a perspective that has been dominant throughout much of Western history and, while it has undergone revisions, its primary assumptions have remained basic to its life. Those assumptions include the following:

1. Sexuality is interpreted in light of a patriarchal perspective in which women are considered to be subordinate to the wisdom and authority of men.
2. Sexuality is interpreted in light of a dualistic perspective regarding body and spirit in which body and spirit are considered separate and often antagonistic realities, and in which the body is considered inferior to the spirit and subject to its domination.
3. Procreation is considered the primary moral justification for sexual relations with all other justifications considered secondary and subordinate to that of procreation.
4. Sexual intimacy is recognized, at best, as erotic love which remains unrelated to either agapaic love or to dimensions of grace or holiness.
5. Sexuality is primarily in terms of external sexual activity that must be controlled though strict rules of sexual conduct—rules that are applicable to all.
6. Homosexual relationships are judged to be morally unjustifiable.

I want to comment briefly on each of these. To begin, a consideration of the *first assumption* in which sexuality and patriarchy are linked. Patriarchal thinking is present from ancient to modern times. It does not always manifest itself in the same way but it is present in the framing of all major attempts to understand sexuality and the relationship of the sexes. The Old Testament provides us a good illustration of how patriarchal theory varied in the interpretation of the relationship of men and women yet never varied so much that the underlying presupposition of male superiority was challenged. Phyllis Tribble has observed that one can see the Old Testament images in three different bodies of material: the holiness or legal codes, the wisdom literature of Proverbs and in the historical writings.⁴ Patriarchal thought is most sharply expressed in the legal codes where the woman is, in effect, owned by her father or husband. Adultery is seen as a capital offense with the woman treated more harshly than the man. Virginity is a necessity before marriage. The woman has no legal or economic rights and she is religiously of secondary importance. Sexually she is essential for procreation though she is considered to be no more than a vessel of the male sperm which is thought to be the total nucleus of life. She is considered unclean as a sexual creature with menstruation and childbirth requiring ritual purification. And, foremost, she is a symbol of temptation.

In the Wisdom literature, she is perceived in more human terms, as more than a procreative instrument. Her nurturing role as well as her birthing role is recognized and relationality with her husband is valued as one who is a companion—a theme the historical writings elaborate.

But, as Tribble points out, it is “only in the historical writings that women become real—a flesh and blood person with name, biography, and individual character. We met Deborah, Jezebel, the Queen of Sheba, Rachael, Rizpah, Miriam, Hannah, Rahab, and Abigail.”⁵ It is also in this material that we see an image of marriage developed in which genuine respect and love are affirmed as important to marriage, and we see introduced the notion that marriage is part of the covenant with God, and a wife and husband called to be companions to one another.

But even in the historical writings, the patriarchal subordination of women holds firm. Men are autonomous and primary and, finally, the source of wisdom and the revealers of truth. Down through history such patriarchal thought has been modified, but never abandoned in any substantive fashion until our own time when significant inroads have been made for a more egalitarian understanding of male-female relationship—inroads, I should add, that the church has at points helped make through the use of Old Testament concepts of justice and covenant. But even with this change, biblical literalism, particular church traditions, and natural law theory are all used to legitimate patriarchal images of reality even in our own day.

The second assumption posits a dualism of body and spirit. Again, I want to draw on a single historical “frame” for appreciating what such dualism is about; namely, the Patristic period of Christianity—the period

of the early church. In so doing, however, I want to add that such a dualistic view is not limited to that period. It was present in some of the New Testament writings that were influenced by Hellenistic thought and while the Patristic period gives it full theological grounding, dualism does not end with that period but continues down to the present.

The early centuries of the church constitute a period in which the treatment of sexuality accents the darker side of sexual energy and a general religious and moral devaluing of it. It is a period of history in which various religious sect groups saw sexuality as demonic and procreation as evil with still other groups advocating sexual license. Some of the church fathers sought a middle path by insisting that sexuality was good because it was a part of creation and because, as a part of creation, it served the moral end of procreation. But the middle path was marked by detours. The detours were the consequence, most of all, of a neo-platonic dualism in light of which body and soul were seen as antagonistic to each other. Following from this basic split, other aspects of life were also split along body-soul lines identified with passion, soul with reason; body with the earthly, soul with the eternal; body with unbridled energy, soul with self-control; body with eros, soul with agape; body with sexuality, soul with spirituality; and, most significantly, body with female and soul with male.

This dualistic view wrought its own havoc insofar as a positive view of sex was concerned, for it led to a suspicion, fear, and excessive need to control sexual desire and expression by that which was considered to be morally superior; namely, reason. It was argued that if control were lost and passion reigned, then evil would result and sin abound. If passion were controlled and reason reigned then sexual relations could be tamed. In this formula, the purpose of sex was that of procreation—thus sexual relations were, finally, for the purpose of procreation rather than pleasure or love. St. Clement warned couples to have sex preferably after supper since one's passions are diminished at that time. And, he argued, that a couple should use restraint of intense pleasure else the couple suffer a loss of self-control. Here, of course, is the fear that in the moment of sexual activity reason will be abandoned and passion will rule.⁶

St. Jerome much later stated this fear quite succinctly: "He who too ardently loves his wife is an adulterer."⁷ And later, fearing that sexuality would taint the spiritual experience, he insisted that both prayer and communion are inappropriate immediately after sexual relationships. St. Jerome also insisted, in one of his more negative judgments regarding sexuality, that "the only good of marriage is that it produces virgins."⁸ With all the major Patristic theologians, a life of celibacy was the higher road to travel, for the road of mutual sexual relationships—even those in marriage—was, at best, a briar path filled with moral ambiguities and spiritual pitfalls.

During this period, Augustine, the greatest mind of the period and one of the greatest minds in the history of the church, struggled with the question of sexuality. Influenced by the theological battles over sexuality

that were current during his time and informed by his own emotional and spiritual sexual scars, he produced a negative theology of sexuality. Most importantly, he argued that original sin was not the consequence of disobedience but concupiscence; i.e., lust or sexual desire—a notion that remained, in large part, unchallenged until the writings of John Milton. Augustine argued much as other Patristic theologians had argued, that sexual passion led to a loss of rational control and, consequently, to a state of sin. Perhaps his most extreme attempt to argue the case is found in his exegesis of the Genesis story of Adam and Eve. In his treatment he creates a way for procreation to have occurred without sexual desire by maintaining that Adam could control the flexing of his muscles at will and, accordingly, “Human organs, without the need for lust could have obeyed human will for the purpose of procreation.”¹⁰

This dualism, therefore, in which body and soul were placed over and against one another and sexual passion judged to be inferior and often dangerous passion, left little room for the positive evaluation of sexual experience as a morally justifiable experience. In our own time this dualism has been greatly eroded, and yet it is still present whenever we differentiate our sexuality from self and deem sexuality an inferior aspect of our life.

This leads to the paradigm’s *third assumption*, that procreation is the primary moral justification for sexual expression. Procreation as an expression of the natural ordering of things is the one positive basis and justification for sexual expression. In appreciating this position, it must be kept in mind that through most of human history procreation has been a dominant concern in the battle for survival; the fear was not of overpopulation but underpopulation. Plague, famine, and war—the three scourges—were ever present and, therefore, the reproductive needs of the human community required that procreation be given a morally central significance. The significance is expressed by this assumption. But it is also the case that procreation was used to give validity to sexuality which otherwise had no validity for early theologians. And it was used to validate woman, at times her only validity in an otherwise hostile understanding of women. Augustine observed “I do not see what other help woman would be to man if the purpose of generating was eliminated.”¹¹ (It is of psychological interest that Augustine fathered a child by a woman he refused to marry and later left, at the insistence of another woman, his mother.)

Given this understanding of the place of procreation, it is not surprising that the church opposed contraception or birth control of all sorts. And the formal teachings of the Catholic Church still remain opposed to “artificial” birth control on grounds that it violates natural law—a position that polls have shown is not shared by the majority of North American educated Catholic laity.¹²

The *fourth assumption* of the dualistic paradigm has to do with the relationship of sex to love. Sexual expression is at best identified as erotic love which is inferior to both agapaic love and companionate love. Fur-

thermore it is unrelated to expressions of agapaic love. In early Christian statements erotic love was, for the most part, denied moral legitimacy—it was nothing more than an earthly pagan form of love from which we were to be ultimately freed. In later thought, allowance was given for such erotic love but it was deemed an inferior form of love unrelated to agapaic love. In effect, eros and agape do not meet; do not inform each other or empower each other. With regard to companionate or filial love, eros is also seen as inferior and unrelated to such expressions of love in early Christian thought. This however begins to change when Puritan marriage theory explores how erotic love can be related to companionate love in marriage.¹³ Eros and agape, however, still remain theologically unrelated in any positive fashion. The religious implications of this are severe: Sexual love belongs to the inferior realms of life unrelated to a life of grace and holiness.

The fifth assumption is that sexuality is to be understood primarily in terms of external sexual activity that must be controlled through strict rules that define what is morally justifiable and unjustifiable sexual conduct. By the eighth century, a number of penitential books began to set forth a code of conduct as strict in its condemnation of sex as its writers were fascinated by sex.¹⁴ The first code is an exhortation to lead a celibate life. The rules are primarily focused on the control of sexual acts—on the definition of what are right or wrong expressions of sexual desire. The second paramount rule is that sexual relations should be expressed within the bonds of marriage alone, which means by definition persons of the opposite sex. Informing this rule is the judgment that only in marriage is sex provided with the social and rational boundaries which we can hold to and control its destructive propensity. In turn, there are rules against premarital, extramarital and postmarital sex as well as masturbation—masturbation received the most extensive consideration—and most other forms of sexual pleasure other than conventional sexual intercourse between a man and a woman. Thus, rules, prohibitions, and control are of primary concern. Important to this position is the fact that rules can be created in an objective and detached manner and applied in a rather indiscriminate fashion. In effect, the rules apply to everyone regardless of circumstance or context. It is well to note that the focus is on the control of external acts with little recognition that sexuality is related to anything more than the desire to engage in certain types of sexual activity. As with other of the assumptions, sex is to be viewed with suspicion, an inferior and potentially destructive aspect of human life which is to be carefully controlled. The rules, obviously, have little concern with enhancing or enriching sexual expression or linking sexuality to the fullness of human life.

The last assumption is that homosexual relationships are immoral. This judgment has woven its way down through history leading to sharp discrimination and cruelty against persons of homosexual orientation.¹⁵ It is important to remember when dealing with this understanding that before modern times it was assumed that homosexuals were simply heterosexuals who were distorting their own sexuality. This view underlies several biblical passages where homosexual acts are condemned. There

is no understanding until the modern period that some people had a homosexual orientation—a deeply embedded natural attraction for members of the same sex rather than the opposite sex. The church developed its own perspective into a full condemnation of homosexuality contributing to the homophobic fear that exists today regarding same sex relationships. This position is changing though the change is very slow. James B. Nelson in his book, *Embodiment*, has observed that among theologians today there are four different theological stances regarding homosexuality: rejecting and punitive; rejecting and non-punitive; qualified acceptance; and full acceptance.¹⁶ The first two reflect variations of the old paradigm's condemnation of homosexuality, the third—qualified acceptance—reflects a breaking away from the old paradigm, while the fourth is expressive of a new paradigm. In light of its condemnation, the church has joined in the creation of moral rules and laws created to control same-sex relationships.

These assumptions that are foundational to the dualistic paradigm provide a perspective, a vision, of how sexuality ought to be interpreted and expressed. It is a vision that is suspicious of sexual energy and sees no reason to integrate sexual and spiritual dimensions into a whole. It is dualistic in style: Women and men; body and soul; sexuality and spirituality; eros and agape; homosexual and heterosexual are judged to be different in type and in significance from one another. In acknowledging as much, however, it is important to recognize that within the history of the church there were also present other insights regarding sexuality. There were secondary themes to ones I have sketched and they were not a part of—indeed, they were in large part condemned in light of—the old paradigm. But they were present, and in the search for a new paradigm they become significant material, ideas, elements to work with: the Old Testament emphasis on the goodness of sexuality as a part of God's creation; the New Testament value of the equality of both men and women; the Calvinist accent on the importance of companionship in marriage; and the later Puritan accent on sexual love as one means of expressing that companionship. The reclaiming of such elements from the past as elements in the creation of a new paradigm is indeed the work of our own time. It is to that work that I want now to turn, for I want to sketch the major outline of what I see emerging as a new paradigm for the church—a new theological and ethical perspective. My sketch will necessarily be brief, but hopefully adequate enough to chart some sense of the course being taken.¹⁷

I want to call this paradigm a holistic paradigm and I want to suggest that it has the following assumptions:

1. Sexuality should be viewed in light of an egalitarian perspective in which men and women are considered to be equal to one another.
2. The morality of homosexual expression should be judged much as we judge heterosexual expression: in light of whether it enables persons to realize wholeness.
3. Sexuality as a part of creation is good.

4. Sexuality should be understood to be related to both body and spirit.

5. Sexuality should be seen as a dimension of the self that is expressive through all forms of love—forms that together constitute holistic love.

6. Sexuality should be seen as a means through which persons can know the grace of God.

7. Rules governing sexual behavior are important to sexual health and wholeness.

As introduction to the discussion of these assumptions, it is important to define two key concepts: *wholeness* and *sexuality*. Wholeness is a word rooted linguistically in such New Testament concepts as holy, health, unity and salvation.¹⁸ It is the experience of well-being, of health, of integration, of trust, of love, of knowing one's self to be autonomous and, as such, a significant part of a greater whole. Wholeness is not limited to peak experiences beyond the process of daily living, but rather includes experiences realized in the midst of daily existence in response to the problems and possibilities life poses. It is not a continuing state we achieve, but an experience realized in moments of an event or relationship. It is the experience of broken life made whole.

Sexuality is a concept that in religious thought has been too often limited to genital sexual experience. There is a need, however, for a more encompassing understanding, which I offer in the following terms: Sexuality is our basic identity as males and females; it expresses itself in our attraction for, our drive to know, and our way of relating to ourselves, to others, and to God.

With these definitions as a backdrop, I want now to turn to the assumptions of the holistic paradigm of sexuality that I find to be most central.

The first assumption in the new paradigm insists that we are to understand male and female—maleness and femaleness—in egalitarian terms. This egalitarianism is rooted theologically in the assumption that we are all equal in the eyes of God—we are all of equal value as persons.

It is rooted ethically in the principles of freedom, which means we have the right to choose; equality, which means we have equal opportunity to choose; and justice, which means that we create the conditions for such freedom and equality to exist.

It is rooted sociologically in the proposition that men and women are equal to each other in their opportunity to choose the roles they play. This means that they can choose their roles on the basis of ability, energy, interest, time, and place rather than simply gender. In turn, social structures should support that possibility.

It should be noted that this egalitarian position does not mean that men and women are all alike. It does mean that the differences that exist

do not make one sex subordinate to the other. The realization of wholeness, then, begins with the assumption that we should realize an equality with one another.

The second assumption affirms an inclusive stance towards sexual orientations. In this perspective, both opposite-sex, bi-sexual, and same-sex relationships should be judged on the basis of whether they enable persons to realize some degree of wholeness in their lives rather than on the grounds that a given orientation is intrinsically right or wrong, natural or unnatural. The theological issue regarding sexual orientation is whether one's orientation is moral: whether persons are able within their orientations to know that wholeness and grace is offered them, or whether they fall into sexually alienating and destructive behavior.

The third assumption is that sexuality as a part of creation is good. God created them male and female ... they became one flesh ... they knew one another ... they were fruitful and multiplied ... and it was good, so the Old Testament affirms. From the beginning we were created sexual beings, we were invited to express our sexuality in creative and procreative fashion.

The Song of Songs provides one of the most beautiful testimonies to the goodness of love between man and woman. In the story the lovers come to a garden and there amidst an Eden-like world they speak, touch, embrace with a full giving and receiving of themselves. The richness of the Song's sensuality speaks for itself:

Oh that you would kiss me with the kisses of your mouth, for your love is better than wine (1:2). Oh may your breasts be like clusters of the vine, and the scent of your breath like apples, and your kisses like the best wind (7:8-9). I am my beloved's and his desire is for me. Come my beloved, let us go out into the country, Let us spend the night in the villages. Let us rise early and go to the vineyards; Let us see whether the vine has budded and its blossoms have opened, and whether the pomegranates have bloomed. There I will give you my love (7:10-12).

In the story, the poet expresses the way that sexuality can become a means of knowing, of loving, of realizing union with the other. It becomes a means of knowing the presence of wholeness, of being at one with another in a loving relationship. It becomes a means of discovering the goodness of creation.

Sexuality is also expressive of the goodness of creation by virtue of its procreative powers. Our reproductive capacity links us in a special way with both the natural world (for it is expressive of our organic, biological nature), and with our self-transcending world of feelings and reflection (for it is expressive of emotional, rational, and cultural aspects of our lives).

Sexuality, then, as a part of creation is good, and that goodness is expressed in terms of the purposes central to its nature—intimacy and procreation. Scripture does not deny that our sexuality and its expression can be a source of alienation. It can become the source of distrust

and fear, of brokenness and manipulation. But what it can become in the interest of one's self-centeredness and what it is created to be are not the same. The creation of sexuality and the intentions of that creation are the key concerns here.

The fourth assumption is that sexuality is understood to be related to both body and spirit. The Song of Songs symbolizes this in beautiful fashion. On the one hand, it is a canticle of sensuality lifting up and celebrating the bodies of the lovers. Voices speak, eyes behold. Lips meet. Bodies join in the joy of erotic communication. It is a song of the body and the body's beauty and fullness.

However, as a song of erotic communication of the union of two bodies, it becomes a song of the spirit, of the union of two persons. The lovers in their very acts of looking, speaking, touching, and reaching out to hold one another engage in a spiritual act of togetherness in a conscious, intimate manner. Feelings yield thoughts. Touches yield words. They transcend to see themselves so that they as persons might have union with each other. They seek to know—to communicate so that they become persons bound together—not simply bodies or spirits.

The fifth assumption is that body and spirit are to be understood in holistic terms. There is no body and spirit dualism. Rather, body and spirit are essential and equal dimensions of a whole. As the ancient Old Testament story suggests, we were created from dust into which spirit was breathed so that we might become human beings.

To speak of body and spirit in dualistic terms, to speak of them in terms of one being superior to the other, is to speak of them as unrelated realities coexisting, if not struggling against one another. A dualistic approach to body and spirit distorts their relationship to each other and skews understanding of human existence as an integrated whole.

The sixth assumption is that our sexuality is seen as a dimension of the self that is expressive through all dimensions of love—dimensions that together constitute holistic love. These expressions of love have traditionally been thought of in their classical Greek formulations of *epithymia*, *eros*, *filia*, and *agape*.¹⁹ In the old paradigm they were separated from one another and treated in hierarchical fashion. What now becomes important is that they be seen as dimensions of a whole. Epithymaic love as an inner desire for sexual pleasure, erotic love as the passion that drives us to seek union with the other, filial love as companionate or friendship love; and agapaic love as the love that is manifest in self-giving—all are dimensions of love necessary for love to be known in its fullness. I want to comment on each of these.

Epithymia is the inner desire for sexual or sensual pleasure and satisfaction. It is the experience of sexual excitement and the desire to satisfy the tension that excitement creates. It is the “spark” of attraction that we can have for other persons. It is present in the sexual feelings we have for ourselves and for others.

The most intense expression of this form of love is the desire for relations. It is wrong, however, to limit epithymia to that act. It is expressed, equally, in the pleasure experienced from looking, touching, hugging, or holding. It is felt in being physically present with another and experiencing that presence with anticipation and joy.

Epithymia is present, therefore, in my desire to reach down and pick up the infant, or to reach out and hug the elderly friend, or to toss my arm around the shoulders of my son when he beats me in tennis. As such, I am not seeking or desiring to have sexual intercourse. I am desirous of making contact in a pleasurable, sensual way quite removed from genital expression but no less personal and important, no less filled with anticipation and satisfaction.

This form of love contains a self-oriented need that does not necessarily take into account the other person's needs or desires. It focuses on the self and the self's desires of the moment. If that focus becomes the only grounds on which a person finally acts, then love becomes a self-centered expression of love rather than one stream that feeds a flowing body of love including but transcending the self.

Eros or erotic love drives us to seek union with that which can provide fulfillment, which can give us a sense of wholeness by reuniting us to that which we long for but are not a part of. It is the passion to find, to experience, to know the other. *Eros* provides epithymia with a power of passion that drives the self towards the other, in order to experience and know the other in a meaningful way.

Thus I desire to have sexual relations with my wife, to enjoy the sensual delight of our bodies. But desire is more than simply the need to satisfy a sexual urge. I desire to be united in a meaningful way so that my satisfaction, my sense of completeness, is more than that from sexual release. My satisfaction comes from giving and being given to, from having a sense of oneness and integration.

I desire to pick up and cuddle the baby not simply out of the need to have certain sensations satisfied that come from touching an infant. I also desire to touch the baby as a meaningful interaction with another person—a person whom I once was like, who needs to be touched. In the touching, human contact occurs that is fulfilling to us both. (Women tell me that birth-giving and breast-feeding are wonderfully erotic experiences.)

Further, my sexuality as an expression of myself as a sexual person reaching out to the other is manifest through the third dimension of love, that of *filia*. Filial love is the love of friendship, of companionship. It is love in which a mutual life of giving and receiving is present in an ongoing fashion. It is or should be a strong element in sexual relationships. (Too often we ignore the importance of friendship as a necessary ingredient for the creation of a good marriage.)

Such a relationship involves a genuine interest in other persons, in what they think and feel, in what they do and believe, in how they live and why they live the way they do. This genuine interest forms the grist of friendship. But the underlying power of erotic love runs the wheels of the gristmill. That underlying power is initiatory and sustaining.

I become a person's friend because I am attracted to the possibility of knowing and becoming a part of that person's life. Whether intense or reserved, genuine companionship comes together and holds together by such attraction. Furthermore, I am attracted to this person because I am a sexual person whose sexual identity at some level is present as an energy in the dynamic of the friendship. This does not mean we will seek to have sexual relations, but this does not deny that there is the presence of a sexual energy working as a part of the excitement about that person and forming the mutual attraction we experience.

Sexuality, therefore, is a part of filial love. As the theologian Norman Pittenger states: "In human relationships as such, of whatever sort, there is a sexual element precisely because those who are party to them are sexual beings."²⁰

The final dimension of love is that of *agape* or self-giving love. *Agape* should not be seen as one form of love alongside the other forms, but rather as a love that informs or infuses those other expressions. Paul Tillich sees it as a quality of self-giving that should ground all other forms of love. And the ethicist James B. Nelson provides a unified understanding of love in which *agape* "undergirds and transforms" the other modes of love. He writes:

Agape is not another kind of love. ... It is the transformative quality essential to any true expression of any of love's modes. If we define Christian love as *agape* or self-giving alone—without elements of desire, attraction, self-fulfillment, receiving—we are describing a love which is both impoverishing and impoverished. But the other elements of love without *agape* are ultimately self-destructive. *Agape*, present with sexual desire, erotic aspiration, and mutuality, releases these from self-centeredness and possessiveness in a relationship that is humanly enriching and creative. It does not annihilate or replace the other modes of our loving. It undergirds and transforms. And faith knows that *agape* is gift, and not of our own making.²¹

Agape, then, is to be seen as that form of love that should transform all our expressions of love. A few years ago a photographic essay was published under the title of *Gramp*.²² The authors tell the story of their grandfather and the grandfather's relationship to his family. They include two photographs that, taken together, provide a powerful statement of the character of love that I have been discussing. One picture shows the grandfather as a middle-aged man holding his grandson. The other shows the grandson as a middle-aged man holding his thin and very aged grandfather.

The statement is obviously not a statement about "sex" in the narrow sense of that word. It is a statement about love—a love in which the sexuality of these persons is very much present in a rich and meaningful

fashion. The grandfather and the grandson in each picture stand as persons with a physical presence to each other in their acts of touching and holding. Two persons deeply attracted to one another have reached out and have been drawn close together in a union that includes yet transcends simple holding. There is present, both physically and spiritually, the warm mutual love of camaraderie, of friendship, of familial devotion. Thus the acts of touching and holding are transformed by the inexplicable gift of self-giving that infuses the revealed love. Our sexuality and our love, from the perspective of a holistic vision, are necessarily interwoven. To deny one or the other would be to split that which creation and creativity have made into one cloth.

The sixth assumption is that sexuality should be seen as a means through which we can know the grace of God. Our sexuality is one of the pivotal dimensions of human life; it becomes one of the means through which the grace of God is expressed. For through it we encounter and participate in the creative, sustaining, and reconciling grace given to us by God.

The expression of our sexuality can become a means of experiencing creative grace insofar as it engages us in creatively using our imaginations, in responding to the self and to the other. Grace comes at that point when we are seeking to find a vital way of relating, of touching, of responding. Suddenly we find a way that “fits,” that is appropriate, that moves the relationship to a new level of meaning. We experience a breakthrough to the new. It is a gift, for we do not simply bring it about, but rather, in bringing and allowing, in releasing and opening, we receive it. It is an act informed by imagination. It is a creative act.

We also participate in creative grace through the procreativity of which we can be a part. Procreation has biological, emotional, social, and moral dimensions. Finally, though, beneath these aspects we confront a mystery—a mystery of why we are created in such a fashion and how that fits into a cosmic whole. Understanding that mystery, we recognize that life has been given by the grace of God. We know this grace when we become a part of the procreative process. We do participate in a miracle of birth.

Sexual expression can also become the means of sustaining grace. As human beings we know sustaining grace in loving and being loved, in disclosing and discovering. A parent’s massaging of a child’s back, the holding of a friend in grief, the sexual union of partners—thousands of acts over thousands of days that are acts of physical presence become the means by which we receive the grace of sustenance and nurture.

Sexual expression can also be a means of reconciling grace. In a broken relationship sexual expression as an act of reconciliation can become a means of overcoming that brokenness. It may be the one place in a couple’s life where they find some type of vital communion together. It may be the way of maintaining touch on the road back to togetherness.

In all of these forms of grace, the experience becomes that of wholeness—of integration, of love, of fulfillment. In that experience of wholeness we know God. To be sexually whole is to know divine grace.

The final assumption is that norms governing sexual behavior should exist as guides to the realization of sexual health and wholeness. Anthony Kosnick and his colleagues in their study, *Human Sexuality*, have suggested one set of norms that I find indicative of what the new paradigm seeks when they call for sexual relations to be self-liberating, other-enriching, honest, faithful, socially responsible, life-serving, and joyous.²³ It is important to note that these norms are focused on the realization of well-being for persons and community, on the realization of some experience of wholeness, rather than simply on the rightness or wrongness of a particular act. I should like to sketch certain broader norms for sexual expression in the following manner:

1. Our sexual expressions should be expressions of loving intimacy in which passion, companionship, and self-giving are all present.

2. The primary context for healthy sexual relations should be within a stable structure, such as marriage or a union or a primary commitment, in order that continuity and depth may be more nearly realized and the relationship of sexual expression to an ongoing life together may be more nearly experienced.

3. Procreative choices should be made in a deliberate and cautious manner in light of whether the best interests of the child, the parents, and the larger community will be served.

4. The expression of our own sexuality should be made in a fashion that is respectful and responsive to the needs for sexual wholeness that the self, the other, and the larger community have.

I believe a paradigm shift is taking place. What finally the new paradigm will look like remains to be seen, but I think that the directions I have charted are suggestive of the course being taken.

Endnotes

1. Anthony Kosnick, et al., *Human Sexuality, New Directions in American Catholic Thought*, (Paulist Press, 1977) p. 92.
2. Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*, (The University of Chicago Press, 1970).
3. The thesis of this address was first developed for lectures given at the University of St. Jerome's College, Waterloo University. See James B. Nelson, *Between Two Gardens*, (Pilgrim Press, 1983) Chapter 5 for a discussion of old and new paradigms in Protestant positions on sexuality and the shift he sees taking place.
4. Phyllis Triple, "Biblical Foundations," in *Human Sexuality, A Preliminary Study*, The United Church of Christ, (United Church Press, 1977) pp. 36–39.

5. *Ibid*, p. 39.
6. See John Noonan, *Contraception, A History of its Treatment by the Catholic Theologians and Canonists* (Harvard University Press, 1965) chs. 4–8 for a detailed discussion of patristic and early medieval theologians' perspectives on sexuality and their fear of sexual desire. Of particular insight is Noonan's treatment of Augustine. See also G. Rattray Taylor, *Sex in History* (Harper, 1973) chs. 2–6 for a good overview of theological positions; and Roland H. Bainton, *Sex, Love and Marriage, A Christian Survey*, (Fontana books, 1958) chs. 2 and 3 for an overview of the place of sex in marriage in the history of Christianity.
7. Noonan, *ibid.*, p. 80.
8. Roland A. Bainton, *Sex, Love and Marriage, A Christian Survey*, (Fontane books, 1958) p. 32.
9. Noonan, *op. cit.*, ch. 4.
10. Augustine, *On Genesis*.
11. Noonan, *op. cit.*, p. 129.
12. *Ibid*.
13. Wilson Yates, "Population Ethics: Religious Traditions: Protestant Perspectives," in *Encyclopedia of Bioethics*, pp. 2359–2363; and "The Protestant View of Marriage," in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 1, Winter, 1985.
14. Noonan, *op. cit.*, chs. 4-5; and Taylor, *op. cit.*, ch III.
15. See A. L. Rowse, *Homosexuals in History*, (Macmillan, 1977).
16. James B. Nelson, *Embodiment* (Augsburg, 1978) ch. 8.
17. This treatment of the holistic paradigm draws on material from an earlier article: Wilson Yates, "Sexuality, Love and Wholeness," in *Engage/Social Action*, November, 1982.
18. See James E. Sellers, *Theological Ethics* (Macmillan, 1966) pp. 55–6. In this study he develops an ethic of wholeness and gives attention to the theological roots of the word.
19. Several theologians have developed perspectives regarding the interdependence of the various forms of love, including Paul Tillich, *Love, Power and Justice* (Oxford, 1960) ch. II; Daniel Day Williams, *The Spirit and Forms of Love* (Seabury, 1975) chs. I, II and V; Rosemary Ruether, "Misogynism and Virginal Feminism in the Fathers of the Church," in *Religion and Sexism*, Rosemary Ruether, ed. (Simon and Schuster, 1974); and James B. Nelson, *Embodiment, op. cit.*, ch. v. Nelson's study provides the most thorough understanding of the interrelatedness of the four dimensions of love and the present discussion draws on his treatment: see ch. v.
20. Norman Pittenger, *Making Sexuality Human* (Pilgrim Press, 1970), p. 30.
21. Nelson, *ibid.*, pp. 113–114.
22. Mary and Dan Jury, *Gramp* (Penguin, 1978).
23. Kosnick, *op. cit.*, pp. 92–95.

B. PROCESS OF THE STUDY

Prior to the first meeting of the Task Force on Pornography, study coordinator Sylvia Thorson-Smith and COWAC-COWC staff, Elizabeth H. Verdesi, Carole Goodspeed, and Judith D. Atwell, began reading extensively on the issue of pornography, including the *Final Report of the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography*, which was released during the summer of 1986. In September, the group attended a seminar at the Interchurch Center entitled "Women's Rights, the New Right, and the Religious Right," and interviewed keynote speaker Betty Friedan regarding her concerns about pornography as a women's issue. While in New York, the staff team for the study visited the 47th Street office of Women Against Pornography and viewed the film, *Not a Love Story* (a documentary about the production of pornographic films).

In October, Thorson-Smith attended the annual meeting of Iowans Concerned About Pornography in order to observe local efforts on the issue. Featured speaker for the event was Diane Cusack of Scottsdale, Arizona, who had served as a member of the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography.

In November, Thorson-Smith and task force members Anne Callison and Elizabeth McWhorter attended a meeting in Washington, D.C., of the Religious Alliance Against Pornography. This event began with a three-hour briefing at the White House, which included presentations by Attorney General Edwin Meese III and two members of his Commission on Pornography, Dr. James Dobson and Father Bruce Ritter. Speakers for the conference included representatives of many religious traditions (Catholic, Jewish, Greek Orthodox, Methodist, Episcopal, Baptist, Church of God, National Council of Churches), governmental agencies (FBI, Postal Service), law schools, other organizations (Women Against Pornography, Parents' Music Resource Center), pollster George Gallup, and another member of the Attorney General's Commission, Dr. Park Elliott Dietz.

The first meeting of the Task Force on Pornography was held in New York City in December. As part of its introduction to the issue, members viewed three films: *Killing Us Softly*, *Rate It X*, and *Not a Love Story*. Dale Rasmussen, consultant to the Program Agency, prepared a preliminary bibliography and presented an overview of the Meese Commission report, as well as the report of the 1970 Governmental Commission on Obscenity and Pornography. Members reviewed the actions of previous General Assemblies, studied the positions and activities of other denominations, and began to explore the issue within a biblical and theological context. In order to accurately understand the availability of pornography, the task force went to Show World, a sex shop located in the 42nd Street area. The visit was conducted by a staff member from Women Against Pornography, which regularly sponsors educational tours.

Following the December meeting, members began to read the diversity of opinion available on the issues of pornography and obscenity.

Summaries of books and articles were written by members and shared with each other by mail as part of their information-gathering.

In February 1987, Thorson-Smith attended a seminar at Grinnell College, Grinnell, Iowa, on "The U.S. Constitution and First Amendment Issues." Two feminists spoke to different sides of the issue of pornography. Dr. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, director of Women's Studies at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, spoke against pornography regulation in her address entitled "Pornography and Individual Right: The Issues." Catherine A. MacKinnon, an attorney who advocates for pornography regulation, spoke concerning "Sexual Politics and the First Amendment." Archibald Cox, special prosecutor for the Watergate investigation, also addressed the issues of First Amendment rights.

Also in February, Thorson-Smith had a lengthy phone conversation with Twiss Butler, Washington, D.C., coordinator of the pornography issue for the National Organization for Women (NOW). Subsequently, Ms. Butler provided the Task Force with numerous resources reflecting NOW's position on the issue.

In March, the task force met in Minneapolis, Minnesota. In 1985, the Minneapolis City Council adopted an ordinance to regulate pornography, which was subsequently vetoed by the mayor. The task force heard from representatives of both sides of that debate: Jeanne M. Barkey, a feminist from the Pornography Resource Center, which supported the ordinance; and David M. Gross, an attorney for the City of Minneapolis, who opposed the ordinance.

During the Minneapolis meeting, the task force also heard a presentation by the Rev. Dr. Jerry R. Kirk, pastor of College Hill Presbyterian Church in Cincinnati, Ohio, and Sharlynn Stare, an elder from that congregation. Rev. Kirk is organizer and president of the National Coalition Against Pornography and chair of the Religious Alliance Against Pornography. Ms. Stare is an active member of Cincinnati Presbytery's Committee on Pornography. As part of their presentation, Mr. Kirk and Ms. Stare showed the film, *Pornography: A Winnable War*.

Throughout the study, members have sought to understand the issue of pornography within a biblical and theological context. During its March meeting, the task force discussed the issue of pornography with Dr. Wilson Yates, professor of social ethics at United Theological Seminary in New Brighton, Minnesota. Dr. Yates presented a paper to the group entitled, "Human Sexuality: Dualistic and Holistic Paradigms." (Dr. Yates' paper is in the Theological Perspectives section of the Background Material of this report.)

At the conclusion of the Minneapolis meeting, the task force discussed the role of pornography in the lives of women who are prison inmates with the Rev. Carrie Dorfman, a Presbyterian chaplain with the Minnesota correctional system.

In May, Thorson-Smith and task force member Jim Spalding attended the third annual meeting of the National Coalition Against Pornography in Cincinnati. While there, they also met with members of the Cincinnati Presbytery Committee on Pornography.

Also in May, Atwell and task force member Carol Davies attended a conference at New York University School of Law in New York City. The conference, entitled "The Sexual Liberals and the Attack on Feminism," explored the debate over pornography and sexuality issues within the feminist community with speakers including Susan Brown-miller, Phyllis Chesler, Andrea Dworkin, Sonia Johnson, Catherine MacKinnon, and Robin Morgan.

Task force members who were at the 1987 General Assembly for other responsibilities conducted an open hearing to which anyone was invited to speak about their concerns regarding the issue of pornography. Discussion during the hearing focused on two dimensions: the global connections, with ecumenical visitors, Dr. Marie Assaad of Egypt and Prokai Nontawassee of Thailand; and the connections between pornography and prostitution with the Rev. Ann Hayman, General Assembly commissioner and director of the Mary Magdalene Project in Los Angeles, California. While at General Assembly, Thorson-Smith had an interview about the issue of pornography with Dr. Ralph Blair, a psychotherapist in New York City and speaker at the luncheon sponsored by Presbyterians for Gay and Lesbian Concerns. Mr. Keith Wulff of the Communications Unit of the Support Agency also met with task force members to begin preparation of a Presbyterian Panel survey on the issue of pornography.

Members of the task force met together in June at Ghost Ranch in Abiquiu, New Mexico. They worked to further the process of the study and attended a seminar entitled, "Female Sexuality and Bodily Functions in World Religions," led by Dr. Marie Assaad of Egypt. This seminar was based on the results of a study of the connections between issues of female sexuality in the world's major religions, which was coordinated by Dr. Assaad when she was Deputy Secretary of the World Council of Churches. While at Ghost Ranch, task force members held a session of open conversation around the issue of pornography with interested persons who were attending seminars at the ranch.

In August, Atwell and Thorson-Smith met in New York City with Dr. Ann WelbourneMoglia, executive director of the Sex Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS). Dr. Welbourne-Moglia testified in 1985 before the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography.

The Presbyterian Panel on the issue of pornography was mailed to respondents in September. (Results of this survey of Presbyterian opinion are available from Research Services, PC (U.S.A.)

The task force concluded its meetings together in Atlanta, Georgia, September 20-22. During this session, members reviewed a preliminary draft of the report. The task force also heard a presentation by Mr. Dave

Ely of the Georgia Coalition Against Pornography and discussed the perspectives of women of color on the issue of pornography with Dr. Beverly Guy-Sheftall, director of the Women's Resource Center at Spelman College, Atlanta. As a worship experience, the task force attended the opening service of the executive committee of the World Council of Churches which was held at Central Presbyterian Church.

Progress reports on the work of the task force were presented to the Council on Women and the Church (COWAC) and the Committee on Women's Concerns (COWC) at their meetings in March and July 1987. The report was adopted by COWC and COWAC in November 1987, and recommended to the 200th General Assembly (1988). The Advisory Council on Church and Society (ACCS) reviewed the report at its December 1987 meeting and took action to support it.

C. ACTIONS OF PREVIOUS GENERAL ASSEMBLIES

1. *189th General Assembly (1977) IX, Action on Overtures (Minutes, UPCUSA, 1977 Part I, p. 118)*

A. *Overture 7-77*. On Opposing the Use of Pornography and Violence in the Entertainment and Marketing Media; and

Overture 48-77. On Addressing the Destructive Nature of Violence on Television. The committee recommends that the 189th General Assembly (1977) take no action on these overtures and that the General Assembly adopt the following resolution:

Whereas, it is the concern of the 189th General Assembly (1977) of The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America that the media is using violence and the sexual degrading of human beings for commercial purposes; and

Whereas, this Assembly recognizes that this practice by the media, besides being morally degrading and economically wasteful, is spiritually destructive; and

Whereas, this Assembly recognizes that in the recent filing of legal activity surrounding the use of violence and pornography in the media, Christians should make a response to such activity that will reflect their faith more than their fears; and

Whereas, this Assembly recognizes the duty to reinforce the use of a dignified image of human beings, but in such a manner which reflects the Christian faith rather than fears and retaliatory tactics;

Therefore, the 189th General Assembly (1977) of The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America does hereby resolve to take a public stand against the use of pornography and violence in the media and to reinforce the dignity of human beings, and thereby strengthen the Christian faith. Specifically, this General Assembly meeting in Philadelphia, PA, June 21-29, 1977, resolves to:

1. Urge the individual members of The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America to act responsibly as members of Christ's body by: (a) refraining from supporting economically all motion pictures offensive to that individual's personal and moral convictions, and refraining from sup-

porting economically companies that sponsor TV or radio programs or advertise in media in ways offensive to that individual's personal moral convictions; (b) by filing objections with the management and refusing to patronize those businesses which they personally feel contribute to the moral decay of our homes and families; (c) writing personally to those against whom the above action has been taken, informing them of the action and the reason for it.

2. Urge individuals to participate in the week-long seminar of the Advisory Council on Church and Society, July 25-Aug. 1, 1977, at Ghost Ranch, exploring the issue of violence on television, and direct this advisory council to make its report on the seminar and the findings of this seminar to all churches and to the 190th General Assembly (1978).

3. Call upon other Christian denominations and other religions to join with the United Presbyterian Church in the reinforcement of the dignity of human beings.

4. Direct the Stated Clerk to transmit immediately this statement opposing the use of pornography and violence in the entertainment and marketing media to all major networks and news media.

2. *196th General Assembly (1984), Resolution on Pornography (Minutes, 1984, Part I, pp. 63-64)*

Whereas, in the last few years there has been an explosive escalation of the portrayal of sexual immorality and deviation, profanity, alcoholism and other drug abuse, and demonic violence on television and radio; and

Whereas, the lifestyle that is modeled for our children on the mass media outlets, which portray these excesses without regard for time of day or age of audience, is potentially dehumanizing and morally destructive; and

Whereas, many of the ideals lifted up on mass media programming are in direct contradiction to those lifestyle ideals that are proclaimed and modeled in the gospel of Jesus Christ; and

Whereas, we are called as members of the church of Jesus Christ to name the principalities and powers that are seeking to claim our allegiance; and

Whereas, the General Assemblies of both the former UPCUSA and the PCUS have acted in response to violence, sexual exploitation for commercial purposes, and lax morality in the public media; and

Whereas, the former PCUS at its 121st General Assembly (1981) recorded its opposition to themes of violence and immorality in the public media and further called for appropriate federal agencies to employ their influence to eliminate extreme portrayals of these themes in the public media; and

Whereas, the former UPCUSA at its 189th General Assembly (1977) adopted a resolution, "to take a public stand against the use of pornography and violence in the media and to reinforce the dignity of human beings, and thereby strengthen the Christian faith," (Minutes, 1977, Part I, p. 118); and

Whereas, among the comments that have been made by past General Assemblies, the 185th General Assembly (1973) noted a concern for the following problem areas as they are portrayed in the mass media:

- a. glorification of violence and its numbing effect on ethical standards;
- b. commercialization and exploitation of sex;
- c. overt appeals to materialism as the ideal style of life;

d. emphasis on advertising instant relief of problems through medication; and

Whereas, pastors, counselors, social agencies, and law officials are seeing families broken and lives adversely affected, as well as persons of both sexes and of all ages victimized by pornography and obscenity; and

Whereas, pornography, "kiddie porn," and materials depicting excessive violence and murder combined with sexual content are part of a growing six billion dollar industry (more than the movie and record industries combined) controlled largely by organized crime (ranked as their third largest money-maker); and

Whereas, the Supreme Court of the United States in 1973 established basic guidelines for determining "what is obscene," and

Whereas, the Supreme Court of the United States has traditionally held that obscenity is not protected by the First Amendment and that obscenity is not protected expression; and

Whereas, there are existing federal and state laws to stem the rampant flow of obscene materials and to control their availability; therefore, be it Resolved, That the 196th General Assembly (1984) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

1. Direct the Stated Clerk to notify the President of the United States that it is the desire of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to have the laws related to obscenity enforced by the U.S. Attorney General and the U.S. attorneys, the U.S. Postal Service, the Commerce Department, and the Customs Department, and that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is supportive of current efforts to include obscenity under the R.I.C.O. Statutes. (R.I.C.O. Statutes: Racketeering Influenced and Corrupt Organizations statutes currently cover obscenity. Legislation to this effect was introduced into the House and Senate in 11-14-83.)

2. Mandate the Council on Women and the Church and the General Assembly Mission Board (Office of Women) to persevere in their work in the areas of pornography and obscenity and the education of the church and society to combat the abusive treatment of women.

3. Establish official, visible relationship with other denominations and their leaders who are taking action against obscenity and pornography.

4. Encourage every Presbyterian to:

a. Develop awareness of the depth of the problem and its implications for the church and the world;

b. Take an active supportive role in one of the organizations working to establish the enforcement of current laws;

c. Refrain from supporting economically all motion pictures offensive to the individual's personal and moral convictions, and refrain from supporting economically companies that sponsor TV or radio programs or advertise in media in ways offensive to that individual's personal moral convictions;

d. File objections with the management or refuse to patronize those businesses that they personally feel contribute to the moral decay of our homes and families;

e. Write personally to those against whom the above action has been taken, informing them of the action and the reason for it.

5. Call on our churches to minister both to those who have been victimizers and to those who are or who have been victimized by violence, pornography, and sexual abuse, affirming the love of God and the new life in Jesus Christ that is for all persons.

6. Instruct the Stated Clerk to send a copy of this action to the appropriate executives of denominations in the United States with whom we are in correspondence, informing them of our concern and commitment and encouraging their consideration of this matter. (*Minutes*, 1984, Part I, pp. 63-64.)

3. *197th General Assembly (1985)*

A. *Overture 92-85*, On Developing Material for Educational Purposes Concerning Obscenity, Pornography, Sexual Harassment, Exploitation, etc.

1. That the above overture be adopted as amended so that it shall read as follows: That the 197th General Assembly (1985) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

a. Appropriate \$42,900 (\$7,000 in 1985, \$20,000 in 1986, \$15,900 in 1987) to the Council on Women and the Church and the Council [sic. i.e., Committee] on Women's Concerns for research to complete the task given them by the 196th General Assembly (1984);

b. Direct COWAC-COWC to present to the 199th General Assembly (1987) the results of such research and proposals to develop educational material and plans to distribute them to sessions and congregations;

c. Request COWAC-COWC to develop material for educational purposes concerning obscenity, pornography, sexual harassment, and other forms of sexual exploitation of persons, appropriate for study within the sessions and congregations;

d. Encourage all pastors and churches in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to support actively the national pornography awareness week (last week in October);

e. Encourage COWAC-COWC to make the church aware of educational resources already in existence that cover the topics of obscenity, pornography, sexual harassment, and other forms of sexual exploitation. This should be done at the direction of the above named councils.

4. *198th General Assembly (1986)*

The General Assembly adopted *Commissioners' Resolution 3-86*, which reads:

Whereas, the United States Attorney General's Commission on Pornography has documented that sexually explicit and violent materials are addictive and demoralizing to individuals, victimize children, women and men, and contribute to the destruction of family life . . . in essence, pornography is not a victimless crime;

Whereas, the content of pornography is antithetical to the Judeo-Christian calling and values;

Whereas, the 196th and 197th General Assemblies (1984, 1985) declared their awareness and growing concern for the devastating effects of pornography on the social, and moral and spiritual conditions of our nation by adopting strong overtures with definitive recommendations;

Whereas, the 197th General Assembly (1985) mandated that a \$45,000, three-year study be undertaken by the Council on Women and the Church

(COWAC) to develop resources to inform and equip congregations in the battle against pornography, but the General Assembly Finance Committee has not funded this work by COWAC;

Whereas, the proposed Mission Design specifies “pornography” as an area of concern of the Social Justice and Peacemaking Ministry Unit (second draft, p. 16.91); therefore, be it:

Resolved, That the 198th General Assembly (1986) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) reaffirm the actions of the 196th and 197th General Assemblies (1984 and 1985) related to pornography; and

Mandate the appropriate agency (Advisory Council on Church and Society and the Social Justice and Peacemaking Ministry Unit) to advocate the public policy position of the General Assembly in the area of pornography and assist the church in its social witness (this includes the immediate funding of work to implement the actions of the two previous General Assemblies).

5. *Guidelines from the 1973 PCUS Statement on “Pornography, Obscenity, and Censorship”*

III. Guidelines for Christian Decision

Christians have no simple and easy answers to the complex legal, psychological, and sociological questions we have considered. We cannot formulate a solution to them which we could claim is the Christian solution. What we can do is to look at the various aspects of the problem of obscenity and pornography in light of the biblical and theological presuppositions of our faith and try to formulate some guidelines for Christian action which are both faithful and realistic.

1. *Human physical life.* The Christian doctrine of the creation of male and female in the image of God, the incarnation of God in a flesh and blood man, and the promise of the “resurrection of the body” all teach us that the human body and all its functions, including human sexuality, are willed and blessed by God. They are therefore to be accepted and used with thanksgiving, joy, pleasure, and responsibility as the good gifts of God. There is nothing inherently dirty, obscene, or sinful about any aspect of our physical existence and relationships.

2. *Human relatedness.* The Christian doctrine of human beings made in the image of God teaches us that they are more than just biological creatures. They are creatures to whom God has given the capacity for personal relationship with him and their fellow human beings. In relationship with each other our physical existence becomes genuinely human existence when we live together with respect for the special dignity and value God has given every human life, in mutual loving and helping, giving and receiving.

3. *A Christian view of obscenity.* The Christian view of both the physical and the distinctively human aspects of our creaturely life suggests a basis for a Christian understanding of what is pornographic or obscene. Obscenity is a way of looking at human life which makes it less than what God created, treating human beings as if they were only animals or objects. Christians regard as obscene not physicality but inhuman physicality, not our biological functions and relationships, but an impersonal treatment of them. Pornography is the intrusion of a stranger who neither knows nor cares about the people involved in intimate physical processes and thus reduces what is happening to bare physical functions without meaning or personal involvement. This understanding of the problem helps us to recognize obscenity and pornography in the two ways they most often occur.

a. Sexual obscenity. The portrayal of nudity or sexual relations as such is not pornography but is a portrayal of sexuality in such a way that what we are invited to see is not human beings but sex organs for their own sake, and what we are invited to feel is not a sense of the wonder and excitement of human relationships but only impersonal physical excitement for its own sake.

b. The obscenity of violence or brutality. Many Americans are very sensitive to sexual obscenity and are concerned about what their children are exposed to in this area, yet often they are indifferent to the obscenity of violence and are casual about letting their children see in TV productions or movies the most callous infliction of pain, suffering, and death of human beings. The immorality of brutality or the sheer indifference which despises and degrades the God-given value and dignity of human life is at least as serious as sexual immorality. As with sexual relationships, so in this area the mere portrayal of brutality and violence is not in itself pornographic; it becomes pornographic if it is presented in such a way that we are encouraged to regard human pain, suffering, and death as humorous, unimportant, or impersonal.

These criteria do not enable us infallibly to identify any particular book, movie, or TV program as obscene, nor do they solve the problem of how such a view of obscenity could be embodied in legal formulas—or even whether or not it should be. What they may do is to help us approach the problem with a deeper understanding so that we are freed from the ancient but still popular heresy that human sexuality is dirty and should be publicly outlawed, sensitized to the obscenity of violence which is so often accepted without protest in our society, and enabled to distinguish between responsible and pornographic treatment of physical human life and sexuality.

4. *The limits of individual freedom and the need for social control.* Since human beings are created for responsible relatedness to each other and can be human only in community, the freedom and rights of the individual must be related to and limited by the welfare of the whole society in which he or she lives. This tells us something about the Christian approach to the legal question of whether and how pornography should be censored by legislation or court action. Christians cannot support the position that every person have the freedom to do and say or hear and see anything he pleases—especially when the speaking and listening and acting are done in a way which directly or indirectly affects other people, and most especially when it adversely affects the young and those who are otherwise helpless, defenseless, or vulnerable. This recognition of the limits of individual freedom opens up the possibility that some Christians may properly support the legal censorship of pornographic material despite the ambiguities and difficulties involved in such a legal solution to the problem. But such support is legitimate only after careful consideration of the present dangers and future consequences (political and religious as well as personal) of limiting freedom of speech and communication, and after careful evaluation on the basis of all available psychological and sociological evidence of the extent to which pornography is a real and not imagined threat to public health and welfare.

5. *The limits of social control and the need for individual freedom.* As individual freedom must be limited by community welfare, so community policies must be limited by the rights of individuals and minority groups. Individuals need the protection and help of the community, and the community needs the creativity, criticism, and reformation which come from free individuals. This also has bearing on the legal question of censorship.

Christians above all recognize the vital importance of the guarantee to individuals and minority groups of freedom of expression and the right to hear

and see. The freedom to proclaim the gospel in word and deed, especially in situations where the promises and demand of the gospel are unpopular, depends on this freedom. Can we justly deny to others, even those with whom we seriously disagree or those who are radically out of step with the majority of our society, the freedom of expression we demand for ourselves?

Christians above all recognize the fact that “contemporary standards” of the “average person” should not be automatically accepted and enforced. They know about the fallibility and sinfulness of human beings and societies, and are called to witness to God’s judgment and renewal. Can we justly deny to others the right we demand for ourselves to disagree with, criticize, and seek to change commonly accepted moral standards—even when what others stand for seems immoral or un-Christian to us?

Christians also know about their own and the church’s fallibility and sinfulness and are open to God’s judgment and correction of their own understanding of right personal and social relationships. Do we not need to have our own values and standards challenged and criticized to help us determine whether they are genuinely Christian or only the reflection of cultural and historical influences unrelated to the Christian faith and life?

Such questions pointing to the legitimacy of and need for individual freedom in opposition to community standards may lead some Christians to oppose all censorship of pornographic material despite the possible dangers involved in such a position. But such opposition is legitimate only after careful consideration of how social health, justice, and unity may be threatened by an irresponsible individualistic concept of freedom in moral as well as in economic and political questions.

6. *Christian action in a pluralistic society.* Whatever our individual decisions about censorship, we must resist the temptation to demand or allow political authorities or courts to enforce on everyone specifically Protestant or even generally Christian standards of belief and conduct—just as we oppose the enforcement of the standards of any church or religion. Both the democratic principles of our Constitution which prohibit the establishment of any religion and our understanding of the Christian faith speak against such a solution to the problem of pornography. The Christian church exists in the world to serve and not be served, to give itself for men and not to make itself the lord over men. It proclaims in word and deed a gospel which judges and renews individuals and the social order, but it does not force people to live as if they were Christians when in fact they are not. The church and individual Christians may and should work through the various political and legal instruments of society for laws and policies which reflect the Christian understanding of the nature and purpose of human life. But in the political, legal, and social spheres we will not argue for such laws and policies because they are biblical and Christian, but because they are the best expression of the proper relationship between individual freedom and community responsibility, because they most adequately respect and protect the value and dignity of human life, and because they promote the most human understanding of man’s physical functions and relationships. Speaking and acting in these terms in the political, legal, and social spheres, we remain faithful to our Christian presuppositions and goals, yet stand together with people of other religions or of no religion who are also concerned about human life and freedom, and work for policies which are legitimate and possible under the Constitution of our nation.

7. *The limits of legal solutions.* Whatever our individual decision about legal measures to control pornography, we cannot expect them to solve the real problems which lie behind it. Laws and rules can control external actions to

some extent, but they cannot control what people desire and will and think. Christians therefore will not expect or allow legislation or court actions to become a substitute for deeper solutions to the problem—the solutions to be found in their own homes, in the church, and in public schools. The dangers of pornography or obscenity are best fought by parents, teachers and ministers who by their own lives and by instruction teach both children and adults the dignity and value of human life, the horrible obscenity of wanton infliction of pain, suffering, and death of human beings, the beauty and goodness of the human body and its functions, and the meaning of sexuality and sexual relationships which are not mechanical or animalistic but personal and human. Pornography or obscenity then loses its power and fascination as it is exposed for what it really is: not some tremendous and delicious evil which is secretly relished even as it is righteously opposed, but a stupid, trivial, and boring parody of the real joy, excitement, pleasure, and wonder of authentic human life as God has willed and created it.

6. *Guidelines from The 1984 UPCUSA Study on “Dignity and Exploitation”*

In dealing with legislative matters, Christians have a peculiar obligation to insure that others’ freedoms are guaranteed, even when that means the freedom to make choices of which one might personally disapprove. The obligation is nowhere clearer than in the area of obscenity and pornography, where we can see it as a Christian responsibility to be sure the law allows other consenting adults to read, watch or listen to things we might find distasteful at best, disgusting at worst. John Milton’s argument against censorship laws proposed to the Parliament in seventeenth century England is still a good one. He opted for a free market of ideas, tastes and concepts, saying, “I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue.”

For Christians, there are some criteria, born of their faith, which can be brought to bear on the development of workable local and state laws, and on the manner in which they are applied. Here are a few representative, not definitive, examples:

1. Minors deserve certain protections. When Christian parents respond to the questions put to them at the baptism of their children, they promise to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. They undertake an obligation, therefore, to influence the spiritual and ethical environment of their children. The first level at which that influence must be exercised is through example, a language children understand more clearly than any other. A second level of influence is by showing approval or disapproval, a powerful and important contribution to the nurture of children even when they howlingly disagree with their parents’ judgments. A third level of influence is through parental action to protect children from untoward and disruptive emotional experiences. While one cannot and should not try to bring up children in cotton batting, there are some aspects of human experience for which children are unprepared at certain ages. Parents are being neither deceptive nor overprotective when they try to protect their children from experiences for which they are developmentally unprepared.

2. Do not overestimate what the law can do to protect the moral climate. The cultivation of healthy attitudes toward all aspects of human experience, the sexual included, in home and church is more significant for that climate than any law. It is worth remembering that what is well done at home cannot be undone at a magazine rack. If children have been taught to enjoy, respect and understand their own sexuality, and have been taught elemental respect for the privacy and integrity of others, those things will provide them better protection than any law against the potentially destructive influence of obscenity or pornography.

3. Respect the rights of other adults. There are two sides to this criterion: (a) it supports the right to limit public display of all forms of obscenity, the violent as well as the sexual; (b) it also supports the right of consenting adults to have discrete access to publications, films, etc., which, while offensive to some, are enjoyable or even therapeutic to others.

4. Remember that law is for protection, not harassment. In the experience of Christian faith, law is the structure of freedom, not its enemy. St. Paul reminds us that freedom is God's gift in Christ, and that law is meant to serve that gift, not to deny it. We are called upon, therefore, to see to it that laws intended to protect against wanton assault on public sensitivities by material judged obscene or pornographic are not used, in turn as an instrument to harass those whose sexual proclivities may arouse fear or anger (or even jealousy) in the majority. Nor should we drop our guard against the law being used to harass teachers through censorship of their curricula by pressure groups in the community.

5. Do not trade freedom for security. The supreme gift of the gospel is confidence in the love and the power of God. On the basis of this gift, Christians are invited to live out the risks of this life without anxiety. While the gospel is not a counsel of deliberate imprudence, it is an invitation to live in an open, giving, unafraid and joyous manner of life. Anything that enhances the freedom of all without destroying the rights of any deserves the support of Christians, who furthermore should not trade their essential manner of life for any illusory security offered by the power of the state.

D. STATEMENTS AND ACTIVITIES OF OTHER RELIGIOUS BODIES

Some of the religious institutions that have responded to the issue of pornography through statements and activities are:

The Lutherans

In 1974, the American Lutheran Church adopted a statement challenging its members to understand the complexities of the issue of pornography and the tension between human freedom and responsibility. That statement was updated with a supplement in 1985, in recognition that "both the nature of pornography and the social climate in the United States have changed." The supplement discusses the problem of defining pornography, analyzes the debate over regulating pornography, presents biblical and theological considerations. It calls on members to affirm human sexuality as a gift from God, wherein "portrayals of respectful, even erotically explicit, sexual encounters may be edifying," while advocating a range of appropriate activities that members may use to demonstrate rejection of materials which "undermine human dignity and promote hatred or violence."¹

In 1986, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod adopted a "guiding statement for moral reflection," analyzing the issue of pornography within the context of Christian understanding of sexuality.²

In late 1986, the Lutheran Council in the U.S.A., representing five Lutheran denominations, sent all members of Lutheran congregations in the United States a letter, urging them to give serious consideration to several statements on pornography and to support "both the First

Amendment and enforcement of laws against child and violent pornography.”³

The United Church of Canada

In 1984, the United Church of Canada adopted a resolution defining pornography and urging members to become involved with the issue. Its Division of Mission in Canada prepared a “Pornography Kit,” which includes information about pornography, a suggested worship service, Bible study guides, and a bibliography.

The United Methodist Church

In 1985, the United Methodist Church sponsored a conference on “Pornography, Violence and Christian Values.” Judith D. Atwell, staff person for COWAC, attended the two-day event, which featured presentations representing a variety of viewpoints on the issue of pornography. Materials produced by the United Church of Canada and a resource entitled “Pornography Hurts,” by Joanna Fairheart, were distributed. The United Methodists also published a series of articles, “Pornography: Increasing Sexual Violence,” in their social action magazine.

Other Denominational Actions

Denominational resolutions have been made by the Baptist General Conference, the Southern Baptist Convention, the Church of God (Indiana), the Church of the Nazarene, the Evangelical Free Church, the Free Methodist Church of North America, the Presbyterian Church in America, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, the Church of God (Tennessee), and the Missionary Church. Both Orthodox Archdioceses of North and South America have issued statements regarding pornography, including plans for action. The *Women’s Concerns Report*, a publication by women in the Mennonite Central Committee of the U.S., devoted one issue to the topic of pornography, discussing definition, effects, and First Amendment considerations.

The National Council of the Churches of Christ

In 1985 the National Council of the Churches of Christ adopted a report produced by a study committee of its Communication Commission entitled, “Violence and Sexual Violence in Film, Television, Cable and Home Video.” Included in the report are guidelines for determining a response to the increase of excessive violence in the media and recommended actions related to television, motion pictures, cable TV, videocassettes, public broadcasting.

The National Council of the Churches of Christ, and other religious bodies (the American Jewish Committee, the National Council of Jewish Women, the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, the United Church of Christ, and the Communications Division of the United Methodist Church) are participating organizations of the National Coalition Against

Censorship. Some leaders of the National Council of Churches are also participating individuals in the Religious Alliance Against Pornography.

The Religious Alliance Against Pornography

In July of 1986, in response to the initiative of Rev. Jerry R. Kirk, Presbyterian minister from Cincinnati, Ohio, leaders from Protestant, Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Jewish, and Mormon religious bodies formed the Religious Alliance Against Pornography. (Its foundational document is in the Background Material of this report.) In November of 1986, the Religious Alliance Against Pornography held a two-day strategy conference in Washington, D.C., which included a briefing at the White House and a meeting with President Ronald Reagan. In the Presbyterian news release following the session with the President, Kirk stated: "We asked him and he was in total agreement that the battle against child pornography, pornography involving children sexually with one another and with adults, and hard-core obscenity, which is illegal and against the law, would be a new priority for this administration."⁴

The National Council of Jewish Women

The National Council of Jewish Women, in keeping with a long history of Jewish opposition to censorship and governmental regulation of printed materials, produced a resource in 1983 entitled, "Endangered: The Right to Read as We Choose." Subsequently, NCJW has produced workshop materials to address the difficult issues of censorship and pornography. An article in a 1986 journal entitled "Censorship, Sex and the First Amendment" concludes: "With the exception of child pornography, NCJW has historically been opposed to any regulation which would limit the publication or sale of any materials, even if that material might be offensive. However, there is considerable debate as to how pornographic materials should be displayed and whether restraints placed on the exhibit of such material constitute censorship."⁵

Notes

¹"The Victims of Pornography," Analysis by the American Lutheran Church, Office of Church and Society, 1985, p. 1.

²Resolution 2-08, "To Intensify Efforts to Curb Pornography, Violence, Obscenity, and Indecency," Adopted by the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, July, 1986.

³Letter from the Lutheran Council in the U.S.A., 1986.

⁴Presbyterian News Report, P-86219, November 21, 1986, p. 11.

⁵"Censorship, Sex and the First Amendment," *NCJW Journal*, Winter 1986, Vol. IX, No. 4, p. 13.

E. STATEMENT OF RELIGIOUS ALLIANCE AGAINST PORNOGRAPHY

(Foundational Statement)

As religious leaders, we believe in the inherent dignity of each human being. Created in God's image and likeness, the human person is the clearest reflection of God's presence among us. Because human life is sacred, we all have a

duty to develop the kind of societal environment that protects and fosters its development. This is why we address a broad range of life threatening and life diminishing issues. These assaults on human life and dignity are all distinct, each requiring its own moral analysis and solution. But they must be confronted as elements of a larger picture.

The purpose of RAAP is to bring into clear focus a major factor in the assault on human dignity and the consequent dehumanization that it promotes: hard core and child pornography. This concern brought us together following the release of the Report of the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography. We are in unanimous agreement that hard core and child pornography, which are not protected by the Constitution, are evils which must be eliminated.

As religious leaders, our primary responsibility is to teach and motivate. We can and must help people understand the moral dimensions of the problem of hard core and child pornography and what their responsibility is in this regard, while fully respecting freedom of expression guaranteed by the First Amendment. In particular, we wish to make it clear that we do not and will not advocate censorship. Our understanding of censorship implies actions being taken against materials which are protected by the First Amendment.

As teachers, we will do all in our power to proclaim the truth of human dignity and freedom, and to promote the God-given human values needed for the moral health of our society. Given the information and motivation, people will do what is necessary to affect public policy.

The membership of RAAP, representing a broad spectrum of America's religious community, is an indication of the seriousness of the problem and our commitment to addressing it. This represents the beginning of an ongoing process which will facilitate greater cooperation on this vital issue among religious bodies.

F. EXAMPLES OF SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH ON PORNOGRAPHY

Following are brief summaries of a few of the studies that have been conducted to determine the effects of exposure to pornography:

1. Dr. Edward Donnerstein, Professor of Communication Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, has spent considerable effort investigating the effects of sexually explicit material on attitudes. In one study, Donnerstein used X-rated movies where violence, rape and assault against women are themes, but there are no explicit acts of intercourse. Testing 156 male college students, he followed the showing of films with the reenactment of a rape trial. Students who had viewed the violent films regarded the rape victim as more worthless and rape as a more trivial offense than did students in a control group who had not seen the films. Donnerstein concluded that "there is a definite pattern of desensitization to violence against women and, in particular, a trivialization of the crime of sex."¹

In a recent book entitled, *The Question of Pornography*, Donnerstein cites other research in drawing his fundamental conclusion that "violence against women need not occur in a pornographic or sexually explicit context to have a negative effect upon viewer attitudes and beha-

viator. But even more importantly, it must be concluded that violent images, rather than sexual ones, are most responsible for people's attitudes about women and rape."²

2. Dr. Victor B. Cline, a clinical psychologist at the University of Utah, has found that men who use pornography mixing sex and violence are "(1) aroused sexually and aggressively, (2) tend to increase their aggressive attitudes and behavior, (3) have an increased production of aggressive rape fantasies, (4) are more accepting of such rape myths as 'women ask for it,' (5) have a lessened sensitivity about rape and an increased callousness toward women, (6) admit an increased possibility of themselves raping someone, especially if they think they can get away with it"³ Cline cites a study by Seymour Feshback at UCLA where, following exposure to violent pornography, 51 percent of male students who were tested indicated the likelihood of raping a woman if assured they would not get caught.

3. Dorf Zillmann of Indiana University and Jennings Bryant of the University of Houston selected average male and female students from four universities. They also selected a male and female population from a midwestern city. One group saw six sexually explicit films that were non-violent and non-degrading, once a week for six weeks. Another group saw three films of the same type, once a week for six weeks. A third group saw six innocuous films at the same intervals. One week after the film series ended, the groups were brought back together and viewed three more films. The first was non-violent and non-degrading; the second was sensuous but not graphic; the third was degrading and violent. Since the subjects demonstrated increased disinterest in the milder films and increased interest in the more violent films, Zillmann and Bryant concluded that people become bored by mild forms of pornography and develop an appetite for stronger forms of it.⁴

4. In 1977, researchers R. A. Baron and P. A. Bell "exposed male students to stimuli that included semi-nude females, nudes, heterosexual intercourse and some explicit erotic passages. The mild erotic stimuli (semi-nudes and nudes) inhibited aggression levels whereas the 'stronger' stimuli had no effects. A follow-up study (Baron, 1979), this time on female subjects, using the same stimulus materials found mild stimuli inhibiting aggressive behavior while the stronger stimuli increased aggression. Both these studies measured aggressive behavior via 'shocks' delivered on an aggression machine."⁵

Notes

¹Minnery, Tom, ed., *Pornography: A Human Tragedy*, 1986, p. 132.

²Donnerstein, Edward I. and Daniel G. Linz, "The Question of Pornography," *Psychology Today*, December 1986, p. 59.

³Cline, Victor, "The Effects of Pornography on Behavior," *Third Annual Conference of the National Coalition Against Pornography*, September 1985, p. 31.

⁴Minnery, *op. cit.*, pp. 118-125.

⁵*Final Report of the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography*, Rutledge-Hill Press edition, 1986, p. 276.

G. TESTIMONIES

1. *Interview with "Fantasy Girl" by Judith D. Atwell*

Penny Jones (not her real name) is an intelligent and vivacious 30-year-old black woman with a vibrant and infectious sense of humor. Penny agreed to talk about her experience as a "Fantasy Girl" because she believes that her story may help others understand the economic realities of some working-poor women and the choices they make.

Penny worked for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in New York as a "Secretary B" with a gross salary of \$285 a week, \$210 net. The rent on her apartment was \$210, utilities \$45, telephone \$30, and transportation approximately \$100. Adding in food, clothing, and occasional entertainment, Penny "sort of broke even." Complicating her financial situation were two additional factors: She had just moved into an apartment and had to furnish it, and her daughter, who was living with Penny's parents in New Jersey, would soon be coming to live with her. She had been helping to support her daughter financially and frequently visited her on weekends.

It became apparent to Penny that she would have to get a second job. She was no stranger to hard work. In the past she had held down two full time jobs and had a job while attending college full time. When she considered what was available to her, she realized that the options were extremely limited. Her word processing skills were not sufficient to enable her to work "temp," and after working full-time during the day, she did not want a job that would necessitate travel on the subway, which was stressful and dangerous at night, especially for a woman. So when she saw the ad in the *Village Voice* for telephone work at home, she called the number listed.

She was invited to attend an "orientation" meeting at the Barbizon Hotel in mid-Manhattan where two men oriented the prospective employees and current employees talked about their work. Penny was told she would need a telephone capable of three-way-calling and that for tax purposes she should register as an "independent contractor." The company would furnish her with a phone number and would assume the cost for all long distance calls. For legal purposes, the company was a mail order business and Penny was "consumer services personnel." The company was very scrupulous in its record keeping; at the end of the year it assisted Penny to complete her special tax form. It encouraged employees to give customer satisfaction and provided motivational inducements including an annual Christmas party.

At the orientation Penny was given a portfolio containing several "scripts." During the training period she practiced with a tape recorder or with another woman, and her performance was critiqued. Because she is black, and most clients prefer white women, she was coached to sound "white."

The operation worked in the following way: At the company offices in mid-Manhattan a receptionist received calls and quickly screened out children and callers who sounded inebriated or “high.” The clients (almost all of whom were men) were then asked their phone numbers, preference of Fantasy Girl, and credit card number. After checking the client’s credit, the receptionist would call Penny, or another woman, and tell her the phone number and client’s fantasy if he had one.

Penny would call the client. She received \$5 per call, or \$7 if the client specifically requested her Fantasy Girl persona. (Each employee had several personas that they developed; in addition, each employee was assigned the persona of one of the models advertising the service whose picture appeared in *Playboy* and *Penthouse*. Penny’s was “Sheri.”)

The company received a minimum of \$49 per call and the average phone call was \$85. The caller was told he had 30 minutes, but the employees developed tactics to get the caller off the phone in less time—usually only five to ten minutes was required. After the call was completed, Penny called the receptionist to tell her the phone line was open.

Penny usually worked four nights a week, 10 PM–4 AM OR 12 AM–6 AM. She made approximately \$300 a week, but often much more, especially when she worked 24-hour shifts on the weekends. She averaged ten calls a night, and some nights took up to thirty calls, especially during football season. Half-time during the Super Bowl was the highest volume night. Her calls came from all over—Australia, Hawaii, Alaska, Texas. Some callers became regulars and conversation covered many areas including family concerns, sports, and business. In between calls she would sleep or do housework.

A camaraderie developed between her and the other women who worked on the service and they often called each other to gossip or to exchange tips. Some of the women were actors or models between jobs, some were students, some were in relationships with pimps and drug users, some women had no marketable skills. Some, like Penny, needed extra money because their full-time employment did not pay enough to make ends meet.

At first the job seemed easy and the money good, but as time went on, it became intolerable. Penny functioned on the edge of exhaustion and found it difficult to stay awake at her secretarial job. It got to the point where she thought “one more phone call and I’ll break into tears.” The bizarre nature of the work, the fantasies that she had to fulfill or create, took its toll. “What kind of men are these?” she wondered. Some seemed like “regular guys.” “But what kind of man would call, begging to be beaten or tied up?” (Her neighbors, unable to subdue their curiosity, would ask what was going on in her apartment; they could hear banging all hours of the night as she was beating on books.) “These men were so submissive that the most active thing they did was place the initial call—after that they became merely passive participants in the fantasy. They wanted to be dominated, yet did not want a ‘live’ partner—not even a

paid prostitute. When they knew what they wanted, it was easy. But often they just said, 'Turn me on,' and it was up to me to create the fantasy. It took a lot of imagination and energy to come up with something. Even though it was a sleazy job, part of me still wanted to do it well. Often there would be no response, and I'd say, 'Are you still with me? Stay with me now.' I'd keep talking, spinning out the fantasy, until we were on the same wavelength. Then I'd get a grunt or a groan, sometimes a thank you, often the phone would just click off." To Penny it was the "ultimate oral sex—no body, no brain—just my voice."

Penny started going to basketball games, she needed a crowd situation, normal people, something to be grounded in. In her exhausted state Penny's world was blurring, fantasy and reality were coming together. One night a regular customer with whom she had developed a rapport, called all excited because "now he knew her." He said that he had seen her picture in *Playboy*. He was ecstatic. Penny felt violated. "Did he know me? If he saw me on the street would he say hello?" She knew that was impossible—"Sheri" was one of her personas. That was whom he was talking about. Not her, not Penny. But she had shared with him, and liked him. It was getting all mixed up.

She started to cut back on the hours she worked as a Fantasy Girl and began reading the training manuals for the word processor. She taught herself all the functions, including the most advanced. After she became accomplished on the word processor, she quit both her Fantasy Girl job and her secretarial job preferring to work as a temporary word processor. At first it was hard going, but now she commands an excellent salary and works the hours she chooses at companies she likes.

When asked what sustained her through those six months as a Fantasy Girl, she replied, "the acceptance and emotional support of me by my family." Her mother was a domestic and her father a laborer, so both knew the hazards of working in occupations where one is dependent upon the good will of others.

When she was just beginning as a "temp" and times were tough, had she considered working again as a Fantasy Girl? "It crossed my mind—I know it is always there and the customers will always be there. But I stuck it out and found a good temp agency. Now I have the skills and the experience to make a decent salary for my daughter and myself and I never have to go that route again."

2. *Testimony of Linda Marchiano at the Public Hearings on the Minneapolis Pornography Ordinance**

Ms. Marchiano: I feel I should introduce myself and tell you why I feel I am qualified to speak out against pornography. My name today is Linda Marchiano. Linda Lovelace was the name I bore during a two and a half year period of imprisonment. (For those of you who don't know the name,

* From transcript prepared by Organizing Against Pornography, Minneapolis, MN, pages 13 and 14.

Linda Lovelace was the victim of this so-called victimless crime. Used and abused by Mr. Traynor, her captor, she was forced through physical, mental, and sexual abuse and often at gunpoint and threats of her life to be involved in pornography. Linda Lovelace was not a willing participant but became the sex freak of the '70s.)

It all began in 1971. I was recuperating from a near fatal car accident at my parents' home in Florida. A girlfriend of mine came to visit me with a person by the name of Mr. Charles Traynor. He came off as a considerate gentleman, asking us what we would like to do and how we would like to spend the afternoon and opening doors and lighting cigarettes and all the so-called manners of society.

Needless to say I was impressed, and started to date him. I was not getting along with my own parents. I was twenty-one and resented being told to be home at 11:00 o'clock and to call and say where I was and to call and give the phone number and address where I would be.

Here comes the biggest mistake of my life. Seeing how upset I was with my home life, Mr. Traynor offered me his assistance. He said I could come and live at his home in Miami. The relationship was platonic, which was fine with me. My plan was to recuperate and then go back to New York and live. I thought then he was being kind and a nice friend. Today I know why the relationship was platonic. He was incapable of a sexual act without inflicting some type of pain or degradation upon a human being.

When I decided to head back north and informed Mr. Traynor of my intention, that was when I met the real Mr. Traynor and my two and a half years of imprisonment began. He began a complete turnaround and beat me up physically and began the mental abuse, from that day forward my hell began.

I literally became a prisoner. I was not allowed out of his sight not even to use the bathroom. Why, you may ask, because there was a window in the bathroom. When speaking to either of my friends or my parents, he was on the extension with a .45 automatic 8 shot pointed at me. I was beaten physically and suffered mental abuse each and every day thereafter.

In my book, *Ordeal, An Autobiography*, I go into greater detail of the monstrosity I was put through. From prostitution to porno films to celebrity satisfier. The things that he used to get me involved in pornography went from .45 automatic 8 shot and M-16 semi-automatic machine gun to threats on the lives of my family. I have seen the kind of people involved in pornography and how they will use anyone to get what they want.

So many people ask me why didn't you escape? Well, I did, I'm here today. I did try during the two and a half years to escape on three separate occasions. The first and second time I was caught and suffered a brutal beating and an awful sexual abuse as punishment. The third time

I was at my parents' home and Mr. Traynor threatened to kill my parents. I said, "No, you won't, my father is here in the other room" and he said, "I will kill him and each and every member of your family." Just then my nephew came in through the kitchen door to the living room, he pulled out the .45 and said he would shoot him if I didn't leave immediately. I did.

Some of you might say I was foolish but I'm not the kind of person who could live the rest of my life knowing that another human being had died because of me.

The name, Linda Lovelace, gave me a great deal of courage and notoriety. Had Linda Borman been shot dead in a hotel room, no questions would be asked. If Linda Lovelace was shot dead in Los Angeles, questions would have been asked. After three unsuccessful attempts at escaping, I realized I had to take my time and plan it well. It took six months of preparation to convince Mr. Traynor to allow me out of his sight for fifteen minutes. I had to tell him he was right, woman's body was to be used to make money, that porno was great, that beating people was the right thing to do. Fortunately for me, after I acquired my 15 minutes out of his presence, I also had someone that wanted to help me.

I tried to tell my story several times. Once to a reporter, Vernon Scott, who worked for the UPI. He said he couldn't print it. Again on the Regis Philbin Show and when I started to explain what happened to me, that I was beaten and forced into it, he laughed. Also at a grand jury hearing in California after they had watched a porno film, they asked me why I did it. I said, "Because a gun was being pointed at me" and they just said "Oh," but no charges were ever filed.

I also called the Beverly Hills Police Department on my final escape and I told them that Mr. Traynor was walking around looking for me with an M-16. When they first told me that they couldn't become involved in domestic affairs, I accepted that and asked them and told them that he was illegally possessing these weapons and they simply told me to call back when he was in the room.

During the filming of *Deep Throat*, actually after the first day, I suffered a brutal beating in my room for smiling on the set. It was a hotel room and the whole crew was in one room; there was at least twenty people partying, music going, laughing, and having a good time. Mr. Traynor started to bounce me off the walls. I figured out of twenty people, there might be one human being that would do something to help me and I was screaming for help, I was being beaten, I was being kicked around and again bounced off of walls. And all of a sudden the room next door became very quiet. Nobody, not one person came to help me.

The greatest complaint the next day is the fact that there was bruises on my body. So many people say that in *Deep Throat* I have a smile on my face and I look as though I am really enjoying myself. No one ever asked me how those bruises got on my body.

Mr. Traynor stopped searching for me because he acquired Marilyn Chambers who I believe is also being held against her will.

A reporter from the Philadelphia newspaper did an interview, his name is Larry Fields. During the course of the interview, Ms. Chambers asked for permission to go to the bathroom and he refused it. Mr. Fields objected and said, why don't you let the poor girl go to the bathroom, she is about to go on stage and he came back with, I don't tell you how to write your newspaper, don't tell me how to treat my broads.

I have also been in touch with a girl who was with Mr. Traynor two months prior to getting me, who was put through a similar situation but not as strong. And as it stands today, she still fears for her life and the life of her family. Personally, I think it is time that the legal system in this country realize that one, you can't be held prisoner for two and a half years and the next day trust the society which has caused your pain and resume the life you once called yours. It takes time to overcome the total dehumanization which you have been through. It is time for something to be done about the civil rights of the victims and not criminals. The victims being women. But realize, please, it is not just the women who are victims but also children, men, and our society.

H. CIVIL LEGISLATION

1. Pornography Victims Protection Act (H.R. 1213)
To amend chapter 110 of title 18, United States Code,
to create remedies for children and other victims
of pornography and for other purposes.

In The House of Representatives February 24, 1987

Mr. Green (for himself, Mr. Bryant, Mr. Crockett, Mr. Dannemeyer, and Mr. Fish) introduced the following bill, which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

A Bill

To amend chapter 110 of title 18, United States Code to create remedies for children and other victims of pornography and for other purposes. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

Section 1. Short Title. This Act may be cited as the Pornography Victims Protection Act of 1987.

Section 2. Section 2251 Amendments.

Section 2251 of Title 18, United States Code is amended:

(1) in subsection (a), by striking out "subsection (c)" and inserting in lieu thereof "subsection (d)" and by inserting before the period at the end thereof the following: "or if such person knows or has reason to know that the minor was transported in interstate or foreign commerce for the purpose of producing any such visual depiction of such conduct";

(2) in subsection (b), by striking out “subsection (c)” and inserting in lieu thereof “subsection (d)” and by inserting before the period at the end thereof the following: “or if such person knows or has reason to know that the minor was transported in interstate or foreign commerce for the purpose of producing any such visual depiction of such conduct”;

(3) by inserting immediately after subsection (b) the following: (c)(I) Any person who coerces, intimidates, or fraudulently induces an individual 18 years or older to engage in any sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of such conduct shall be punished as provided under subsection (d), if such person knows or has reason to know that such visual depiction will be transported in interstate or foreign commerce or mailed, if such visual depiction has actually been transported in interstate or foreign commerce or mailed, or if such person knows or has reason to know that the individual 18 years or older was transported interstate or foreign commerce for the purpose of producing any such visual depiction of such conduct. Proof of one or more of the following facts of conditions shall not, without more, negate a finding of coercion under this subsection

(A) that the person is or has been a prostitute;

(B) that the person is connected by blood or marriage to anyone involved in or related to the making of the pornography;

(C) that the person has previously had, or been thought to have had, sexual relations with anyone, including anyone involved in or related to the making of the pornography;

(D) that the person has previously posed for sexually explicit pictures for or with anyone, including anyone involved in or related to the making of the pornography at issue;

(E) that anyone else, including a spouse or other relative, has given permission on the person’s behalf;

(F) that the person actually consented to a use of the performance that is changed into pornography;

(G) that the person knew that the purpose of the acts or events in question was to make pornography;

(H) that the person signed a contract to produce pornography; or

(I) that the person was paid or otherwise compensated;

(4) in subsection (c), by striking out “(c)” and inserting in lieu thereof “d”;

and

(5) by amending the heading to read as follows: 2251. Sexual exploitation.”

Section 3. Section 2252 Amendments.

(a) Subsection (a)(1) Offense—Section

2252 (a)(1)(A) of title 18, United States Code, is amended by inserting after “conduct” the following: “or the use of an adult who was coerced, intimidated, or fraudulently induced to engage in sexually explicit conduct and the person knows or has reason to know that the adult was coerced, intimidated, or fraudulently induced.”

(b) Subsection (a)(2) Offense—Section

2252(a)(2)(A) is amended by inserting after “conduct” the following: “or the use of an adult who was coerced, intimidated, or fraudulently induced to engage in sexually explicit conduct and the person knows or has reason to know that the adult was coerced, intimidated, or fraudulently induced.”

(b) Subsection (a)(2) Offense—Section

(c) Conforming Amendment—The heading for section 2252 is amended to read as follows:

2252. Certain activities relating to material involving sexual exploitation.

Section 4. Civil Remedies.

(a) Redesignation.—Chapter 110 of part I of title 18, United States Code, is amended by redesignating section 2255 as section 2261.

(b) Creation of Remedies—Chapter 110 of part J of title 18, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 2254 the following:

2255. Civil remedies.

(a) The district courts of the United States shall have jurisdiction to prevent and restrain violations of section 2251 or 2252 by issuing appropriate orders, including

(1) ordering any person to divest himself of any interest, direct or indirect, in any legal or business entity;

(2) imposing reasonable restrictions on the future activities or investments of any person including prohibiting such person from engaging in the same type of legal or business endeavor; or

(3) ordering dissolution or reorganization of any legal or business entity after making due provision for the rights of innocent persons.

(b) The Attorney General or any person threatened with losses or damage by reason of a violation of section 2251 or 2252 of this title may institute proceedings under subsection (a) of this section and, in the event that the party bringing suit prevails, such party shall recover the cost of the suit, including a reasonable attorney's fee. Pending final determination, the court may at any time enter such restraining orders or prohibitions, or take such other actions, including the acceptance of satisfactory performance bonds, as it shall deem proper. For purposes of this section, a violation of section 2251 or 2252 of this title shall be determined by a preponderance of the evidence.

(c) Any victim of a violation of section 2251 or 2252 of this title who suffers physical injury, emotional distress, or property damage as a result of such violation may sue to recover damages in any appropriate United States district court and shall recover threefold the damages such person sustains as a result of such violation and the cost of the suit, including a reasonable attorney's fee. For purposes of this section, violation of section 2251 or 2252 of this title shall be determined by a preponderance of the evidence.

(d) A final judgment or decree rendered in favor of the United States in any criminal proceeding brought by the United States under this chapter shall stop the defendant from denying the essential allegations of the criminal offense in any subsequent civil proceeding.

(e) Nothing in this section shall be construed to authorize any order restraining the exhibition, distribution or semination of any visual material without a full adversary proceeding and a final judicial determination that such material contains a visual depiction of sexually explicit conduct, as defined by section 2261 of this title, engaged in by a minor or by a person who was coerced, intimidated, or fraudulently induced to engage in such sexually explicit conduct.

2256. Civil penalties.

(a) Any person found to violate section 2251 or 2252 of this title by preponderance of the evidence shall be liable to the United States Government for a

civil penalty of \$100,000 and forfeiture of any interest in property described in section 2254. The Attorney General may bring an action for recovery of any such civil penalty or forfeiture against any such person. If the Attorney General prevails he may also recover the cost of the suit, including a reasonable attorney's fee.

(b) If the identity of any victim of an offense provided in section 2251 or 2252 of this title is established before an award of a civil penalty is made to the United States under this section, the victim shall be entitled to the award. If there is more than one victim, the court shall apportion the award among the victims on an equitable basis after considering the harm suffered by each such victim.

2257. Venue and process.

(a) Any civil action or proceeding brought under this chapter may be instituted in the district court of the United States in any district in which the defendant resides, is found, has an agent, or transacts his affairs.

(b) In any action under section 2255 or 2256 or this title in any district court of the United States in which it is shown that the ends of justice require that other parties residing in any other district be brought before the court, the court may cause such parties to be summoned, and process for that purpose may be served in any judicial district of the United States by the marshal of such judicial district.

(c) In any civil or criminal action or proceeding under this chapter in the district, a subpoena issued by such court to compel the attendance of witnesses may be served in any other judicial district except that no subpoena shall be issued for service upon any individual who resides in another district at a place more than one hundred miles from the place at which such court is held without approval given by a judge of such court upon a showing of good cause.

(d) All other processes in any action or proceeding under this chapter may be served on any person in any judicial district in which such person resides, is found, has an agent, or transacts his affairs.

2258. Expedition of actions.

In any civil action instituted under this chapter by the United States in any district court of the United States, the Attorney General may file with the clerk of such court a certificate stating that in his opinion the case is of general public importance. A copy of that certificate shall be furnished immediately by such clerk to the chief judge or in his absence to the presiding district judge of the district in which such action is pending. Upon receipt of such copy, such judge shall designate immediately a judge of that district to hear and determine the action, shall assign the action for hearing as soon as practicable and hold hearings and make a determination as expeditiously as possible.

2259. Evidence.

In any proceeding ancillary to or in any civil action instituted under this chapter the proceedings may be opened or closed to the public at the discretion of the court after consideration of the rights of affected persons.

2260. Limitations.

A civil action under section 2255 or 2256 of this title must be brought within six years from the date the violation is committed. In any such action brought by or on behalf of a person who was a minor at the date the violation was committed, the running of such six-year period shall be deemed to have been tolled during the period of such person's minority.

Section 5. Clerical Amendment.

(a) Table of Sections.— The table of sections for chapter 110 of part I of title 18, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

Chapter 110—Sexual Exploitation

Sections

- 2251. Sexual exploitation.
- 2252. Certain activities relating to material involving sexual exploitation.
- 2253. Criminal forfeiture.
- 2254. Civil forfeiture.
- 2255. Civil remedies.
- 2256. Civil penalties.
- 2257. Venue and process.
- 2258. Expedition of actions.
- 2259. Evidence.
- 2260. Limitations.
- 2261. Definitions for chapter.
- 2262. Severability.

(b) Table of Chapters—The table of chapters for part I of title 18, United States Code, is amended by striking the item relating to chapter 110 and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

110. Sexual Exploitation, 2251.

Section 6. Severability.

Chapter 110 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 2261 the following:

2262. Severability.

If any part of this chapter, or the application thereof, to any person or circumstances is held invalid, the other parts of this chapter and their application to other persons or circumstance shall not be affected.

2. Ordinance of the City of Minneapolis

(This ordinance was adopted by the Minneapolis City Council in 1985 and was subsequently vetoed by the mayor.)

The City Council of the City of Minneapolis does ordain as follows:

Special findings on pornography: The Council finds that pornography is central in creating and maintaining the civil inequality of the sexes. Pornography is a systematic practice of exploitation and subordination based on sex which differentially harms women. The bigotry and contempt it promotes, with the acts of aggression it fosters, harm women's opportunities for equality of rights in employment, education, property rights, public accommodations and public services; create public harassment and private denigration; promote injury and degradation such as rape, battery and prostitution and inhibit just enforcement of laws against these acts; contribute significantly to restricting women from full exercise of citizenship and participation in public life, including in neighborhoods; damage relations between the sexes; and undermine women's equal exercise of rights to speech and action guaranteed to all citizens under the constitutions and laws of the United States and the state of Minnesota.

[The ordinance further delineates what falls within its definition, as follows:]

(1) Pornography is the sexually explicit subordination of women, graphically depicted, whether in pictures or in words, that also includes one or more of the following:

- women are presented dehumanized as sexual objects, things or commodities; or
- women are presented as sexual objects who enjoy pain or humiliation; or
- women are presented as sexual objects who experience sexual pleasure in being raped;

Or

- women are presented as sexual objects tied up or cut up or mutilated or bruised or physically hurt; or
- women are presented in postures of sexual submission; or
- women's body parts—including but not limited to vaginas, breasts, and buttocks—are exhibited, such that women are reduced to those parts; or
- women are presented as whores by nature; or
- women are presented being penetrated by objects or animals; or
- women are presented in scenarios of degradation, injury, abasement, torture, shown as filthy or inferior, bleeding, bruised, or hurt in a context that makes these conditions sexual.

(2) The use of men, children, or transsexuals in the place of women is pornography. ...

[The ordinance defines its violation as:]

Discrimination by trafficking in pornography. The production, sale, exhibition, or distribution of pornography is discrimination against women by means of trafficking in pornography;

- City, state, and federally funded public libraries or private and public university and college libraries in which pornography is available for study, including open shelves, shall not be construed to be trafficking in pornography but special display presentations of pornography in said places is sex discrimination.

- The formation of private clubs or associations for purposes of trafficking in pornography is illegal and will be considered a conspiracy to violate the civil rights of women.

- Any woman has a cause of action hereunder as a woman acting against the subordination of women. Any man or transsexual who alleges injury by pornography in the way women are injured by it will also have a cause of action.

Coercion into pornographic performances. Any person, including transsexual, who is coerced, intimidated, or fraudulently induced (hereafter, "coerced") into performing for pornography shall have a cause of action against the maker(s), seller(s), exhibitor(s) or distributor(s) of said pornography for damages and for the elimination of the products of the performance(s) from the public view. *(Actionable for five years after last sale or performance.)*

[The following conditions do not negate a finding of coercion.]

- that the person is a woman; or

- that the person is or has been a prostitute; or
- that the person has attained the age of majority; or
- that the person is connected by blood or marriage to anyone involved in or related to the making of the pornography; or
- that the person has previously had, or been thought to have had sexual relations with anyone, including anyone involved in or related to the making of the pornography; or
- that the person has previously posed for sexually explicit pictures for or with anyone, including anyone involved in or related to the making of the pornography at issue; or
- that anyone else, including a spouse or other relative, has given permission on the person's behalf; or
- that the person actually consented to a use of the performance that is changed into pornography; or that the person knew that the purpose of the acts or events in question was to make pornography; or
- that the person showed no resistance or appeared to cooperate actively in the photographic sessions or in the sexual events that produced the pornography; or
- that the person signed the contract, or made statements affirming a willingness to cooperate in the production of pornography; or
- that no physical force, threats, or weapons were used in the making of the pornography; or
- that the person was paid or otherwise compensated.

Forcing pornography on a person. Any woman, man, child, or transsexual who has pornography forced on him/her in any place of employment, in education, in a home, or in any public place has a cause of action against the perpetrator and/or institution.

Assault or physical attack due to pornography. Any woman, man, child, or transsexual who is assaulted, physically attacked or injured in a way that is directly caused by specific pornography has a claim for damages against the perpetrator, the maker(s), distributors(s), sellers(s), and/or exhibitor(s), and for an injunction against the specific pornography's further exhibition, distribution, or sale. . .[Not applicable to material antedating the ordinance.]

Defenses. It shall not be a defense that the defendant did not know or intend that the materials were pornography or sex discrimination.

I. BIBLIOGRAPHY OF RELIGIOUS PUBLICATIONS ON SEX EDUCATION AND SEXUALITY†

This current listing of materials was compiled by Leigh Hallingby, manager, and Deborah Richie, research assistant, Mary S. Calderone Library. The citations are listed without evaluation. Please note that *SIECUS* does not sell any of these publications. However, most of them are available for use at *SIECUS*'s Mary S. Calderone Library, New York University, 32 Washington Place, 5th floor, New York, NY 10003; (212) 673-3850.

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†*SIECUS* Report, May–June 1987.

(p/h). It is best to add an extra 15 percent to cover the costs. Many publications are available in quantity at less expensive bulk rates.

Single copies of this bibliography are available from *SIECUS* on receipt of \$1.00 and a stamped, self-addressed, business-size envelope. In bulk they are \$.75 each for 5-49 copies and \$.50 each for 50 copies or more. Please add 15 percent to cover p/h.

I. Sex Education Materials

American Lutheran Church

• *Decisions About Sexuality* (Decision Series). Augsburg, 1982. Six-session program for junior high. Student book by Joyce D. Sandberg, \$2.25; teacher's guide by Phillip Dell, \$3.25.

• *Sexuality: Fact and Fantasy* (In the Image Series). Augsburg, 1982. Six-session program for senior high/young adults. Student book by Karen G. Bockelman, \$2.50; teacher's guide by Anita A. Johnson, \$3.75.

Baptist Sunday School Board—Broadman Press

• *Sexuality in Christian Living Series, Broadman Press, 1972-73. Five texts: Made to Grow* (ages 6-8), \$6.95; *The Changing Me* (ages 9-11), \$6.95; *Growing Up with Sex* (ages 12-14), \$6.95; *Sex is More than a Word* (ages 15-17); \$5.50; *Teaching Your Children About Sex* (adults), \$4.95. The first three are also available in Spanish for \$.95, \$2.25 and \$2.50, respectively.

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

• *Growing up to Love—Meaning of Sexuality*. Laraine Wright O'Malley. Christian Board of Publication, 1978. Six-session program for grades 7-9; part of *Christian Education: Shared Approaches*, a curriculum for 12 Protestant denominations; \$3.30. See accompanying curriculum *The Search for Intimacy* under United Church of Christ.

Episcopal

• *Human Sexuality Study Guide Series Overview*. Episcopal Diocese of California, rev. ed., 1982. Outlines series on human sexuality for adult church groups; \$7.00.

• *Sexuality: Gift or Burden?* Dorothy F. Rose and Dorothy I. Britain. Episcopal Diocese of Central New York, 1980. Outlines seminar to help adults clarify their values, understanding, and feelings regarding sexuality; \$3.00.

Jewish

• *Course on Human Sexuality for Adolescents in Religious Schools, Youth Groups, and Camps*. Annette Daum and Barbara Strongin. Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Dept. of Interreligious Affairs, rev. ed., 1981. Sixteen-hour curriculum designed to help teens cope with changing sexual mores; \$2.50.

•*Love, Sex, and Marriage: A Jewish View*. Roland B. Gittelsohn, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, rev. ed., 1980. For grades 11 and up; \$7.95.

Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod

•The New Concordia Sex Education Series. Concordia, 1982. Six texts: *Each One Specially* (ages 3-5), \$6.50; *I Wonder Why* (ages 6-8), \$6.50; *How You Got to be You* (ages 8-11), \$6.50; *The New You* (ages 11-14), \$6.50; *Lord of Life, Lord of Me* (ages 14 and up), \$6.50; *Sexuality: God's Precious Gift to Parents and Children* (adults), \$6.50; complete set, \$39.00. Six corresponding filmstrip/audio cassette sets, \$15.95 each; set of six \$79.95. Six corresponding videocassettes, \$19.95 each. Complete set of books/filmstrips/audio cassettes, \$118.95.

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

• *Teenage Pregnancy: The Kids Next Door*. Presbyterian Church (order form PCUSA, Curriculum Services), 1983. A six-session youth Elect Series Course for adolescents in grades 10-12 and their parents; part of *Christian Education: Shared Approaches*, a curriculum for 12 Protestant denominations; \$3.30.

Roman Catholic Church

•*Benziger Family Life Program*. Benziger, 2nd ed., 1987. Grades K, 1, and 2; student books, \$4.48 each; family handbooks, \$4.40 each; teacher education manuals, \$10.00; teacher resource manuals, \$12.00 each. Grades 3, 4, and 5; students books, \$4.92 each; family handbooks, \$4.40 each, teacher education manuals, \$11.00 each; teacher resource manuals, \$12.00 each. Grades 6, 7, and 8 student books, \$5.28 each; family handbooks, \$4.40 each; teacher education manuals, \$12.00 each; teacher resource manuals, \$12.00 each. Parish leader's book, \$10.00. Diocesan implementation manual, \$32.00.

•Benziger High School Family Life Program. David Thomas Benziger, 1982. *Identity* (grades 9-10), *Family* (grades 11-12). Student's book, \$6.12; teacher's manual, \$6.00; parent orientation guide, \$3.60.

•*Education in Human Sexuality for Christians: Guidelines for Discussion and Planning*. National Committee for Human Sexuality, Department of Education, United States Catholic Conference. U.S. Catholic Conference, 1981; \$9.75 (incl. p/h).

•*Educational Guidance in Human Love: Outlines for Sex Education*. Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, Rome. U.S. Catholic Conference, 1983; \$1.95 (inc. p/h).

•New Creation Series. William C. Brown Co., 1984. Grade 1: *Someone Special*; \$3.50 Student Manual (SM), \$4.50 Teacher Manual (TM), Grade 2: *People to Grow With*; \$3.30 SM, \$4.50 TM. Grade 3: *All Kinds of Growing*; \$3.30 SM, \$4.50 TM. Grade 4: *Changing and Becoming*; \$3.60 SM, \$4.50 TM. Grade 5: *Gifts and Promises*, \$3.60 SM, \$4.50 TM. Grade 6: *Growing Within, Changing Without*; \$3.75 SM, \$4.50 TM. Grade 7: *On Our*

Way; \$3.90 SM, \$4.50 TM. Grade 8: *New Creation People*, \$3.90 SM, \$4.90 TM. *Insights into New Creation: For Parents and Teachers Using the New Creation Series*, \$3.50; *Program Manual*, for use with the New Creation Series, \$5.50.

•*Parents Talk Love: Matthew Kawaik and Susan Sullivan*. Paulist Press, 1984. Video cassette of three 20-minute parts with study guide designed to help parents be sex educators of their children; \$49.95.

•*Parents Talk Love: A Catholic Family Handbook on Sexuality*. Susan Sullivan and Matthew Kawiak. Paulist Press, 1985; \$7.95.

The Salvation Army—Eastern Territory

•*Bridging the Gap Between Youth and Community services: A Life Skills Education Program*. The Salvation Army, 2nd ed., 1985. For ages 12-18. Leader's guide, \$12.10; supplement for use in religious settings, \$3.50; whole package, \$13.00.

Unitarian Universalist Association

•*About Your Sexuality*. Deryck Calderwood. Unitarian Universalist Association, rev. ed., 1984. A complete multimedia program for junior high levels and up; \$275.00. •*Religious Education AIDS Packet*. Unitarian Universalist Association, 1986. Varied collection of information about AIDS including fact booklet and suggestions on how to add AIDS education to curricula; \$4.50.

United Church of Christ

•*The Search for Intimacy: A Youth Elect Series Course for Older Youth*. Bill Stack-house and Manfred Wright-Saunders. United Church Press (order from Pilgrim Press), 1981. For grades 10-12; part of *Christian Education: Shared Approaches*, a curriculum for 12 Protestant denominations, \$3.50. See accompanying curriculum *Growing Up to Love* under Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

•*Sexual Abuse Prevention: A Study for Teenagers*. Marie Marshall Fortune. Pilgrim Press, 1984. A curriculum for presentation at five consecutive weekly sessions or on a weekend retreat; \$3.95.

United Methodist Church

•*Affirming Sexuality in Christian Adulthood*. Joan Hunt and Richard Hunt. Graded press (order from Cokesbury), 1982. For adults. Leader's guide with bound-in sound and sheet and poster, \$4.15; student's book, \$2.05.

•*Journeys: A Christian Approach to Sexuality*. Robert Conn. Graded Press (order from Cokesbury), 1979. For late teens. Leader's book, \$1.80; student's book, \$1.80.

•*God Made Us; About Sex and Growing Up*. Graded Press (order from Cokesbury), 1980. For grades 5-6. Leader's guide by Dorlis Glass and Marilyn Carpenter, \$5.25; student's resource book by Eleanor Bartlett, Dorothy Gins, and Charles Herndon, \$1.40.

•*Sex and Sexuality: A Christian Understanding*. Joan Miles. Graded Press (order from Cokesbury), 1982. For Junior high. Leader's guide, \$1.95; student's book, \$1.95.

Non-Denominational

•*Programs in Religious Setting*. Marjorie Dahlin. Center for Population Options, 1983. Sexuality education strategy and resource guide, including successful program models; \$4.00.

•*Religion: A Key Foundation for Family Life Education*. Patti O. Britton and Timothy P. Lannan, eds. Planned Parenthood Federation of America, 1983. Articles on sex/family life education programs emanating from religious organizations; \$2.00.

•*Religion and Family Life Education: A Selected, Annotated Bibliography*. Planned Parenthood Federation of America, 1983; \$3.25.

•*The Talk: A Religious Workshop for Parents and Teens on Communicating Sexual Values*. Tara Howard. Planned Parenthood of San Diego, 1982; \$9.95.

•*There Is a Season: Studies in Human Sexuality for Youth of Christian Churches and their Parents*. Dorothy L. Williams. William C. Brown Co., 1985. Counsels responsibility and restraint for grades 7-9 in Protestant denominations. Program manual, \$24.95; parent book, \$4.95, 1/2-inch video cassettes (3 one-hour tapes), \$450.

II. Sexuality and Religion

American Lutheran Church

•*Abortion: A Series of Statements of the American Lutheran Church 1974, 1976 and 1980*. American Lutheran Church (order from Augsburg), 1980. Single copies, \$.50; 12 copies, \$4.00; 100 copies, \$30.00.

•*Abortion: A Statement of Judgment and Conviction*. American Lutheran Church (order from Augsburg), 1980. single copies, \$.04; 12 copies, \$.32; 100 copies \$2.40.

•*Embodiment: An Approach to Sexuality and Christian Theology*. James B. Nelson. Augsburg, 1978; \$11.95.

•*Human Sexuality and Sexual Behavior*. American Lutheran Church (order from Augsburg), 1980. Single copies, \$.15; 12 copies, \$1.65; 100 copies, \$13.50.

•*Sex, Love, or Infatuation: How Can I Really Know?* Ray E. Short. Augsburg, 1978; \$3.95; usage guide, \$.40; 12 copies, \$4.40.

•*Struggling with Sex: A Serious Call to Marriage-Centered Sexual Life*. Arthur A. Rouner. Augsburg, 1987; \$6.50.

Jewish

•*Assault on the Bill of Rights: The Jewish Stake*. Annette Daum. Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1982. Contains 24-page section on abortion; \$5.00.

• *Keeping Posted*, Vol. 27, No. 5, Summer 1982. Union of American Hebrew Congregations. A Jewish view of human sexuality for junior and senior high youth. Student edition, \$1.25; leader's edition, \$2.00.

• *Marital Relations, Birth Control, and Abortion in Jewish Law*. David M. Feldman. Schocken, 1974; \$8.95.

Lutheran Church in America

• *A Study of Issues Concerning Homosexuality: Report of the Advisory Committee of Issues Relating to Homosexuality*. Lutheran Church in America, 1986; \$3.30 + \$1.00 p/h. Accompanying study guide by Jane P. Mit-cham, no charge.

National Council of Churches

• *A Compilation of Protestant Denominational Statements on Family and Sexuality*. National Council of Churches, 3rd ed., 1982; \$5.50 (incl. p/h).

• *Two Churches Face Issues of Human Sexuality*. G. William Sheek. National Council of Churches, 1978; \$1.00.

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

• *Abortion; Documents for Church Study*, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 1974; \$.50.

• *Homosexuality and the Church: A Position Paper*. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 1979; \$.25.

• *Nature and Value of Human Life*, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 1982. Position paper on abortion adopted by the General Assembly; \$1.45.

Roman Catholic Church

• *Abortion and the Early Church: Christian, Jewish, and Pagan Attitudes in the Greco-Roman World*. Michael J. Gorman. Paulist Press, 1982, \$4.95.

• *A Challenge to Love: Gay and Lesbian Catholics in the Church*. Robert Nugent, ed. Crossroad, 1983; \$10.95.

• *A Disturbed Peace: Selected Writings of an Irish Catholic Homosexual*. Brian McNaught. Dignity, 1981; \$5.95 (incl. p/h).

• *Homosexuality and Social Justice*. The Consultation on Homosexuality, Social Justice, and Roman Catholic Theology, 1986. Updated, expanded edition of report originally published by Task Force on Lesbian/Gay Issues of the San Francisco Archdiocese; \$16.95 (incl. p/h).

• *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons*. United States Catholic Conference, 1986; \$2.95 + \$1.50 p/h.

• *Sexual Morality: A Catholic Perspective*. Phillip S. Keane, Paulist Press, 1977; \$8.95

• *What Are They Saying About Sexual Morality?* James P. Hanigan. Paulist Press, 1982; \$4.95.

The Salvation Army

•*Keeping Children Safe from Harm*. Salvation Army, 1986. Based on symposia on child sexual abuse; \$7.50 + \$1.00 p/h.

•Position statements on: Abortion (1986), Family Planning (1979), Homosexuality (1979), Pornography (1974), Sexual Permissiveness (1971). Salvation Army; no charge.

Seventh Day Adventist Church

•Hangups Series: *Can This Be Love?* (on sex before marriage), 1977; *VD Means...*, 1978; *What Is Sexual Solitaire?* (on masturbation), 1977; *Two of a Kind* (on homosexuality), 1977; *Will You Marry Me?* 1978; *Wayout*; no charge for single copies of these pamphlets.

Unitarian Universalist Association

•*On the Record*. Unitarian Universalist Association, 1985. Resolutions regarding homosexuals, bisexuals, the Office of Lesbian and Gay Concerns, gay human rights, and Holy Union ceremonies; \$.40; bulk rate available.

•*A Voice for Lesbian and Gay Human Rights: Unitarian Universalism*. Donna ScalcioneConti, ed. Unitarian Universalist Association, 1985; \$.25.

• *Where Love Is: Affirming Lesbian and Gay Services of Union*. Robert P. Wheatly. Unitarian Universalist Association, 1985; \$.25.

United Church of Canada

•*Contraception and Abortion: A Statement of the 28th General Council of the United Church of Canada*. United Church of Canada, 1982; \$4.75.

•*Faith and Sexuality: A Spectrum of Personal Convictions Contributing to the Discussion of Human Sexuality in the United Church of Canada*. United Church of Canada, 1981; \$1.50.

•*Gift, Dilemma and Promise*. United Church of Canada, 1984. Report and affirmations on human sexuality, including official statements; \$4.50.

•*In God's Image ... Male and Female*. United Church of Canada, 1980. Study on human sexuality by the Division of Mission in Canada for the General Council of The United Church of Canada; \$2.50.

•*Responsible Sexuality*. United Church of Canada, 1986; no charge for single copies of this pamphlet.

United Church of Christ

•*Abortion: The Moral Issues*. Edward Batchelor, ed. Pilgrim Press, 1982; \$9.95.

•*AIDS: Personal Stories in Pastoral Perspective*. Earl E. Shelp, et al. Pilgrim Press, 1986; \$7.95.

•*Between Two Gardens: Reflections on Sexuality and Religious Experience*. James B. Nelson. Pilgrim Press, 1984. Essays attempting to inte-

grate human religious and sexual experiences in the face of the Western cultural split between spirit and body; \$8.95.

- *Coming Out to Parents*. Mary V. Borhek. Pilgrim Press, 1983; \$9.95.
- *Gay/Lesbian Liberation*. George R. Edwards. Pilgrim Press, 1984; \$9.95.
- *Homosexuality and Ethics*. Edward Batchelor, ed. Pilgrim Press, 1980; \$15.95 hc; \$8.95 pb.
- *Human Sexuality: A Preliminary Study/The United Church of Christ*. Pilgrim Press, 1977; \$5.95; study guide, \$1.75.
- *Love and Control in Sexuality*. W. Norman Pittenger. Pilgrim Press, 1974; \$4.25.
- *Making Sexuality Human*. W. Norman Pittenger. Pilgrim Press, 1979; \$4.95.
- *My Son Eric*. Mary V. Borhek. Pilgrim Press, 1979. A mother describes her personal growth in accepting her gay son; \$7.95.
- *Our Passion for Justice: Images of Power, Sexuality and Liberation*. Carter Heyward. Pilgrim Press, 1984; \$10.95+ \$1.50 p/h.
- *The Same Sex: An Appraisal of Homosexuality*. Ralph W. Weltge, ed. Pilgrim Press, 1969. An anthology of articles by experts from a variety of disciplines: \$3.95.
- *Sexual Violence: The Unmentionable Sin. An Ethical and Pastoral Perspective*. Marie Marshall Fortune. Pilgrim Press, 1983. The author, an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ, is director of the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence; \$9.95.

United Methodist Church

- *Faithful Witness on Today's Issues: Homosexuality*. Discipleship Resources, undated; \$.45-\$.35 each depending on quantity ordered.
- *Guide to Study Document on Human Sexuality*. George E. Koehler. Discipleship Resources, 1983; \$3.25.
- *Homosexuality: In Search of a Christian Understanding*. Leon Smith, ed. Discipleship Resources, 1981; \$3.00.

Non-Denominational

- *And They Felt No Shame: Christians Reclaim Their Sexuality*. Joan Ohannesson. Winston, 1983; \$11.95.
- *Christian Feminism: Visions of a New Humanity*. J. L. Weidman, ed. Harper and Row, 1984; \$7.95.
- *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century*. University of Chicago Press, 1980; \$35.00 hc, \$12.95 pb.
- *Comprehensive Theological Perspectives on Abortion*. Religious Affairs Committee. Gary N. McLean, ed. Planned Parenthood of Minnesota, 1984. A collection of essays covering a broad spectrum of positions on reproductive rights; \$5.95 + \$E0 p/h.

- The Divine Feminine: The Biblical Imagery of God as Female*. Virginia Ramey Mollenkott. Crossroad, 1983; \$7.95.
- Embracing the Exile: Healing Journeys of Gay Christians*. John E. Fortunato. Winston, 1982; \$7.95.
- Homosexuality: A Re-examination*. Engage/Social Action, 1980; \$.75-\$.65 each depending on quantity ordered.
- Human Sexuality: God's Good Gift*. Engage/Social Action, 1982; \$.60-.50 each depending on quantity ordered.
- Innocent Ecstasy: How Christianity Gave America an Ethic of Sexual Pleasure*. Peter Gardella. Oxford University, 1985; \$17.95.
- Is the Homosexual My Neighbor? Another Christian View*. Letha Scanzoni and Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, Harper and Row, 1978; \$8.95.
- Our Right to Choose: Toward a New Ethic of Abortion*. Beacon Press, 1983; \$10.95 + \$2.00 p/h.
- Radical Love: An Approach to Sexual Spirituality*. Dorothy H. Donnelly. Winston, 1984; \$6.95.
- Religion and Sexuality: Judaic-Christian Viewpoints in the U.S.A.* John M. Holland, ed. The Association of Sexologists (order from Multi-Focus), 1981. Representatives of the Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish religions present their theological viewpoints on sexuality; \$5.95.
- Religion and Sexuality: Current Perspectives*. Patti O. Britton and Michael McGee, eds. Planned Parenthood Federation of America, 1986. This is the summer 1986 issue of *Emphasis*; \$3.00.
- Sacrament of Sexuality*. Morton T. Kelsey and Barbara Kelsey. Amity House, 1986; \$9.95.
- Sex and the Bible*. Gerald Lame. Prometheus, 1983; \$18.95.
- Sex and the Pulpit*. A. L. Feinberg. Speak Out, 1981; \$9.95.
- Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology*. Rosemary Radford Ruether. Beacon Press, 1983; \$9.95.
- Sexuality*. Letha Dawson Scanzoni. Westminster, 1984. One of 12 books in the series *Choices: Guides for Today's Woman*, based on the Judeo-Christian tradition; \$6.95.
- The following publications are all written and published by Ralph Blair: *Doubtful Christians Make Queer Saints*, 1984, \$5.00; *Ethics and Gay Christians*, 1982, \$2.00; *Evangelicals(?) Concerned*, 1982, \$2.00; *Ex-Gay (A Critical Evaluation)*, 1982, \$3.00; *Getting Close: Steps Toward Intimacy*, 1980, \$3.00; *Getting Closer: Structure for Intimacy*, 1981, \$3.00; *Hope's Gays and Gays' Hopes*, 1983, \$2.00; *Record: Newsletter of Evangelicals Concerned*, no charge; *Wesleyan Praxis and Homosexual Practice*, 1983, \$3.00; *With Sunshine and Rainfall for All: An Evangelical Affirmation of Gay Rights*, 1983, \$3.00.

A Study Guide for

PORNOGRAPHY: FAR FROM THE SONG OF SONGS

Prepared by the Rev. Barbara Horner-Ibler
Member, Task Force on Pornography

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INTRODUCTION

This is the supplemental study guide for the report submitted to the 200th General Assembly (1988) on pornography, entitled *Pornography: Far From The Song Of Songs*. The study outlines a process for small groups of concerned people to grapple with the content of the report, to begin to study and address the complex issue of pornography, and to develop responses to the issue which will “reflect their faith more than their fears” (1973 PCUS General Assembly statement on pornography).

The issue of pornography can be an emotionally volatile one, precisely because it touches the center of intimate human experience—human sexuality and sexual relationships. Any group that takes on a study of the issue of pornography needs to be prepared for disagreements and emotional reactions. The study of

pornography will reveal individual differences and perspectives, and the group may find varying degrees of consensus. Encourage openness. Be willing to change your mind in light of new learnings. Tolerate the differences of opinion and emotion that will hopefully emerge. And remember to celebrate together the goodness of God's gift of human sexuality.

Three models for study are included in this study guide:

1. a six-week study of six one-and-one-half hour sessions;
2. a two-hour workshop; and
3. a day-long workshop.

The first model is preferred, since it gives a group sufficient time to explore the issue in depth and build the trust necessary for sharing disagreements and personal reactions. Understandably, it is not always possible to spend such an amount of time in one study; therefore, the other two models are presented as alternatives.

A WORD TO THE LEADER/FACILITATOR:

You are crucial to the atmosphere that is fostered for a study of the issue of pornography. This may be one of the most difficult studies you will conduct, because it deals with issues of sexuality that are rarely surfaced in group discussion, particularly within the church. Individual fears and anxieties may emerge in expressions of anger, laughter, silent withdrawal, or nervous domination of conversations. Plan for much latitude of expression, but always encourage group members to move beyond their fear and anxiety to examine the issue of pornography in ways that lead to growth and wholeness.

Since some group members may be very uncomfortable with the open discussion of sexual themes, it is important to give permission for silent participation — no one should be coerced into active participation or speaking. If sexually explicit material is shown, it should be introduced with permission to refrain from viewing. Some images are never forgotten. All persons should have a clear choice in participating at any point in the study.

Pornography is essentially about the exploitation of sexual power. Study of it should never exploit human feelings and experiences. Personal experiences of victimization and sexual coercion may be revealed in the context of this study. Great care must be exercised to protect the integrity and dignity of all persons who participate in a discussion of the issue of pornography.

The leader/facilitator should be a person comfortable with her or his own sexuality so that others can be nurtured to a greater degree of wholeness with regard to their own sexuality and sexual issues. The leader should be VERY familiar with the report in order to move the group through a large volume of material. It would be helpful for the leader to read the entire report at least two times before conducting a study of it.

Gather for study. Argue with the paper. Debate with one another. Celebrate human sexuality. Discover the joy, the excitement, and the challenge of being Christians (of the Presbyterian variety) in our world of the 1980s and 1990s!

Note: The following films are recommended for showing during the course of this study:

Still Killing Us Softly: Advertising's Images Of Women (30 minutes, color, 16 mm (also available in video), \$46 rental, Cambridge Documentary Films, Inc., P.O. Box 385, Cambridge, MA 02139, 617-354-3677) Excellent analysis of advertising's images of women, which present messages about beauty, work, family, and sexuality. Technique used by the film's creator, Dr. Jean Kilbourne, ranges from humorous comment to sharp exposure of violent and abusive images. Useful introduction to the issue of pornography by reflecting on familiar images of women, men and sexuality.

Rate It X (90 minutes, Interama, Inc., 301 West 53rd Street, Suite 19E, New York, NY 10010, 212-977-4830) Excellent movie to include in a discussion of pornography. Explores sexual themes and images as they are presented in contemporary culture. Stimulates reactions of humor, surprise, and anger as interviews are conducted with the producers of a variety of sexually explicit material. Insightful presentation of the ways women are objectified, exposing the rationalization and denial that accompany the production of such material.

Not A Love Story: A Film About Pornography (16mm, \$80 rental, National Film Board of Canada, 16th Floor, 1251 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020-1173). Full length documentary movie examining the production of X-rated sexually explicit films. Includes interviews with both producers and performers, revealing a range of opinion on the significance and consequences of these films.

MODEL I: A SIX-WEEK STUDY SERIES

SESSION ONE

Resources:

One per participant: copy of the report (including responsive reading for closing), Bible, marker

Newsprint sheets

Purpose:

To begin to uncover the feelings and attitudes of the participants about the issue of pornography.

To explore some of the theological underpinnings of the General Assembly report.

Background reading:

Section I (Introduction)

Section II (Theological Statement)

Opening:

Before the session begins, write the word PORNOGRAPHY in the middle of a large sheet of newsprint and fasten it to the wall. (In order to facilitate full participation in this activity, you may need to have one sheet per 4–5 participants.) Allow enough space in front of the newsprint for all the members of the study group (or each smaller group) to stand together and have access to write on the newsprint. Give each person a marker. Explain that the purpose of this activity is to uncover the feelings and attitudes we all have about pornography as we begin this study. This activity is “word association.”

The first step is for participants to ask themselves: “What comes to mind with the word “pornography?” Encourage participants to write on the newsprint the first thoughts they have and then draw a line connecting them to the word PORNOGRAPHY. The second step involves participants’ responses to the words that appear on the newsprint during the first step. No turns need to be taken; participants should feel free to write as often as they wish by drawing a line from the word or phrase that sparked their new word or phrase.

For example, one person might draw a line from PORNOGRAPHY and write “dirty pictures.” Someone else might

draw a line from “dirty pictures” and write “naked bodies.” A third person might connect “human bodies” to “naked bodies,” and still another might connect “image of God” to “human bodies.” At the same time, in another direction, someone might connect PORNOGRAPHY to “erotica,” followed by another connection to the word “sexy.” Or from PORNOGRAPHY to “abuse of children” to “anger.” With each word added to the newsprint, new connections are made and new levels of understanding will emerge.

It is preferable that this process be done in silence. Participants need to feel free to reflect on what they see emerging and to respond without distraction. You, as the leader, may need to give members permission to use feeling and value words (sad, angry, confused) by using these words yourself. The length of the exercise will depend on the size and involvement of the group. There will be some natural lulls while people are thinking about what is on the newsprint and what is triggered in their minds. When you sense that they are finished, invite them to return to their seats. A minimum of 15 minutes is suggested for this activity. (Save these sheets of newsprint, since they will be used in the final session.)

Reflection and Discussion:

1. What did you discover in this activity about your feelings, attitudes, reactions, and understandings about pornography? Are there positive and negative aspects to sexually explicit material? Where did the shift from positive to negative, or negative to positive occur in your group’s responses? Can you categorize your group’s responses in any way?

2. Look at the affirmations of the report in Section I. Can you agree with them? Do you disagree with any of them? Why? Are there any that strike you as new insights that you haven’t considered before? Are there any that you can affirm with particular enthusiasm? Are these positive, appropriate affirmations to state at the beginning of a study of pornography? Can you add any affirmations of your own to this list?

3. Read Genesis 1, Genesis 2-3, Song of Songs 5:10-16, Song of Songs 7:1-9, and Judges 19. What do each of these readings make you feel? Jot down new words or phrases to describe the emotions that emerge as you consider each of these texts. Share your responses together as a group.

4. Discuss Section II (Theological Statement) of the report. In the theological statement, is pornography understood to be a “cause” or a “symptom” of societal problems? How do you explain the significance of pornography? What does the theological state-

ment say about human sexuality? Can you affirm this statement as expressive of your own theology of sexuality?

5. How do patriarchal structures and interpretations of Scripture contribute toward the perpetuation of sexism and pornography? Where and when do you see sexism perpetuated in our church and society today?

6. How do you know God's *hesed*, God's love in covenant relationship? When have you experienced it in your own life? What was happening at that time? Have you ever known such covenantal love as part of a sexual relationship? What are the qualities of covenantal love in human relationships? How can the church foster the "hesed" of God among people?

Closing Litany from Genesis 1:

One: In the beginning of creation, when God made heaven and earth, God said, "Let there be light."

MANY: AND THERE WAS LIGHT, AND GOD SAW THAT THE LIGHT WAS GOOD.

One: God said, "Let there be a vault between the waters, to separate water from water."

MANY: SO GOD MADE THE VAULT. AND SO IT WAS, AND GOD CALLED THE VAULT HEAVEN.

One: God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered into one place, so that dry land may appear."

MANY: AND SO IT WAS, AND GOD SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD.

One: God said, "Let the earth produce fresh growth."

MANY: AND SO IT WAS, AND GOD SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD.

One: God said, "Let the waters teem and let the birds fly."
MANY: AND GOD SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD.

One: God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures."
MANY: AND SO IT WAS, AND GOD SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD.

One: Then God said, "Let us make humanity in our own image." So God created humanity in God's own image, in the image of God, God created them; male and female God created them.

MANY: AND SO IT WAS. AND GOD SAW ALL THAT WAS MADE, AND IT WAS VERY GOOD.

One: God ceased from all God had been doing. God blessed the seventh day, because

MANY: ON THAT DAY GOD CEASED FROM ALL THE WORK. GOD BLESSED THAT DAY AND MADE IT HOLY.

One: And so it was. . .Creation was completed, as it was begun, by the Spirit and in the hands of God.

MANY: AND SO IT IS. . .VERY GOOD! AMEN.

For the next session:

Section III (Why Study Pornography Now?)

Section IV (What is Pornography?)

Section V (Current Statistics) and Part A of the Background Material (Theological Perspectives)

SESSION TWO

Resources:

Bible for each participant

Assortment of sexually explicit material (pictures from magazines) including, but not limited to: a page or two from a novel with explicit descriptions of sexual activity, *Playboy*, *Hustler*, pictures of Rembrandt's paintings of nudes, feminist "erotica," the words of the hymn "The Church's One Foundation," pictures from *The Joy of Sex* and *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, examples of violent or abusive sexually explicit material (you may be uncomfortable obtaining and viewing this material, but it is useful in making the distinctions in defining pornography)

Newsprint and markers

One newsprint sheet with the definition of pornography as presented by the report

Copy of the report including closing litany for each participant

Purpose:

To explore the task of defining pornography and applying a definition to particular material.

To understand and affirm the differences between individuals in evaluating sexually explicit material and to observe the degree of group consensus.

To explore a variety of theological perspectives on the issue of pornography.

Opening:

Inform the participants that during this session they will be asked to view or read sexually explicit material. Acknowledge that there may be some material that makes them feel uncomfortable. They may want to look away or even leave the room. Encourage them to “live through” those initial feelings together in small groups, accepting the reactions of each person in the group. Pass out an assortment of material to each small group of 4-5 persons. Ask participants to work toward consensus determining material regarded as pornography. On the newsprint, each group should write the criteria the group used to make these judgments. What makes some material “art” and some material “pornography?” Is all sexually explicit material pornographic? What significance does sexual arousal play in determining what is pornographic? Do we regard sexual arousal as a positive or negative experience? What determines which it is? Are there differences between male and female reactions to sexually explicit material?

From the group lists of criteria for evaluating pornography, encourage participants to prepare a definition. Share the definitions together in the large group. Discuss the degree of consensus in preparing definitions and evaluating particular material. As part of this discussion, remind participants of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart’s comment: “I cannot define pornography, but I know it when I see it.” Discuss the emotional reactions (positive and negative) that participants have when viewing sexually explicit material.

When this task is completed, put up the newsprint with the definition of pornography as presented in the General Assembly report (see Section IV, What is Pornography?). How does your study group’s definition compare? Is there anything you would change about your group’s definition or the report’s definition?

Use the guidelines presented in the report (How to Recognize Pornography) to look again at the material your group determined to be pornographic. Do the guidelines fit the material? Are there any differences?

Reflection and Discussion:

1. Can distinctions really be made between pornography and other sexually explicit material (erotica)? Between terms like “hard core” and “soft core?” How difficult is it to determine whether that sexually explicit material fits the legal definition of obscenity? (See Section VII, Current Obscenity Law.)

2. The task force that prepared the General Assembly report had difficulty finding exact words to separate pornography from other sexually explicit material. Did you have similar difficulties? Why or why not?

3. Look at and reflect together on some of the questions posed in “The Task Force’s Struggle” of Section IV.

4. Using Sections III (Why Study Pornography Now?) and V (Current Statistics), discuss the significance of pornography as a contemporary issue. What connections do you see between the difficulty of defining pornography and the difficulty of interpreting statistics on pornography?

5. Aurelia Fule, in her theological perspective on pornography in the Background Material, describes the “No-No’s.” What are some of your “no-no’s” regarding sexuality? Regarding pornography? In what ways do you think she believes we can affirm a “Yes” attitude toward sexuality, while dealing with pornography?

6. In her article, Fule also makes connections between “my body and who I am.” What has happened to your body that makes you the person you are? Athletics, surgery, menstruation, birth, sexual experiences, abuse? What effect did those experiences have on your self-image and self-understanding?

7. Elizabeth Haile offers a theological perspective on pornography as a racial-ethnic person. She presents an understanding of pornography as a justice issue (as contrasted to a “morality” or “freedom” issue), because pornography reinforces the treatment of women of color as “disposable” and objects of abuse. In racial-ethnic communities, she points out, “the individual does not have absolute rights if those rights violate the integrity of the community.” How does this differ from the “majority culture” in the United States? Does pornography violate the integrity of the community? Can this standard be applied within the larger culture? How might the church regard pornography as a justice issue?

8. Paul Spalding describes men as alienated from each other and from women. Do you agree with his perspective? How do you see this manifested in our society? How can men (and women) be

freed to accept one another as friends AND lovers, companions AND sexual partners?

9. “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me” Have each person share with a partner one time in their lives when words DID hurt them.

10. Read the following story, “From a Storyteller.” Then discuss the connections between inclusive language in the church and the issue of pornography, as presented in the theological perspective of Isabel Wood Rogers.

It is Labor Day weekend and I’ve come away to a church camp in the High Sierras with forty young adults. We have sung jubilant songs praising God the Father, the King, the Lord and Conqueror. There have been seminars and speakers but little attention to group process or individual feelings. All four camp leaders are men.

Tonight after a spirit-filled talent show, I walked back to the cabin with Ingrid, a Swedish woman who is in California for an internship in physical therapy. She is a strong woman who traveled alone to Lebanon and spoke in front of the entire camp about her experiences. English is still a struggle. As we walked in the darkness, I asked her to give me her response to the sculpture of “Christa,” a female on the cross.

Our conversation before my querie had been meditative, the easy give and take women often share. Now Ingrid jumped with fury and almost shouted, “Oh no! That’s too much.” She felt passionate as she explained that she sees people just shaping religion to fit their needs. Fear was in her eyes.

We continued our dialogue in the cabin almost oblivious to Sarah, preparing for sleep on the other side. In response to Ingrid’s defending the use of “God the Father,” I said that some women feel unable to worship when God is exclusively male because their relationships with their own fathers have been alienating, destructive and unloving.

“That’s exactly how I feel,” Sarah broke in with bitterness and pain and anger in her voice. “I haven’t been able to worship or feel close to God this whole weekend. I’m so angry at what my father’s done to me and the mess that my life is in, that I can’t turn to my ‘Heavenly Father.’ I simply can’t do it.” Songs of praise and celebration had been impossible for her to sing and accentuated her anguish and separation from God, her family, and from the group. An outcast.

Ingrid and I turned, stunned by the openness of one who had seemed so detached. The moment was holy. Christa was present.

We sat on bunk beds and listened to the tears and details of her story, her suffering. Christa. We lit a candle and sat around it on the floor praying out loud, reading psalms, giving Sarah a massage. Women sharing and knowing each other’s pain intimately, softly and with conviction of the Resurrection. Christa, I said in my heart.

By Elizabeth Morris, from “Reflections on the Christa,” *Journal of Women and Religion*, Vol. 4, No. 2, Winter 1985 (Used with permission.)

Closing Litany of Confession:

One: We confess our lack of faith.

MANY: WE REMEMBER THE TIMES WE HAVE BEEN BITTER AND HARD. WE RECALL CYNICAL SMILES AND IRONY. IN OUR HEARTS WE FIND THE OLD SEEDS OF DESPAIR.

One: We also confess our hatred and violence.

MANY: WE REMEMBER THE TIMES WE HAVE YEARNED FOR REVENGE, AND THE TIMES WE HAVE REJOICED IN THE SUFFERING OF OTHERS.

One: We have also failed to love ourselves.

MANY: AT TIMES WE HAVE HATED OUR OWN LIVES AND DOUBTED OUR STRUGGLES. WE HAVE LOOKED ON OUR BODIES WITH DISGUST. WE HAVE RAGED AGAINST OUR OWN FEELINGS, AND WE HAVE LIED TO OURSELVES AND TO OTHERS.

One: We confess our failure to touch each other with love.

MANY: WE REMEMBER TIMES WHEN A FRIEND WAS IN NEED AND WE DID NOT OFFER HEALING. WE RECALL REJECTING LOVE AND TRUST THAT WAS OFFERED TO US WITH OPEN HANDS. WE REMEMBER FEELING ARROGANCE AND PRIDE AND CONTEMPT, THE COLDNESS THAT SHUTS OUT OTHERS.

One: At last we confess our need.

MANY: WE NEED TO BE HEALED OF OUR PAIN AND SORROW.

WE NEED TO BE TOUCHED WITH LOVE AND WITH THE TRUTH.

WE NEED TO TRUST THE COMMON GROUND ON WHICH WE ALL WALK,

OUR SISTERHOOD AND OUR BROTHERHOOD, THE INNER LIGHT THAT SUSTAINS AND HEALS US ALL.

WE NEED TO TRUST OUR BODIES.

WE NEED TO AFFIRM OUR FEELINGS, TO BELIEVE IN OUR ANGER AND TO TRUST OUR LOVINGKINDNESS.

WE NEED TO BREAK THE LOCKS THAT WE HAVE
PLACED ON OUR HEARTS.

WE ARE NOW READY TO LIVE WITHOUT OUR
SHELLS.

From “Hallow the Eve, Women: Jubilee!” by The Philadelphia
Task Force on Women and Religion, in *Woman-Soul Flowing*,
Ecumenical Women’s Center, Chicago, IL, 1978 (Used with
permission.)

For the next session:

Section VI (What Are the Effects of Pornography?)

Section X (Pornography and Culture)

SESSION THREE

Resources:

Newsprint and markers

Copy of the report including the closing litany for each partic-
ipant

Assortment of sexually explicit material from the last session
(This session would be an appropriate time to show one of the
films suggested in the Introduction. If one of the lengthy ones
is selected, perhaps participants could be told in advance that
this will be an extended session.)

Purpose:

To examine the question of harm that is caused by pornography.

To study the relationship between pornography and our con-
temporary culture.

To begin to understand the effect of pornography on the lives
of real people—those in the industry that produces it and
those who are affected by its use.

Opening:

Divide into small groups (4–5 per group). Brainstorm about
the types or categories of people who participants believe to be
harmed by pornography. List those persons and the ways in
which the group feels that they are harmed. Compare the group’s
discussion of harm with the analysis in the General Assembly re-
port. Note also the examples of social science research in the
Background Material of the report. Post the newsprint sheets
around the room.

Reflections and Discussion:

1. Section VI of the report discusses the connection in the media between violence and sexuality. Give examples of where you have seen this in advertisements, commercials, movies, news reports, television shows, etc. What do you believe are the effects of this repeated link between sex and violence?

2. Dr. Ann Welbourne-Moglia believes that exposure to sexually explicit material of all kinds is inescapable in our culture and that our best hope of disempowering pornography is by education for healthy sexuality. What is healthy sexuality? What is the role of Christians and the church in nurturing it? Where, if anywhere in our society, do you see healthy images of relationships and sexuality?

3. Separate participants into a male group and a female group.

WOMEN: Discuss what you believe are the reasons for sexual violence and coercion toward women. Do men and women have different sexual needs and fantasies? In what ways has the new sexual freedom liberated female sexuality? In what ways has it created new problems for women?

MEN: Why do you believe that men use pornography? What are men looking for in sexually explicit material and how does the use of pornography influence their relationships with women? In what ways is the sexual double standard between men and women still in effect? In what ways has it been changed?

Come back together as a whole group and share your discussions.

4. Look at the sexually explicit material used in the last session. Look at the faces, the eyes and the body language of the people in the pictures. What questions would you ask if you could talk to them in person? What emotions are conveyed by the pictures? Try to see these people as human beings, created in the image of God. How does this affect your response to them and to what they do? (Your discussion might include reaction to the testimonies of Linda Marchiano and the “Fantasy Girl” found in the Background Material of the report.)

5. Spend some time going through Section X (Pornography and Culture), discussing each of the cultural phenomena described. Allow for participants to give other examples of these phenomena. Conclude with examination of the summary, asking

the question, "How might Presbyterians model in their own life together the values by which they hope to transform society?"

Closing litany:

One: We know ourselves to be a people who distort sexuality.

MANY: WE ARE SEPARATED FROM OURSELVES, EACH OTHER AND THE GOD OF LIFE.

One: Let us confess our brokenness.

WOMEN: AS WOMEN CAUGHT IN OUR TRADITION, WE CONFESS THAT WE HAVE HELPED PERPETUATE THE MYTH OF FEMININE INFERIORITY BY ADOPTING THE ROLE OF NATURAL FOLLOWERS.

MEN: AS MEN CAUGHT IN OUR TRADITION, WE CONFESS THAT WE HAVE HELPED PERPETUATE THE MYTH OF MASCULINE SUPERIORITY BY ASSUMING THE ROLE OF NATURAL LEADERS.

WOMEN: AS WOMEN, WE CONFESS THAT WE HAVE BEEN WILLING TO LIMIT OUR IMAGE TO THAT OF WIVES, MOTHERS, AND SEXUAL OBJECTS FOR MEN.

MEN: AS MEN, WE CONFESS THAT WE HAVE OFTEN SEEN WOMEN AS SEXUAL OBJECTS. WE HAVE BEEN A PART OF RESTRICTING THEIR ROLES TO THOSE OF WIVES AND MOTHERS.

WOMEN: WE CONFESS THAT WE HAVE NOT SOUGHT OUR OWN REAL IDENTITY IN SCRIPTURE AND HISTORY. WE HAVE FAILED TO TRUST OURSELVES AND OTHER WOMEN. WE HAVE OFTEN BEEN OUR OWN WORST ENEMIES.

MEN: WE CONFESS THAT WE HAVE PERPETUATED RELIGIOUS TEACHINGS WHICH REINFORCE ILLUSIONS OF MALE SUPREMACY. WHILE WE EXALT SERVANTHOOD, WE LEAVE THE MENIAL TASKS TO WOMEN.

WOMEN: WE CONFESS THAT WE HAVE PARTICIPATED IN A SYSTEM WHICH INHIBITS AND DENIES SELF-AFFIRMATION AND CREATIVITY TO ALL SORTS AND CONDITIONS OF PERSONS.

MEN: WE CONFESS THAT WE HAVE PAID LIP SERVICE TO UNIVERSAL EQUALITY. YET OUR LIVES ARE BASED

ON SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION AND, IN FACT, WE HAVE PLACED WOMEN IN SUBORDINATE POSITIONS.

MANY: MOVED BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, WE ACCUSE OURSELVES BECAUSE WE HAVE NOT ALLOWED CHRIST TO FORM US AS CHRIST'S NEW PEOPLE. WE CONFESS OUR SIN TO GOD, TO THE CHURCH, AND TO ONE ANOTHER. WE PLEDGE TO WORK FOR RECONCILIATION WITH ONE ANOTHER.

From A Service of Christian Worship, Bethesda Church, New York City, 1975, in *Woman-Soul Flowing*, Ecumenical Women's Center, Chicago, IL, 1978 (Used with permission.)

For the next session:

Section VII (A History of Pornography Regulation)

Section VIII (Government Studies of Pornography)

Section IX (What Should Be Done About Pornography?)

SESSION FOUR

Resources:

Timeline of the history of government regulation drawn on newsprint

Chart of the four approaches to addressing the issue of pornography on newsprint

Hypothetical situations in Reflection and Discussion, written on individual newsprint sheets and posted around the room

(This session could include the showing of the videotape, *Pornography: The Winnable War*, as an example of the morality approach discussed in the General Assembly report, 28 minutes, available from the National Coalition Against Pornography, 800 Compton Road, Cincinnati, OH 45231)

Purpose:

To understand the history of the debate over regulation of sexually explicit material.

To examine the four different approaches to the issue of regulating pornography and explore how each approach might be applied to particular situations.

To evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each approach.

Opening:

This will be the first “presentation” time of this study. As a leader/facilitator, you may want to delegate the preparation and presentation of this material to members of the group. Using a timeline written on newsprint, outline the history of pornography regulation, highlighting major court decisions and interpretations. Then, using a previously prepared chart, summarize the current approaches to the issue of pornography regulation in our society. This segment should be planned as an overview of what group members have read themselves in preparation for this session and should last no longer than 10–15 minutes.

Reflection and Discussion:

1. Divide participants into small groups, so that each of the four approaches can be represented by at least one group. Have each group decide which approach they would like to argue, making certain that all four are represented. (As in traditional debate format, participants do not necessarily have to agree with the view they are asked to advocate.) Point out the five situations written on newsprint and posted around the room. Encourage the groups to analyze the situations and develop a response for each one that is characteristic of their approach.

Situation A: “Toolbox Murders,” a “slice and dice” film described in the “Pornography and Culture” section of the report, has just opened at a local adult theater.

Situation B: Your junior high school teen is home sick from school and she/he is watching a “steamy” scene from a soap opera that leaves little to the imagination.

Situation C: The school district in your community has made the decision to introduce a family life and sexuality education curriculum for kindergarten through high school. A vigorous debate has erupted over the material to be included.

Situation D: A woman you know, who is divorced and the mother of three children, has found a secretarial position. Since she receives no alimony or child support, it doesn’t pay enough to cover monthly expenses. She is considering a night job as a live voice on a Dial-a-Porn number. (See interview with a “Fantasy Girl” in the Background Material of the report.)

Situation E: It has come to the attention of the community that some books and magazines with sexually explicit material are among the resources of the high school library. Some parents want them removed.

Let each group work for about 20 minutes, developing a response characteristic of their approach for each situation. Share the arguments with the entire group, one situation at a time.

2. At the completion of this activity, identify four corners of the room, each one representing one of the four approaches. Invite participants to move to whichever corner represents the views they are most in agreement with. Have them share the reasons for their choice. What do they most affirm about this approach? Do they wish to overlap any of the approaches? Which ones and for what reasons? Use the General Assembly report's analysis of the Strengths and Weaknesses to evaluate each of these views.

3. Repeat the exercise in #2, but this time have participants move to the corner of the room that represents the approach they most disagree with. Have them discuss the reasons for their rejection of this approach. Have each person find another person who chose the approach they disagree with and discuss their differences of opinion. Try to understand each other's essential reason for preferring a particular approach.

Closing litany:

Remind participants of the verses from the Song of Songs read in Session One and of the rationale for the title of the General Assembly report, *Pornography: Far From The Song Of Songs* (see the first paragraph of Section II, the Theological Statement). Close with the following poetic excerpts based on the Song of Songs and Psalm 23.

One: The sun has set upon the sabbath. It is evening of the first day. I sing from Solomon's song. I who live, carry on.

MANY: TELL ME,
O THOU WHOM MY SOUL LOVES, WHERE DO YOU
PASTURE?
WHERE DO YOU MAKE YOUR FLOCK TO REST AT
MORNING TIDE?
I SLEEP, BUT MY HEART WAKES.
THE VOICE OF MY BELOVED KNOCKS AT MY
HEART.
OPEN, OPEN TO ME, MY PRECIOUS ONE ...

One: In the tent of Yahweh is peace
in the work of the coming morning,
for thy law is a light on our pathway.

MANY: WE LEAN INTO EACH OTHER
BEFORE THE LEAVING,

IN OUR EMBRACE, SECURITY,
IN OUR MURMURINGS, FAITHFUL LOVE.

One: My shepherd is the Lord,

MANY: THERE IS NOTHING I SHALL WANT.

One: In the Lord I rest,

MANY: FRAGRANT PASTURES MY RESTING PLACE.

One: In you I am restored,

MANY: STILL WATERS MY ABODE.

One: My redeemer rescues my soul,

MANY: LIVING DESERTS MY HOME.

One: Yes, the Lord cares for me.

MANY: WHEN I WALK IN THE SHADOW OF DEATH I AM NOT
AFRAID.

One: You, my sustainer, are there.

MANY: QUIETING ME,
THY ROD MEASURES ME COMPASSIONATELY,

One: Lifting me up,
Thy Torah supports me gently.

MANY: YOU ARE MY COMFORT.

YOU PREPARE MY TABLE EVEN IN THE MIDST OF
THOSE THAT DO VIOLENCE TO ME;
EVEN THERE IN THE DARKEST SUFFERING, I
DISCOVER HOLY FOOD.

I FEEL THE TOUCH OF SOOTHING OIL ON MY HEAD,
MY CUP OF LIFE IS FULL TO OVERFLOWING.

One: Whatever follows in the days of my life,
your goodness,
your mercy will accompany me.

MANY: YOU ARE MY DWELLING PLACE, MY HOME
FOREVER. AMEN.

“And It Was Evening, and It Was Morning of the First
Day,” from *Miryam Of Judah* by Ann Johnson. ©1987
by Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, IN 46556. (All rights
reserved. Used with the permission of the publisher.)

For the next session:

Section XI (Findings)

Section XII (Recommendations)

SESSION FIVE

Resources:

Masking tape (wide) and marker

Purpose:

To explore the findings and recommendations of the General Assembly report.

To use the concluding sections of the report to clarify individual attitudes toward the issue of pornography.

(This session is constructed with less activity and discussion in order to allow for “catch-up” if necessary from the previous sessions. It could also be planned to include one of the suggested films.)

Opening:

Before the session begins, in a line on the floor, stretch out five strips of masking tape. On one of the strips, at one end, write the words “strongly agree.” On the next one write “agree,” on the next “neutral,” on the next “disagree,” and on the last one “strongly disagree.” Provide enough space between each strip for people to group by the response.

Strongly agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

When the group has assembled, read off, one at a time, the findings of the report. Ask participants to identify their response to each finding by standing near the tape expressing his/her choice. Have them observe the responses of others as well. Repeat for each finding. Invite the participants to find another person—one with whom they have observed consistent agreement, or one with whom they have observed consistent disagreement—and discuss in pairs their responses to the findings. Have participants take turns sharing one finding that is most important to their understanding of this issue and explain why they regard it as most important.

Reflection and Discussion:

1. Are there findings with which the group strongly agrees or strongly disagrees? If so, discuss the reasons for strong affirmation of the report's findings, as well as reasons for any strong disagreement with them. Are there any additional findings that the group wants to develop?

2. Review each of the recommendations of the report and the response to them by General Assembly. Does the group agree/disagree with the action taken? Do you feel that the General Assembly action was an appropriate response to the study that was conducted of this issue? Assess the potential impact of each recommendation on pornography and the church's attempt to address it.

Closing:

Read Isaiah 66: 6–14, Luke 13:31–35, and I Corinthians 12:12–31. Listen to the tape or a reading of "We Are the Body of Christ."

Response following each statement:

WE ARE THE BODY OF CHRIST,
BIRTHING, FEEDING, TOUCHING, WEEPING.

WE ARE THE BODY OF CHRIST,
MENDING, BLEEDING, HEALING, DANCING.

GLORIFY GOD WITH OUR BODIES.
DANCE WITH GOD THROUGH OUR LIVES.

1. Birth from our bodies, as birth of Christ's Spirit, bringing life to the world.
2. Our breast milk in nursing, as blood from Christ's side, quenching thirst by grace.
3. The touch of our kindness, as that from Christ's hands, making peace for our world.
4. The tears from our eyes, as those shed by Christ, washing darkness away.
5. Mending the tear, as forgiveness Christ shares, bringing peace to our world.
6. Blood from our hearts, as wine shared by Christ, changing death to new life.

7. Bread from our hands, as loaves shared by Christ, feeding all those in need.
8. Dance of our lives, as joy sung by Christ, freeing all for new life.

From *Cry of Ramah* by Colleen Fulmer, Loretto Spirituality Network, 529 Pomona Ave., Albany CA 94706. \$8.00 for the tape plus handing/postage (Used with permission.)

SESSION SIX

Resources:

Newsprint and markers

Purpose:

To evaluate what we have learned in this study.

To share what it has meant for individuals.

To explore where individuals and the church should go from here. To close the study with worship.

Opening:

Repeat the activity from Session One, writing PORNOGRAPHY at the center of several newsprint sheets, dividing into small groups of no more than 5 persons, and writing words in free association. After 10–15 minutes of silent reflection and writing, put up the newsprint sheets from the first session near those completed during this session. Discuss as a whole group how their responses and attitudes about pornography may have changed since the first session. What do the changes reflect about the particular learnings from the past weeks? Have each person share at least one new insight they have had about this issue. Have their fears and uncertainties about pornography been eased? Share any insights the group has about sexuality and human relationships that have been learned as a result of this study.

Reflection and Discussion:

Brainstorm (and list on newsprint) ideas that the group has for addressing the issue of pornography. Keep in mind the findings and recommendations of the General Assembly report in considering appropriate steps of action. Spend some time reflecting on strategies for change that address the roots of the problem of pornography—raising the status of women, fostering mutual understanding and respect between women and men, and educating for healthy sexuality. Consider what can be done in your church and community to enhance these goals.

Before closing this session, identify “if” and “how” the group wants to take further action by continuing study, forming a committee or task force, or making a particular request to the session. It is entirely appropriate to end this study without taking group action. Some members, however, may want to see some results of their study. Be flexible and see what emerges from the group.

As part of the final session, fill out the response form accompanying this report.

Closing:

Close with a brief order of worship, either the one that follows or one that your group develops.

CALL TO WORSHIP Genesis 1:27–28

HYMN “God, You Spin the Whirling Planets”

God, You spin the whirling planets,
Fill the seas and spread the plain,
Mold the mountains, fashion blossoms
Call forth sunshine, wind and rain:
We, created in your image,
Would a true reflection be
Of your justice, grace, and mercy,
And the truth that makes us free.

You have called us to be faithful
In our life and ministry.
We respond in grateful worship,
Joined in one community.
When we blur your gracious image,
Focus us and make us whole.
Healed and strengthened, as your people,
We move onward toward your goal.

God, your word is still creating,
Calling us to life made new.
Now reveal to us fresh vistas
Where there’s work to dare and do.
Keep us clear of all distortion
Polish us, with loving care.
Thus, new creatures in your image,
We’ll proclaim Christ everywhere.

Words © 1980 Jane Parker Huber; from *A Signing Faith* (Used by permission of The Westminster/John Knox Press. Tune: Austrian Hymn — “Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken.”)

SCRIPTURE I Corinthians 12:12-26

LITANY "In Praise of Human Bodies"

One: O God, in whose image we have all been created, we celebrate the form that image takes in our human bodies. Male and female, wonderfully made, "a little less than angels," each and every part pronounced at creation "very good."

MANY: AND YET, O GOD, WE SEE SOME PARTS OF OUR BODIES AS SEEMLY, OTHERS AS UNSEEMLY. SOME AS PERFECT IN DESIGN AND FUNCTION, OTHERS AS LESSER AND EVEN CLOAKED IN SHAME.

One: We have made objects of those lesser parts, O God. We have separated body parts from persons, seen organs apart from total human beings, distorted their purpose from the wholeness of human sexuality.

MEN: WE SPEAK FOR MEN THROUGH ALL TIME WHO HAVE FAILED TO RESPECT THE FULL HUMANITY OF WOMEN AND THE GOODNESS OF THEIR BODIES. WE REMEMBER MEN WHO HAVE UNDERSTOOD THEIR OWN SEXUALITY ONLY IN TERMS OF POWER, DOMINANCE AND CONTROL. WE SPEAK FOR ALL MEN WHO HAVE NOT FULLY KNOWN AND TRUSTED THE GOODNESS OF THEIR OWN BODIES.

WOMEN: WE SPEAK FOR WOMEN THROUGH ALL TIME WHO HAVE LIVED IN SILENT IGNORANCE ABOUT THEIR BODIES. WE REMEMBER WOMEN WHO HAVE KNOWN ONLY PASSIVITY, ABUSE, SHAME, AND SECRECY IN THEIR SEXUAL EXPERIENCE. WE SPEAK FOR ALL WOMEN WHO ARE NEWLY DISCOVERING THAT THEY TOO ARE CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD, ALIVE IN BODIES CREATED FOR GOODNESS AND WONDERFUL POSSIBILITY.

One: O God, you know the tensions of our day—the possibilities for human wholeness in sexual liberation as well as the distortion and exploitation of sexual license. In the midst of our struggle, help us to see your will and your path toward affirming the intended goodness of our created humanity.

MANY: FEMALE AND MALE, WE PRAISE YOU GOD, FOR THE WISDOM AND LOVE WHICH GENERATED OUR BEING. WE PRAISE YOU, O GOD OF OUR CREATION,

WITH OUR SEEMLY PARTS AND WITH OUR
UNSEEMLY PARTS, NAKED OR ADORNED. MAY OUR
BODIES EMBODY THE PRESENCE OF YOU, THE
LIVING GOD. AMEN.

A TIME OF REFLECTION

What personal awareness or learning has been experienced during this study?

How does increased understanding of the pornography issue affect one's attitudes toward sexuality, spirituality and human relationships?

HYMN "Creator God, Creating Still"

Creator God, creating still,
By will and word and deed,
Create a new humanity
To meet the present need.

Redeemer God, redeeming still,
With overflowing grace
Pour out your love on us, through us,
Make this a holy place.

Sustainer God, sustaining still,
With strength for every day,
Empower us now to do your will.
Correct us when we stray.

Great Trinity, for this new day
We need your presence still.
Create, redeem, sustain us now
To do your work and will.

Words © 1980 Jane Parker Huber; from *A Signing Faith* (Used by permission of The Westminster/John Knox Press. Tune: St. Anne — "Our God, Our Help in Ages Past.")

BENEDICTION

ALL: GO OUT INTO THE WORLD IN PEACE. HAVE COURAGE. HOLD ON TO WHAT IS GOOD. RETURN NO ONE EVIL FOR EVIL. STRENGTHEN THE FAINTHEARTED. SUPPORT THE WEAK. HELP THE SUFFERING. HONOR EVERYONE. LOVE AND SERVE GOD, REJOICING IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. THE GRACE OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE LOVE OF GOD AND THE COMMUNION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT BE WITH YOU ALL. ALLELUIA! AMEN!

MODEL II: A TWO-HOUR WORKSHOP

Resources:

Newsprint and markers

Bibles

Copies of the closing litany for each participant Masking tape (wide)

Purpose:

To explore the feelings and attitudes of participants about the issue of pornography.

To understand the task of defining pornography and applying a definition to particular material.

To examine the question of harm that is caused by pornography.

To learn about the four different approaches to the question of regulating pornography.

To study the findings and recommendations of the General Assembly report.

Background reading: *Pornography: Far from the Song of Songs* (If possible, have copies for all participants; thorough reading of the report is a MUST for the leader/facilitator.)

Opening:

(10 min) Have participants introduce themselves and state briefly what sparked their interest in this workshop.

Reflection and Discussion:

(20 min.) In small groups, consider the images/terms associated with the word “pornography.” What are the criteria for judging particular sexually explicit material pornographic? Return to the large group and compare definitions and criteria. Look at the definition and guidelines for recognizing pornography presented in the General Assembly report. What are the similarities and differences between your group’s definitions and that of the report? How much consensus does your group have about the definition and its application to particular material?

(20 min.) In small groups, brainstorm and list on newsprint the types of people who are harmed by pornography and the

ways in which they are harmed. In the large group, explore participants' assessment of harm in conjunction with the report's discussion of harm. Spend some time examining the differences of opinion presented in the report. Which ones seem to be most valid in the opinion of your group?

(40 min.) Chart on newsprint the four approaches to regulating pornography (Section IX). Make a brief presentation summarizing each position. Divide into small groups and have each group take one of the four perspectives for the sake of discussion. Use questions #1 and #2 from Session Four (in the Six Week Study) to explore the differences between these approaches.

(15 min.) Use the Opening from Session Five to introduce the group to the findings and recommendations of the General Assembly report. Continue with Reflection and Discussion questions from Session Five, as there is time. Complete the response form accompanying this report.

Closing: (15 min.)

Read Genesis 1:27-28, Song of Songs 5:10-16 and 7:1-9, and Isaiah 66:6-14.

Read the litany, "In Praise of Human Bodies," included in Session Six of the Six-Week Study.

Conclude with "God, You Spin the Whirling Planets" by Jane Parker Huber. (See Closing, Session Six.)

MODEL III: A DAY-LONG WORKSHOP

Resources:

Newsprint and markers

Bibles for each participant

Copies of closing worship for each participant

Masking tape (wide)

Assortment of sexually explicit material (see Resources in Session Two of Six-Week Study).

Purpose:

To explore the feelings and attitudes of participants about the issue of pornography.

To understand the theological underpinnings of the General Assembly report.

To examine the questions of definition, harm, and the regulation of pornography.

To study the findings and recommendations of the General Assembly report.

Background reading: *Pornography: Far from the Song of Songs* (If possible, have copies for all participants; thorough reading of the report is a MUST for the leader/facilitator.)

Opening:

(10 min.) Have participants introduce themselves and state briefly what sparked their interest in this workshop.

Reflection and Discussion:

(20 min.) Use the Opening and question #1 of Reflection and Discussion from Session One of the Six-Week Study.

(30 min.) Read Genesis 1, Genesis 2-3, Song of Songs 5:10–16, Song of Songs 7:1–9, and Judges 19 (particularly verses 22–30). Have participants write down thoughts and feelings that they have as each text is read. Share these as a group. Review together the theological statement (Section II) of the report. In what way is pornography a symptom or a cause of societal problems? Look at the affirmations in the Introduction to the report (Section 1). Does your group affirm these as well? How does one know God's *hesed*, or God's love in covenant relationship? Have participants experienced it in their lives? How does the church nurture it in human relationships?

(10 min.) Break

(30 min.) Use the Opening from Session Two.

(30 min.) Use Opening and Reflection/Discussion questions in Session Three.

Lunch Break: (This could include one of the films suggested in this study guide.)

(1 hr.) Use Opening and Reflection/Discussion questions in Session Four.

(1 hr.) Use Session Five to examine the Findings and Recommendations of the General Assembly Report. Complete the response form accompanying this report.

Closing:

(30 min.) Use the worship from Session Six to close, or involve the group in planning your own closing worship.

XVII. Response Form for

PORNOGRAPHY: FAR FROM THE SONG OF SONGS

In accordance with Recommendations 1-3 adopted by General Assembly, the following series of questions are included to survey opinions of those who have studied this report. The form may be prepared as a response to individual or group study. Please complete the questions and mail the form to the Women's Unit, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 100 Witherspoon Street, Louisville, KY 40202-1396.

1. Is this a group or individual response?
 1. __ Individual (if individual, skip to question 5)
 2. __ Group _____
(please specify type of group)
2. Please check where study took place.
 1. __ church
 2. __ home
 3. __ other _____
(please indicate where study took place)
3. Presbytery _____
4. Total number of participants _____
Men _____ Women _____
5. Length of study process (in number of hours) _____
6. Section IV of the report, beginning on page 11, presents a definition of pornography that was adopted by the General Assembly. Please indicate the extent to which you (or your group) agree or disagree with the report's definition of pornography.
 1. __strongly agree
 2. __agree
 3. __not sure
 4. __disagree
 5. __strongly disagree

If you disagree, please comment on your points of disagreement:

7. Following are the findings of the report, found in section XI, beginning on page 81.
 - a. CIRCLE the appropriate number indicating to what extent you (or your group) agree or disagree with each finding.
 - b. Then PLACE A CHECK next to the findings that you (or your group) believe are most important for developing church policy and education on the issue of pornography.

	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Not Sure</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
___ Finding 1	1	2	3	4	5
___ Finding 2	1	2	3	4	5
___ Finding 3	1	2	3	4	5
___ Finding 4	1	2	3	4	5
___ Finding 5	1	2	3	4	5
___ Finding 6	1	2	3	4	5
___ Finding 7	1	2	3	4	5
___ Finding 8	1	2	3	4	5
___ Finding 9	1	2	3	4	5
___ Finding 10	1	2	3	4	5
___ Finding 11	1	2	3	4	5
___ Finding 12	1	2	3	4	5
___ Finding 13	1	2	3	4	5
___ Finding 14	1	2	3	4	5
___ Finding 15	1	2	3	4	5
___ Finding 16	1	2	3	4	5
___ Finding 17	1	2	3	4	5

8. Following are nine of the recommendations of the report (section XII, beginning on page 84), having to do with pornography policy, views, and activity of Presbyterians regarding this issue:
 - a. CIRCLE the appropriate number indicating to what extent you (or your group) agree or disagree with each recommendation.
 - b. Then PLACE A CHECK next to the recommendations that you (or your group) believe are most important in addressing the issue of pornography.

	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Not Sure</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
___ Recommendation 4	1	2	3	4	5
___ Recommendation 5	1	2	3	4	5
___ Recommendation 6a	1	2	3	4	5
___ Recommendation 6b	1	2	3	4	5
___ Recommendation 6c	1	2	3	4	5
___ Recommendation 6d	1	2	3	4	5
___ Recommendation 7	1	2	3	4	5
___ Recommendation 8	1	2	3	4	5
___ Recommendation 9	1	2	3	4	5

9. Check which of the previous General Assembly reports have been studied by you or members of your group (indicate number of persons in parentheses).
1. __ Rape and battering (___)
 2. __ Sexual harassment (___)
 3. __ Sexual exploitation of women (_____)
10. Did you (or your group) use the study guide accompanying the report?
1. __ Yes, extensively
 2. __ Yes, partially
 3. __ No, not at all
11. Did you (or your group) study the Background Material to the report?
1. __ Yes, extensively
 2. __ Yes, partially
 3. __ No, not at all
12. As a resource for study, what did you (or your group) find to be the strengths and weaknesses of the pornography report?
- Strengths:
- Weaknesses:
13. List any actions that you (or your group) plan to take as a result of your study of pornography.