

SOCIAL & ETHICAL ISSUES GROUP

THE 'P' WORD: PART 2

For many of us pornography is a taboo subject, something that would not generally be discussed because it is restricted and prohibited by social custom. But one of the main things that came out of The 'P' Word Conference in June was that we, as the church, should not be allowing a 'no comment' culture to be created on this topic, and there are many good reasons why.

What's the problem?

Increasingly we are having conversations in Level 1 with young people about on-line porn and their use of it. This is because as a society it is becoming more normal to openly discuss and have conversations about it. The church community could be left in a place where it has no voice and no viewpoint if we allow a 'no comment' culture to persist in how we approach this topic within churches.

The reasons behind why porn is a taboo subject are known - the effect it can have on our relationships, the distorted views it creates of what sex is or should be, how it can become a secret and guilty area of our lives. This is all well and good, but if we want to be able to discuss and comment on this area that is massively impacting our society, then we must consider our attitude to pornography.

What can we do?

We need to take our thoughts about porn back to the root of the problem. Jesus tells us that lusting with the eyes is bad. So perhaps it is not so much the images that are seen that may be the sin, but the motivation of lust that's behind the viewing of it. I wonder if this gives us a different viewpoint on how to deal with the conversation about porn, but also the motivation to see it as a sin that can and should be dealt with?

As Christians it is important to remember how we are required to deal with the struggles that we have: to confess, to assist and to empower. Safety is key and we create this by being safe people to others. It is important to remember that we are all children of God, whether we have messed up or not. The example of following Jesus not only allows us to see where we are, but lets us see where we could be.

Rob Fraser-Binns this month contributes the second of two articles reporting back on The 'P' Conference which he attended in June.

The theme this time is how churches respond to the challenge of the universal availability of pornography, and how we might help those in our midst who are struggling to resist its temptations.



The Bible does not tell us to just make moral judgements. It calls us to be compassionate, to communicate and to counsel. Shame is the number one issue for people who struggle with porn, but we know and believe that this does not come from God.

Firstly we need to **Face It**. Recognising that we have a problem is key to seeing change in any situation. Until we realise that there is a problem we cannot begin to try and change it. Secondly, **Understand It**. Porn is a physical and a spiritual thing, our brains will take time to heal and the way in which we talk about it has to be relevant to the listeners. To understand it is to talk about it and the problems that it could be causing within someone's life.

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The 'P' Word Part 2 (continued)

Thirdly, we need to *Fight It*. Whether that is recognising that we have a problem ourselves and deciding to begin dealing with it, or standing up against the effect it is having on others, porn is not going to disappear on its own.

If you have in any way been affected by the issues raised in this article, you may care to contact, in total confidence, Kathleen Forbes at the Family Life Centre (kathleen.forbes@stirlingbaptist.co.uk) or our pastor responsible for pastoral care, Brian Gooding (brian.gooding@stirlingbaptist.co.uk)

More Information & Resources:

- For more about helping those who are struggling with porn, Paula Hall has written a very useful book called, '**Confronting Porn**: A comprehensive guide for Christians struggling with Porn and churches wanting to help them.'
- The **Naked Truth Project** have created online recovery groups for people who want to quit porn, facilitated by trained mentors in the field. These groups are provided online and consist of 8x1 hour sessions. See <http://clicktokick.com/>
- A range of software is available to enable an individual to be accountable to someone else for what they view on the internet. One of the most popular of these is **Covenant Eyes**, www.covenanteyes.com/

A Reminder about the Naked Truth Parenting Workshop

Naked Truth, one of the organisers of The P Word Conference are running a parents' workshop at **Newton Mearns Baptist Church on Friday 11th November** starting at 8pm. This will be the perfect opportunity to discover:

- Up to date information regarding online and digital culture
- Practical tips about resources that can be used at home
- Advice for protecting younger children, installing filters and safe searches
- Information about mobile technology
- Advice for engaging and discussing with older children

If you are interested in attending this event, please contact Rob so that we can arrange car shares.

SPEAK UP!

Earlier this week the Ashers Bakery Company in Northern Ireland were found guilty by the legal system of discrimination because of their refusal to bake a cake celebrating same-sex marriage.

The Evangelical Alliance, in collaboration with the Lawyers' Christian Fellowship, have recently produced a booklet to equip and inspire Christians with the confidence of the current legal freedoms we have to share our faith.

You can find the booklet on-line at <http://www.eauk.org/current-affairs/politics/speak-up.cfm>

DON'T SCREEN US OUT

People with Downs Syndrome and their families have been campaigning against the possible introduction of new prenatal screening tests which would, it is expected, lead to an increase in the number of babies with Down's Syndrome being 'screened out' by abortion. The campaigners are making the claim that these tests would discriminate unfairly against babies with Down's Syndrome. At present 90% of babies diagnosed with Down's are aborted.

More information at <http://dontscreenusout.org/> where you can also sign an open letter to Health Minister Jeremy Hunt.

FROM WESTMINSTER

The Digital Economy Bill, which seeks to require internet companies to ensure that young people do not have access to adult material on-line, is being scrutinised by a committee of the House of Commons

After pressure from many sources, and evidence of the addictive nature of gaming machines, the UK Government has launched a public consultation on maximum stakes and prizes of gaming machines and on the number and location of these machines. The consultation closes on 4th December and can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/call-for-evidence-review-of-gaming-machines-and-social-responsibility-measures>