

## *Introduction*

The 1970s blockbuster, *Jaws*, left the American public frightfully aware of the dangerous reality of sharks preying upon swimmers in our oceans. Similarly today, beneath the surface of the virtual ocean of the Internet, lurks a shark-like predator capable of attacking net surfers at any time. That predator is Internet pornography.

The Church today exists in a sexually saturated society. Within the space of one generation, America has moved from *Leave It To Beaver* to *Sex in the City*, or, more recently, *Sex in Cyberspace*. Unfortunately, this changing morality is sweeping through the Church as well. Consider the following scenarios.

- A respected, successful pastor's secret addiction to Internet pornography is revealed when someone accidentally downloads pornography he had stored on his computer.
- A young pastor's family is torn apart when the pastor's wife leaves him for a man she met in an Internet chat room.
- A ministry couple catches their 15-year-old son using his father's VISA card to download Internet porn. They discover he has been secretly addicted for two years.

Sound like something out of a Soap Opera? Unfortunately not. Each of these incidents actually took place recently within ministry families in the Seattle area.<sup>1</sup> Of the millions of people who visit pornographic Web sites and sexually-explicit chat rooms on the Internet each month, an increasing number of these are men and women in ministry—or their children.

There is hope. Not only can Christian leaders protect themselves from this lurking predator, they can serve as a lighthouse for other unsuspecting victims, helping them to navigate these waters safely. Toward this end, the purpose of this paper is threefold. In Part 1, the goal is to raise awareness among ministers of the problem of Internet pornography. Many people today—including ministers—are in danger of being snared by the allure of cyberporn. In Part 2,

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<sup>1</sup>Each of these families sought help from *Prodigals International*, a ministry dedicated to helping people struggling with sexual temptation, based in Seattle, WA. Their Web site can be found at [www.iprodigals.com](http://www.iprodigals.com).

the aim is to provide practical suggestions and resources to assist ministers in avoiding the trap of Internet pornography. There are numerous preventive measures that ministers can take to protect themselves, their families, and the people in their churches. In Part 3, the purpose is to provide recovery suggestions for ministers who may have already become trapped in the struggle with Internet pornography. It is important to note that the focus of this paper pertains to the early and occasional use of pornography. Those who are caught in a cycle of addictive sexual behavior, or are struggling with hard-core pornography, should seek professional counsel from Christian ministries that specialize in this type of recovery.

## PART 1: WHAT MINISTERS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT INTERNET PORNOGRAPHY

For many ministers, “Internet pornography” is a term that evokes a complex array of responses. While most are uncomfortably familiar with the term, many misconceptions exist as to what it is and who can fall prey to it. Part 1 will establish a foundational understanding of Internet pornography by: (1) defining the problem; (2) examining the extent of the problem; (3) discussing the unique nature of Internet pornography; and (4) highlighting the potential dangers of Internet pornography.

### **A. Defining the Problem**

The Internet has become the pornographers’ playground. Every imaginable (and unimaginable) type of pornography is available. But just what is meant by pornography? At the onset of this discussion, it is important that there is a clear understanding of the meaning of several terms that will be used throughout this paper.

“*Pornography*” is a broad term that can be defined as “all sexually oriented material intended primarily to arouse the reader, viewer, or listener.”<sup>2</sup> Webster’s dictionary says pornography is “writings, pictures, etc. intended to arouse sexual desire.”<sup>3</sup> For the follower of Christ, pornography can simply be understood as all those things that entice people toward unbiblical sexual expression. Pornography comes in many different forms. Magazines, x-rated movies, Dial-A-Porn hotlines, obscene novels, nude bars, television shows, videos, postcards, photos, and the Internet are just a few of the venues through which a person can access pornography. The repeated use of pornography can often lead to “*sexual addiction*.” Sex addiction refers to any compulsive or obsessive pattern of behaviors and attitudes that traps a person in an unhealthy cycle of lust, sex or dependency relationships.<sup>4</sup>

There are two generally recognized forms of pornography, “*soft-core*” and “*hard-core*.” Soft-core refers to the erotic and semi-nude materials that are widely and readily available commercially. They may be loosely called “indecent.” Hard-core refers to graphic and obviously offensive material that is obsessed with sex and/or sexual violence, child pornography, bestiality, homosexuality, and other deviant sexual behaviors. The United States Supreme Court legally refers to hard-core pornography as “obscenity,” which, according to Webster’s means it is “offensive to modesty or decency, lewd, impure, foul, filthy, repulsive and disgusting.”<sup>5</sup>

The phrase “*Internet pornography*” refers to sexual materials that are available electronically via the Internet through adult Web sites, chat rooms, newsgroups, and email. The phrase is often used interchangeably with the terms cyberporn, cybersex, and netporn. The

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<sup>2</sup>Enough is Enough Web site, “Reefs & Rocks: Dangers and legal definition of pornography,” available from <http://www.enough.org/reefs.htm>; Internet; accessed 15 July 2002.

<sup>3</sup>Webster’s *New Universal Unabridged Dictionary* (New York, NY: Dorset & Barber, 1983), 1402.

<sup>4</sup>Prodigals International Web site, “Defining Sexual Addiction,” available from [http://www.iprodigals.com/dox/prg\\_define.htm](http://www.iprodigals.com/dox/prg_define.htm); Internet; accessed 13 July 2002.

<sup>5</sup>Webster’s, 1234.

Internet is now the leading source of pornographic material. The industry never lags far behind technological advances as it seeks for new and improved marketing venues. Consequently, the technology of Internet pornography is rapidly evolving. Users may now control sexual situations on their computer screens (i.e., disrobing images of women or children, using sexually stimulating toys, etc.). Increasingly sadomasochistic themes and sites are appearing.<sup>6</sup>

## **B. The Extent of the Problem**

The following statistics reveal the extent of Internet pornography use in America in three arenas: (1) society in general; (2) the Christian community; and (3) among ministers.

### *Internet Pornography in America*

Like it or not, adult online entertainment is one of America's fastest growing industries. The phenomenal growth can be directly attributed to the proliferation of adult Web sites. The *Wall Street Journal* reports that according to the Justice Department, in 1998 there were 28,000 X-rated Web sites generating 925 million dollars in revenue. Within just three years, there were 280,000 X-rated Web sites, generating over 10-20 billion dollars in revenue.<sup>7</sup> This means that pornography is a bigger business than professional football, basketball, or major league baseball. People pay more money for pornography than they do for movies (non-adult movies). Every year, 400 regular movies are made. The porn people make 11,000.<sup>8</sup> With low advertising and labor costs, adult sites typically enjoy profit margins of 30% or more. Compare this with online

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<sup>6</sup>Wayde Goodall, *Pornography and Cyberporn: Breaking Addictions and Rehabilitating Men of God*, a seminar manual (Akron, Ohio: Emerge Ministries, Inc., 1999), 14-5.

<sup>7</sup>*Wall Street Journal*, Monday, November 26, 2001, as quoted in *Covenant Eyes* Web site, "Internet Danger." Available from <http://www.covenanteyes.com/addictionsigns.php>; Internet, accessed 26 June 2002.

<sup>8</sup>Frank Rich, "Naked Capitalists: There's No Business Like Porn Business," *The New York Times Magazine*, May 2001 as quoted by William F. Buckley Jr., "Porn, Pervasive Presence," *National Review*, November 19, 2001. Available from <http://www.nationalreview.com/19nov01/buckley111901.shtml>; Internet; accessed 15 July 2002.

brokerages, among the few Internet ventures to rival adult sites in popularity, which are far less lucrative; the 1998 profit-margin for Ameritrade, for example, was just 0.2 percent.”<sup>9</sup>

Sex is the number one reason American adults use the Internet. Conservative estimates claim that one-third of all visits are to sexually oriented Web sites, chat rooms and news groups.<sup>10</sup> Further, at least one in five American adults, which is nearly 40 million people, has visited a sexually oriented Web site.<sup>11</sup> Twenty-one million Americans visit one or more sex sites at least once a month.<sup>12</sup> If these figures aren’t bad enough, one recent study conducted by the Sexual Recovery Institute of Los Angeles found that 25 million of the 95 million American Internet users visit cybersex sites every week and that 60% of all web site visits are sexual in nature.<sup>13</sup> Two million Internet users are addicted to cyberporn. Of these, at least 200,000 spend more than eleven hours a week surfing the net for erotic content.<sup>14</sup>

Who are these people that are turning to the Internet for sexual experiences? Historically, this has been predominantly a male issue, though some studies indicate an increased use among women. Users include both the young and old, with some studies indicating increased use among 12-17 year old teenagers. Finally, users appear to include a high percentage of educated professionals. The May 15, 1999 cover story of *Fortune* magazine was a feature article, “Addicted to Sex—Corporate America’s Dirty Secret.” Dr. Patrick Carnes, a leading expert on sexual addictions, commented in the article that: “Most of my patients are CEOs or doctors or

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<sup>9</sup>Patrick McGrath, “The Online Obscenity Problem—An Overview,” as quoted in the *Obscenity Crimes* Web site. Available from <http://www.obscenitycrimes.org/pornproblem.cfm>; Internet; accessed 10 July 2002.

<sup>10</sup>Jane E. Brody, “Cybersex Leads to Psychological Disorder,” *New York Times News Service*, 5/22/00. Data based on a 1998 survey of 9,265 adults by Dr. Alvin Cooper. As quoted in the *Prodigals International* Web site, “Stats & Facts.” Available from [http://www.iprodigals.com/dox/prg\\_stats.htm](http://www.iprodigals.com/dox/prg_stats.htm); Internet; accessed 13 July 2002.

<sup>11</sup>Focus on the Family’s Web site *Pure Intimacy*, “Zogby Survey Reveals a Growing Percentage of Those Seeking Sexual Fulfillment on the Internet.” Data based on a 2000 survey of 1,031 adults. Available from <http://www.pureintimacy.org/news/a0000031.html>; Internet; accessed 13 July 2002.

<sup>12</sup>Timothy Egan, “Erotica, Inc.,” *New York Times*, October 23, 2000, 1.

<sup>13</sup>Helen Cothran, ed., *Opposing Viewpoints: Pornography* (San Diego, CA: Greenhaven Press, 2002), 33.

<sup>14</sup>*National Council on Sexual Addiction and Compulsivity*, 10/19/00, as quoted in the *Prodigals International* Web site. Available from [http://www.iprodigals.com/dox/prg\\_stats.htm](http://www.iprodigals.com/dox/prg_stats.htm); Internet; accessed 13 July 2002.

attorneys or priests. We have corporate America's leadership marching through here."<sup>15</sup> Carnes estimates that 8 percent of men and 3 percent of women in the U.S. are sexually addicted.<sup>16</sup> Interestingly, men prefer pornography pictures and women prefer sexually explicit chat rooms.<sup>17</sup>

### *Internet Pornography in the American Church*

Multiple surveys in recent years have indicated that between one-third and two-thirds of Christian men have some level of involvement with pornography.<sup>18</sup> In an August, 2000 *Christianity Today* surveyed its readership and 36% of laymen responding have visited a sexually explicit Web site. Of those who have visited a porn site, 44% have visited such sites "a few times" in the past year.<sup>19</sup> In 1995, psychologist Patrick Means, with *Prodigal International* ministries, surveyed 350 men from twelve denominations. In his study, 64% struggle with sexual addiction or sexual compulsion including, but not limited to use of pornography, compulsive masturbation, or other secret sexual activity.<sup>20</sup> *The Hart Report*, by Fuller Theological Seminary's Dr. Archibald Hart, reports on a 1994 confidential survey of 600 Christian men. One in six Christian married men use pornography to stimulate themselves to masturbate. He further reported that 96% of Christian males under the age of 20 masturbate regularly, and 61% of all Christian married men masturbate regularly.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>*Enough is Enough* Web site, "Just Harmless Fun? Understanding the Impact of Pornography." Available from <http://www.enough.org>; Internet; accessed 15 July 2002.

<sup>16</sup>Patrick Carnes, *Out of the Shadows: Understanding sexual addiction* (Minneapolis: ComCare, 1983).

<sup>17</sup>*Sexual Addiction and Compulsivity: The Journal of Treatment and Prevention*, Spring, 2000. Based on 1998 survey of 9,265 adults by Dr. Alvin Cooper and others. As quoted in the *Prodigals International* Web site, "Stats & Facts." Available from [http://www.iprodigals.com/dox/prg\\_stats.htm](http://www.iprodigals.com/dox/prg_stats.htm); Internet; accessed 13 July 2002.

<sup>18</sup>Since pornography has historically been perceived as a male issue, the vast majority of studies, especially Christian studies, have focused on the male population. Statistics are sparse and contradictory regarding women, ranging from less than 2% to 50% use among women.

<sup>19</sup>*Christianity Today*, March 5, 2001, 44-45.

<sup>20</sup>Patrick Means, *Men's Secret Wars* (Grand Rapids: Revell, 1996), 255.

<sup>21</sup>Archibald D. Hart, *The Sexual Man* (Waco, TX: Word Publishing, 1994), 95 and 119.

*Internet Pornography Among American Ministers*

Sadly, the statistics are not much different for ministers. In the 2000 *Christianity Today* survey mentioned above, 33% of clergy responded to having visited a sexually explicit Web site. Of those who had visited a porn site, 53% had visited such sites “a few times” in the past year, and 18% visit sexually explicit sites between a couple of times a month and more than once a week.<sup>22</sup> These findings are confirmed by a 2000 survey by *Leadership* journal. Of the 564 pastors responding, it was found that 40% of pastors online have visited a pornographic Web site. More than one-third of pastors had done so in the past year.<sup>23</sup> *Focus on the Family* statistics reveal that one in seven calls to their pastoral care hot line in the year 2000 dealt with Internet pornography.<sup>24</sup> In the two years since these surveys, the figures appear to be increasing. In March 2002, *Pastors.com*, conducted a pastor’s forum poll of 1351 pastors. According to the poll, 54% of the pastors had viewed Internet pornography within the last year, and 30% of these had visited within the last 30 days.<sup>25</sup>

The statistics are staggering. Internet pornography is a definite reality of American society. And the problem exists on both sides of the Church’s doors...and pulpits. But statistics alone do not begin to capture the agonizing stories of the victims of sexual temptation in the Church: individuals plagued by guilt and fear that they will be found out; devastated spouses who feel betrayed; congregations paralyzed by scandal; careers and ministries ruined, marriages and families destroyed, and the image of Christ smeared. Internet pornography consumption is a growing concern for ministers, whether for themselves personally, or for those they love.

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<sup>22</sup>*Christianity Today*, March 5, 2001, 44-45.

<sup>23</sup>“Pastors and Internet Pornography,” *Leadership*, Winter, 2001, 89.

<sup>24</sup>Focus on the Family’s Web site *Pure Intimacy*, December 2000. Available from <http://www.pureintimacy.org>; Internet; accessed 13 July 2002.

<sup>25</sup>“Pastor’s Forum Poll,” on the Saddleback Ministries Web site *Pastors.com*, March 2002. Available from <http://www.pastors.com/article.asp?ArtID=1971>; Internet; accessed 10 July 2002.

### C. The Unique Nature of the Problem

Internet pornography has some unique distinctions from other forms of pornography. These distinctions are radically contributing to the rapid proliferation of Internet pornography. Dr. Alvin Cooper, noted researcher on cyberporn, claims that the Internet opened a new and unique aspect to the pornography industry because of what he terms “the three As of cybersex”: accessibility, affordability, and anonymity.

#### *Accessibility*

To say that pornography is easy to obtain is an understatement. With the rise of new technology we live in a virtual pornotopia. Pornography is the high-tech boom that did not go bust. Before the digital age, there were only so many ways to sell a dirty picture. But technology has transformed the industry and accelerated pornography through easy access. Now distributed through video, VHS, DVD, Internet sites, television channels, and dedicated phone lines, new technology has allowed pornography to break through into the mainstream of society, straight into millions of American homes.<sup>26</sup>

In particular, the Internet fuels the ability to have pornography on demand. The introduction of pornography to the information highway has made home computers the fastest growing and primary mode of distribution of pornography. There are now more outlets for hardcore pornography in the United States than McDonalds restaurants.<sup>27</sup> An Internet saturated with pornography is making it alarmingly easy to bring a powerful new array of sexual temptation right into our homes and workplaces—at the click of a mouse.

The accessibility of Internet porn is only accelerating this tragic epidemic in the Church.

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<sup>26</sup>Michael Kirk and Peter J. Boyer, “American Porn,” *Frontline*, original airdate February 7, 2002. Complete transcript available from: <http://www.frontline.american.porn.transcript/PBS>; Internet; 10 July 2002.

<sup>27</sup>*Enough is Enough* Web site, “Reefs & Rocks: Dangers and legal definition of pornography,” Available from <http://www.enough.org/reefs.htm>; Internet; accessed 15 July 2002.

The quick proliferation of pornography has led to a broad cultural acceptance of the porn industry. Because of the easy access, what was intolerable yesterday has become acceptable today. As in so many areas, the values of society tend to creep into the Church. One thing appears certain. This tidal wave of pornography will only get bigger in the years ahead.

### *Anonymity*

Previously, if someone wanted pornographic material they would have to buy a magazine or visit some strip joint. All of these “risked” them being seen and found out. But with computers being used in private, unaccountable settings, people can view pornography right in their homes and offices. In 1995, *Time* magazine broke one of the first big stories on cyberporn. In that piece, Philip Elmer-Dewitt described the new allure of online porn:

“pornography is different on the computer networks. You can obtain it in the privacy of your home—without having to walk into a seedy bookstore or movie house. You can download only those things that turn you on, rather than buy an entire magazine or video. You can explore different aspects of your sexuality without exposing yourself to communicable diseases or public ridicule.”<sup>28</sup>

While the perception of anonymity is helping to fuel Internet pornography, this is really a farce. What could be more anonymous than viewing pornography on the Internet? A number of things actually—including physically walking into a sex store on the seedy side of town. Ironically, the same technology that makes it possible to view porn anonymously also makes it possible to track virtual footprints.<sup>29</sup> It is simply a myth that when a person “goes on-line” they are anonymous and nobody can find out who they are, what sites they accessed, or what they viewed and/or downloaded. The virtual tracking system will be discussed in greater detail in Part 2 of this paper.

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<sup>28</sup>Philip Elmer-Dewitt, “On a Screen Near You,” *Time*, July 3, 1995, 38.

<sup>29</sup>Ryan Hosley and Steve Watters, “Dangers and Disappointments,” from the Web site *Pure Intimacy*. Available from <http://www.purintimacy.org/online1/essays/a0000034.html>; Internet; accessed 13 July 2002.

### *Affordability*

Pornography was once a vice of the fabulously wealthy. No one else could afford it. When Tiberius Caesar wanted to indulge, he had to purchase special hand-drawn scrolls from Egypt, or have young men and women who were trained in sexual practices brought in to his palace to perform. Today, all that has changed. Everyone can afford pornography.<sup>30</sup> Cybersex is cheaper than printed pornography, with many sites and materials available free of charge. The user should beware, however, for while initial costs can be minimal the price can excel quite quickly. Often the adult Web site will ask for a credit card number when someone logs on for a “free look” and then ask if the person would like to see more, “hotter, sexier...for just \$3.95 a minute,” and that minutes will lead to another and another.

In summary, accessibility, anonymity, and affordability have made Internet porn more attractive and seemingly less dangerous than past outlets for sexual experimentation. Porn surfers are able to find content for any appetite at low or no cost and without ever showing their faces in public, greatly contributing to the increasing number of people using Internet pornography.

#### **D. Reasons Why Internet Pornography is so Dangerous**

Many pornography advocates claim that pornography is harmless fun, mere adult entertainment. They claim it is an outlet to help men and women escape from the stress of their normal lives into a world of sexual excitement. Early arguments were even made for the fact that pornography helped to serve as a “safety-valve” to help let off sexual energy that could otherwise cause a spouse to turn to someone outside the marriage.<sup>31</sup> Advocates argue that sex is a

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<sup>30</sup>Judy Budziszewski, “Virtual Unfaithfulness: Pornography use in a Marriage,” from Focus on the Family’s Web site *Pure Intimacy*. Available from <http://www.pureintimacy.org/online/essays/a0000032.html>; Internet; accessed 13 July 2002.

<sup>31</sup>This theory has basically died from lack of supporting evidence in the last twenty years. *Enough is Enough* Web site, “Just Harmless Fun? Understanding the Impact of Pornography.” Available from <http://www.enough.org>; Internet; accessed 15 July 2002.

human appetite to be satisfied. Sex, however, is hardly just another appetite, like hunger for food. Our sexual appetites are a bit more complex than eating too much pizza, and the consequences of sexual decisions usually cannot be fixed with two Alka-Seltzers.

In the following paragraphs, several potential dangers of pornography will be highlighted. These include: (1) its disregard of God's design for sexuality; (2) its negative effect on the user personally; (3) its negative effect on the user's relationships; and (4) the fact that it can lead to addiction.

### *Pornography Disregards God's Design for Sexuality*

It is God's will for His creation to avoid sexual immorality. 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5 is clear, "It is God's will...that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust."<sup>32</sup> Likewise, Ephesians 5:3 declares, "But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity...because these are improper for God's people." The word for sexual immorality here is the Greek word *porneia*. It is used 25 times in the New Testament. We get our word pornography from it. It includes all kinds of illicit sex, homosexuality, bestiality, pedophilia, prostitution, adultery and other deviant sexual behaviors.

While God commands purity in body, He also calls for purity of mind—where most sins find their inspiration (James 1:13-15). King Solomon once said, "can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned?" (Proverbs 6:27). Along those lines, can you repeatedly bring sexually arousing images into your head without consequences? Philippians 4:8 admonishes believers to think on things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, or praise worthy. Christian leaders have a responsibility to keep their bodies and minds pure from sexual sin such as pornography.

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<sup>32</sup>All Scripture quotations are from the New International Version, unless otherwise noted.

*Pornography Has a Negative Influence on the User Personally*

A great danger of pornography is the destructive consequences reaped by the individual using it. Pornography advocates claim that pornography doesn't hurt anyone, yet numerous studies indicate that pornography has negatively influenced the users' attitudes and behaviors. Dr. Archibald Hart, of Fuller Theological Seminary, surveyed approximately 160 men about the subject of pornography. The survey found that 94% had been exposed to pornography, many beginning at a young age. The respondents were overwhelming in the opinion that nothing good came from their exposure to pornography.<sup>33</sup>

<b>Effects of Pornography</b>		
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
Was the exposure to pornography educational in any way?	2%	98%
Was it helpful?	3%	97%
Was its effect neutral?	3%	97%
Was it harmful?	84%	16%
Did you feel it was degrading to women?	80%	20%
Does it promote violence toward women?	58%	42%
Does it degrade sex?	71%	29%
Is pornography addicting in any way?	70%	30%
Does it distort sexuality?	82%	18%
Was it destructive?	71%	29%

In what ways can pornography be harmful to the user? In a published study of 9,000 online users, a direct correlation was found between the amount of time people spent at sexually-oriented sites and the psychological problems they were grappling with. "We found the more time people spend on-line for sex, the more problems they reported in their work lives or social activities," said psychologist Alvin Cooper, director of the San Jose Marital and Sexuality Center.<sup>34</sup> Personal consequences can include inability to concentrate, sleeplessness, living in a

<sup>33</sup>Archibald D. Hart, *The Sexual Man* (Dallas: Word, 1994), 92.

<sup>34</sup>Alison Bass, "Addiction to Cybersex Symptomatic of Other Woes," *The Boston Globe*, as reported in the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, June 14, 1999, E-1.

sexual fantasy world, obsessive masturbation, unrealistic expectations of sex, and a degraded view of women. Expounding on this, psychologist Gary Brooks, in his book *The Centerfold Syndrome*, identifies five negative qualities that develop in men who consume pornography:<sup>35</sup>

*Voyeurism*: Men become obsessed with looking at women rather than interacting with them as real people.

*Objectification*: This attitude views women mostly as objects to be rated on the basis of their body parts, as opposed to their mind, their personality, their spirituality, or any other quality.

*Validation*: Many men develop an almost driven need to have their masculinity affirmed by women, especially attractive women.

*Trophyism*: Women become the property of the man as a symbol of accomplishment and manliness. Their worth is based on the increased prestige they bring to the man.

*Fear of True Intimacy*: By channeling their energy and attention into the false intimacy of pornography, men never develop the skills necessary to develop deep, honest relationships with real women, trapping them in a world of loneliness and fear of closeness.

In addition to these psychological dangers, the use of pornography can lead a downward spiral to sexual abuse. The *American Psychological Association* states that men subject to long-term exposure to pornography become desensitized to violence and are less sympathetic to rape victims. They also become more accepting of rape myths and attitudes of violence toward women.<sup>36</sup> Due to the addictive nature of pornography, the person needs to look for progressively deviant pornography and sexual experiences, and this can escalate to committing a real-life sexual offense. Those who treat sexual offenders know first hand just how easily pornography can progress into sexual abuse. Dr. Mary Anne Layden of the University of Pennsylvania Healthy System, who has been treating sexual violence victims and offenders for 15 years, said, “I have not treated a single case of sexual violence that did not involve pornography.”<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>National Coalition for the Protection of Children and Families, *NCPCF in Action Special Report*, July, 1997. Available from [http://www.iprodigals.com/dox/prg\\_stats.htm](http://www.iprodigals.com/dox/prg_stats.htm); Internet; accessed 13 July 2002.

<sup>36</sup> John Bales, *American Psychiatric Association Monitor*, November 1993, 7.

<sup>37</sup> Rick Schatz, “A Downward Spiral to Sexual Abuse,” National Coalition for the Protection of Children and Families. Available from <http://www.nationalcoalition.org/spotlight.phtml>; Internet; accessed 13 July 2002.

*Pornography Has a Negative Influence on the User's Relationships*

In the opinion of many professionals, the great danger of Internet pornography is not the threat of becoming a violent sex offender (though this can and does occur), but rather the disturbance of the fragile bonds of intimate family and personal relationships. Pornography interferes with and destroys healthy relationships.<sup>38</sup>

A unique dynamic at play here is that contemporary society tends to perceive the Internet as a culture, not merely as a means of communication. Andrew Careaga of the University of Missouri notes the shifting trend to view the Internet as a means of community.<sup>39</sup> This creates an interesting dynamic for the person using Internet pornography, who consciously or unconsciously allows it to serve as a replacement for actual relationships with real people with whom they are in daily contact. Dr. David Greenfield, a psychologist who has treated Internet addiction, discovered in a survey of over 18,000 people that a major reason people go online is to find intimacy.<sup>40</sup> Intimacy refers to the God-given desire to be known and loved for who you are. But being known that well is scary, because it makes us vulnerable. So some people search for intimacy in less threatening places, like pornography. For many people, an image is easier to relate to than an actual person with a heart, mind and emotions. An image has no expectations. You do not have to impress an image or deal with any of the awkwardness that comes with relating to a real person. The temptation of pornography is to bypass the effort involved in building a relationship between two imperfect people. Porn gives the person a chance to fantasize about perfect people and help them to forget about their own imperfections (easy to do since the Internet allows people to hide their weaknesses while exaggerating their strengths).

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<sup>38</sup>Paul J. McGeady, "The Harmful Effects of Pornography," as quoted in the *Obscenity Crimes* Web site. Available from <http://www.obscenitycrimes.org/harmfuleffects.cfm>; Internet; accessed 10 July 2002.

<sup>39</sup>Phone interview with Andrew Careaga during Models of Ministry in the Emerging Church, doctoral course at the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, June 2002.

<sup>40</sup>Focus on the Family's Web site *Pure Intimacy*. Available from <http://www.pureintimacy.org>; Internet; accessed 13 July 2002.

Using pornography as a shortcut to intimacy can cause people to develop a fear of true intimacy—despite deep loneliness, they are not able to give their hearts to real people.<sup>41</sup> As a result, viewing porn is used as an anesthetic for loneliness.

While the Internet offers plenty of sex—intimacy can be much harder to find. Pornographic Web sites and steamy chat rooms may lead to moments of stimulation, but they fail to offer the depth and long-term satisfaction of face-to-face intimacy with a real person in a committed relationship.<sup>42</sup> One consistent problem online is the temptation to allow the accelerated relational closeness to lead prematurely to sex. “Men tend to give intimacy in order to get sex, and women tend to give sex in order to get intimacy.” Says psychologist Dr. James Dobson. “Internet chat rooms and newsgroups have a way of bringing those tendencies together.”<sup>43</sup> While intimacy can happen to a limited extent from online communication, it inevitably requires a tremendous amount of face-to-face interaction in the real world. Therefore, true intimacy can not be found exclusively online.<sup>44</sup>

Many seekers of online sex are discovering the inevitable disappointment of trying to find meaningful sexual fulfillment outside of a committed relationship. A recent Zogby International survey found, interestingly, that two-thirds of the people who had visited sexual-oriented Web sites did not think it was possible to find sexual fulfillment online. It turns out that the Internet is better at delivering sexual arousal than sexual intimacy. Seeking sexual fulfillment through pornography will inexorably leave one unsatisfied.<sup>45</sup> Eventually, individuals seeking

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<sup>41</sup>Steve Watters, “In Your Face, In Your Mind: Resisting the Power of Pornography,” Available from <http://www.pureintimacy.org/online1/essays/a0000042.html>; Internet; accessed 13 July 2002.

<sup>42</sup>Focus on the Family’s Web site *Pure Intimacy*. Available from <http://www.pureintimacy.org>; Internet; accessed 13 July 2002.

<sup>43</sup>Steve Watters, “Can Intimacy Be Found Online?” Available from <http://www.pureintimacy.org/online1/essays/a0000004.html>; Internet; accessed 13 July 2002.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

<sup>45</sup>Ryan Hosley and Steve Watters, “Dangers and Disappointments,” Available from <http://purintimacy.org/online1/a0000034.html>; Internet; accessed 13 July 2002.

sexual fulfillment in cyberspace must face the reality that their pursuits are in vain. Sex will always be incomplete outside of a committed, loving relationship.

Another side effect of pornography impacting relationships is that the use of pornography actually diminishes a person's sexual happiness. Professors Dolf Zillman of Indiana University and Jennings Bryant of the University of Houston found that people exposed to nonviolent pornography reported lessened satisfaction with their partner's physical appearance, affection, curiosity and sexual performance.<sup>46</sup> Those exposed to pornography were also inclined to put more emphasis on sex without emotional involvement or commitment. Pornography plays a major role in many adulterous affairs—causing many marriages to end in divorce.

Pornography also has an indirect effect on the person's relationships. Often people who use pornography are terrified that someone might find out about their problem. It eats them up inside and separates them from others, as well as from God, due to the guilt and fear of being found out. People who indulge in porn often feel the need to hide from their heavenly Father because of the shame and guilt.<sup>47</sup>

In short, the use of pornography is a self-centered, consuming experience that disconnects the person from God, from their spouse and family, and from their own feelings. By focusing so strongly on meeting a need for sexual arousal without addressing sexual intimacy, Internet pornography inevitably leads to disappointment both personally as well as relationally.

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<sup>46</sup>Focus on the Family Web site Pure Intimacy, "Subtle Dangers of Pornography," Available from <http://www.pureintimacy.org/online1/essays/a0000008.html>; Internet; accessed 13 July 2002.

<sup>47</sup>Steve Watters, "In Your Face, In Your Mind: Resisting the Power of Pornography," Available from <http://www.pureintimacy.org/online1/essays/a0000042.html>; Internet; accessed 13 July 2002.

### *Pornography Can Lead to Addiction*

Pornography has been called “the gateway drug to sexual addiction.” Even a casual interest in soft-porn can pull someone under before they realize what has happened. The body’s biological responses are one reason why pornography’s effects are so powerful. Research reveals that there are biochemical and neurological responses in individuals who are sexually aroused. The adrenal hormone epinephrine is released, locking memories into the brain, and explaining why people can remember pornographic images seen years before. Then, chemicals released by nerve endings in response to pleasure, reinforce the body’s desire to repeat the process. In other words, chemical responses to sexual arousal and gratification cause the body to desire to repeat a rewarding behavior. Thus the biological drive to return to rewarding behavior can lead to an actual dependence or addiction.<sup>48</sup> Users become trapped in a cycle of pornography usage, sexual fantasizing and compulsive masturbation.

The defining elements in any addiction include four things: attempted abstinence, continuation despite adverse consequences, escalation of the addiction, and denial of the problem. Sexual addiction is progressive in the way it takes over an addict’s life, increasing in frequency and escalating over time to ever riskier and more degraded forms.<sup>49</sup> A highly respected clinical psychologist, Dr. Victor Cline, of the University of Utah, has studied hundreds of sex offenders who have had intensive exposure to hard-core pornography as a part of their history. He has found a near-universal four-step pattern of progression:<sup>50</sup>

*Addiction:* The person develops a strong desire and need for pornographic materials that seem to provide a powerful and exciting aphrodisiac, so they keep coming back for more. It becomes a regular part of the person’s life. They become hooked and cannot quit.

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<sup>48</sup>*Enough is Enough* Web site, “Just Harmless Fun? Understanding the Impact of Pornography.” Available from <http://www.enough.org>; Internet; accessed 15 July 2002.

<sup>49</sup>*Prodigals International* Web site, “Defining Sexual Addiction,” Available from [http://www.iprodigals.com/dox/prg\\_define.htm](http://www.iprodigals.com/dox/prg_define.htm); Internet; accessed 13 July 2002.

<sup>50</sup>Victor B. Cline, “Pornography’s Effect on Adults and Children, Morality in Media,” Available from <http://www.pureintimacy.org/online1/essays/a0000034.html>; Internet; accessed 13 July 2002.

*Escalation:* The person develops a need for more explicit, rougher, and more deviant images for the same sexual effect as before. They start to look for more graphic pornography. They start using porn that disgusted them earlier, but is now enticing. They prod their partner into increasingly bizarre sexual activities.

*Desensitization:* Material once viewed as shocking or taboo is seen as acceptable or commonplace. They begin feeling numb toward the images they see. Even the most graphic porn is no longer arousing. They become desperate to feel the same thrill again, though they cannot find it.

*Acting out sexually:* The person makes a critical jump and starts acting out the images they have seen and rehearsed in their minds, including exhibitionism, sadistic/masochistic sex, rape, or sex with minor children. What was first fantasy has become reality.

Psychologists are beginning to recognize and treat compulsive Internet addiction. Dr.

Mark Schwartz of *Masters and Johnson Institute* in St. Louis states, “Sex on the net is like heroin. It grabs them and takes over their lives.”<sup>51</sup> According to Dr. Kimberly Young, founder of the *Center for On-Line Addiction*, estimates that as many as five to ten percent of everyone who goes online will become addicted.<sup>52</sup> Overcoming pornography addiction usually takes years, and affects everyone around the person for the rest of his or her life.

In summary, the preponderance of the evidence clearly demonstrates that pornography is not “just harmless fun, that doesn’t hurt anyone.” There are grave perils associated with its use. Pornography is not about real human sexuality: it’s about a dehumanized, synthetic version of sex that eliminates love, honor, dignity, true intimacy, and commitment. The use of pornography is simply self-gratification at the expense of others. The image of sexuality offered by pornography comes without relationships, responsibility or consequences—a largely fraudulent picture. Unfortunately, these fraudulent messages are ingested, affecting attitudes and behavior.<sup>53</sup> Clearly, the damaging effects of pornography on our lives, our families, and God’s kingdom are immeasurable.

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<sup>51</sup>Jane E. Brody, “Cybersex Leads to Psychological Disorder,” *New York Times News Service*, 5/22/00.

<sup>52</sup>Focus on the Family Web site *Pure Intimacy*, “Are you addicted to Internet Sex?” Available from [http://www.pureintimacy.org/online1/primary\\_test.html](http://www.pureintimacy.org/online1/primary_test.html); Internet; accessed 13 July 2002.

<sup>53</sup>“Just Harmless Fun? Understanding the Impact of Pornography.” Available from <http://www.enough.org>;

## PART 2 : SUGGESTIONS FOR PREVENTING THE USE OF INTERNET PORNOGRAPHY

In light of the potential dangers, some ministers' response is that Christians should not utilize the Internet. Unfortunately, this does not solve anything. Keeping one's head in the sand and hoping the problem will go away is not going to work. The Internet is here to stay. The presence of the Internet in everyday life is everywhere and pastors cannot ignore its reality. Instead, ministers should learn to take advantage of the tremendous benefits of utilizing the Web in their ministries. The key is learning how to utilize the Internet safely. Internet pornography can be prevented by recognizing the dangers and taking the appropriate actions.

When dealing with the Internet, ministers should exercise wisdom and caution. For starters, this means keeping in mind that the greatest asset of the Internet is also its greatest problem: You can find just about anything you want to look for—good or bad. Since one never knows when temptation will strike, it is imperative that ministers taking steps now to become proactive and become accountable for their Internet activity—procrastination only makes things worse. As Thomas Hobbes said, “Hell is truth seen too late.”<sup>54</sup> The devastating news that a fellow minister has been involved in pornography is not only shocking, but also heartbreaking. The ripple effect of hurt and disillusionment goes through the family, the church, the denomination, and the kingdom of God. Ministers simply cannot say enough or do enough to protect themselves and their ministries from this lurking predator.

There are many preventive measures that ministers can take to face the challenge of inappropriate Internet materials. Following are several suggestions to help ministers experience a SAFE surf. SAFE surfing involves four components: Service provider selection, Accountability, Filters/blocking software, and Education.

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<sup>54</sup>Patrick Means and Marsha Means. “Coming Clean: Breaking the Bonds of Internet Pornography,” *The Pastor's Family Bulletin*, Focus on the Family, n.d.

## A. Service Provider Selection

Though the Internet is an incredible resource and full of positive information, it also provides ready access to a host of inappropriate or objectionable materials.<sup>55</sup> People who say they do not visit questionable Web sites do not realize they will encounter objectionable material whether they intend to or not. Even if you think you know where you are going on the Internet, chances are you will stumble across pornography. As a result, ministers need to ensure that any type of objectionable content is filtered. Ministers, their families, and their staffs should be able to surf the net all day without fear of what they will discover.<sup>56</sup>

One way to provide preventative protection is to utilize the services of an Internet Service Provider (ISP) that filters out pornography and other unwanted material. This is called server-level filtering. The advantage of a server-based filtering system is that it does not require frequent downloads of new “bad” Web sites. Instead, the service provider is responsible for maintaining the filter. Following are some resources to assist people in obtaining Internet service that limits Internet use to content consistent with their values.

- ViaFamily ([www.viafamily.com](http://www.viafamily.com))
- Family Connect ([www.familyconnect.com](http://www.familyconnect.com))
- Integrity Online ([www.integrityonline.com](http://www.integrityonline.com))
- Rated-G Online

One helpful resource to assist in the selection of an ISP is the Web site [FilterReview.com](http://FilterReview.com). This site, provided by the National Coalition for the Protection of Children & Families, helps you find the Internet safety solution that will best suit your needs, both in selecting an ISP as well as a filter/blocking system. It provides the user with the information necessary to be able to make the most appropriate decision for your situation. Filter Review allows you to select what

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<sup>55</sup>There are many inappropriate materials in addition to pornography, such as: adult humor, violence, unlawful activities, ethnic hate, questionable chat-rooms, and other degrading materials.

<sup>56</sup>Wayde I. Goodall, “Protecting Your Family and Church from Internet Pornography,” *Enrichment*, Fall 1999, 130.

features you are looking for in a safety solution, and then presents you with options that closely match your criteria. One can find additional product reviews and details from Get NetWise at [www.GetNetWise.org](http://www.GetNetWise.org).

## **B. Accountability**

Typically when people are on the Internet there is very little accountability for knowing where, when, and how long they have been on the net. This is no different for ministers. In the 2000 survey by *Leadership* journal referred to above, 75% of pastors admitted they do not make themselves accountable to anyone for their Internet use.<sup>57</sup> Howard Hendricks of Dallas Theological Seminary studied 237 instances of Christian men—most of them in positions of leadership—who had experienced moral failure and found that not one of them had an accountability relationship with another man or men.<sup>58</sup>

Unfortunately, most find that overcoming Internet pornography temptation is virtually impossible on their own. While filters can provide some help, they can also block acceptable Web sites, or, the filters can be turned off or bypassed, rendering them ineffective. In light of this, developing various accountability relationships is an effective plan for preventing the problem of Internet pornography.

One excellent avenue for Internet accountability is available through Web-based accountability sites that combine personal accountability and virtual accountability. Based on Job 31:1, “I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl,” these programs remove the secrecy and privacy of using the Internet by automatically emailing to your chosen accountability partners a regular log of all of the sites you visited, including the Web addresses

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<sup>57</sup>“Pastors and Internet Pornography,” *Leadership*, Winter, 2001, 89.

<sup>58</sup>Wayde Goodall, *Pornography and Cyberporn: Breaking Addictions and Rehabilitating Men of God*, a seminar manual (Akron, Ohio: Emerge Ministries, Inc., 1999), I.

and amount of time you were on the Internet. The system cannot be bypassed or erased. Such accountability programs promote self-control and personal discipline, and the individual is held accountable for their Internet use. These can be helpful tools whether someone is struggling with pornography, gambling, chat rooms, impulse buying, or simply spending too much time on the Internet. Three such sites are listed below. These services range from free of charge to \$60/month (which includes additional software filtering services).

- American Family Filter (www.afafilter.com)
- Covenant Eyes (www.Covenanteyes.com)
- XXXChurch (www.xxxchurch.com)

In addition to electronic accountability sites, ministers can have human accountability check-points built into their personal and organizational computer operations. While we often use the expression “surfing the Web,” a better metaphor may be “walking on the beach” because your footprints follow you wherever you go.<sup>59</sup> You can track where a person has been by reviewing the history files on the browser.<sup>60</sup> The history file usually provides documentation for the locations and times of all Web traffic over the past month or so. Note, it is possible to clear the browser history. However, pictures from the Web sites they visit are usually stored in a cache file—a temporary file that saves a copy of any HTML pages, images or files that you access for quick downloading later. Though your cache files can be deleted, recovering them is simply a matter of knowing where to look.<sup>61</sup> Ask a friend or someone in the organization to regularly

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<sup>59</sup>When you visit a site, small text files called “cookies” can be transmitted and placed on your local PC identifying you to a specific web site.

<sup>60</sup>If you have Microsoft Explorer, just click the “history” button near the top of the page. In new versions of Netscape, you can find a history option under the “Communicator” category. For older versions, just enter the phrase “about:global” into the address box and press enter. If you have version 4.0 or later of America Online, you can just click the arrow to the right hand side of your locator bar to see what AOL and web files have been viewed.

<sup>61</sup>You can usually find files by using the “Find” feature and doing a search among file folders with the words “cache” or “webcache.” This folder will bring up a list of item names with the suffixes .gif, .jpg, .tif, .zip and .bmp. By clicking on those file names, you can see what pictures have been downloaded.

Steve Watters, “Next Steps for a Concerned Spouse,” *Pure Intimacy* Web site, Available from <http://www.pureintimacy.org/online2/essays/a0000044.html>; Internet; accessed 13 July 2002.

check your computer records (“cookie trail”) to see if you’ve accessed inappropriate sites. Have them review the bookmarks in the Web browser, then check the hard drive for files that contain pictures from Web sites that were visited recently.

### **C. Filters and Blocking Software**

Another option is to install filtering software on your computer. Distinct from server-level filtering, this is known as computer-level filtering. Such programs block selected Internet material from being able to be received on your computer. Many people prefer computer-level filtering because it gives them greater flexibility in controlling their personal computers. One drawback, however, is that it does require regular downloads to update the filter software on new “bad” sites. Following is a listing of several filtering resources. These software programs usually cost between \$30-40 dollars.

- American Family Filter ([www.afafilter.com](http://www.afafilter.com))
- Cyber Patrol ([www.cyberpatrol.com](http://www.cyberpatrol.com))
- Cybersitter ([www.solidoak.com](http://www.solidoak.com))
- Cybersnoop ([www.pearlsw.com](http://www.pearlsw.com))
- FamilyClick ([www.familyclick.com](http://www.familyclick.com))
- NetNanny ([www.netnanny.com](http://www.netnanny.com))
- SurfControl ([www.surfcontrol.com](http://www.surfcontrol.com))
- SurfWatch ([www.surfwatch.com](http://www.surfwatch.com))
- X Stop ([www.xstop.com](http://www.xstop.com))

One suggestion: because filtering systems can be bypassed, ask someone else to hold the password. Realize that no filtering program can protect you from all that is on the Internet. This is only a tool, a “brick” in your wall of defense. Many feel that the ideal service is one that provides server-level filtering and is supplemented with additional controls at the computer level.

## **D. Education**

Christian leaders need to break the silence barrier and take the initiative to talk about the dangers of Internet pornography with their people. The Church should be talking openly and directly about the dangers of Internet pornography and certain kinds of chat rooms. Pastors need to address the issue administratively among the pastoral and support staffs, and then set accountability systems in place. Christian organizations need to establish Internet pornography policies, and have them in place prior to an occurrence of the problem. Pastors and youth pastors need to regularly present biblical and practical principles to equip their people to withstand the pull toward pornography.

Several Internet sites provide helpful resources for understanding and addressing the problem of Internet pornography. Ministers can educate and equip themselves with prevention resources from the following ministries:

- Focus on the Family, Pure Intimacy      ([www.pureintimacy.org](http://www.pureintimacy.org))
- Prodigal International                      ([www.iprodigal.com](http://www.iprodigal.com))
- Enough is Enough                              ([www.enough.org](http://www.enough.org))
- Obscenity Crimes                              ([www.obscenitycrimes.org](http://www.obscenitycrimes.org))
- Covenant Eyes                                ([www.covenanteyes.com](http://www.covenanteyes.com))
- eXXit    ([www.exxit.org](http://www.exxit.org))
- Literature Ministries International      ([www.thesafesite.com](http://www.thesafesite.com))
- Heart to Heart Counseling Center      ([www.sexaddict.com](http://www.sexaddict.com))

It is possible to do SAFE surfing of the Internet. Ministers who are serious about preventing a problem with Internet pornography, as well as the perception of a potential problem, would be wise to install multiple layers of preventive measures.

### PART 3: SUGGESTIONS FOR RECOVERING FROM THE USE OF INTERNET PORNOGRAPHY

Realizing that you may have a problem with online sex is only half the battle. The real challenge is taking bold steps to do something about it. The following suggestions can assist in the recovery process.<sup>62</sup>

1. **Confession.** The first step is to admit that you have a problem. However perverse, offensive, or sinful, the God who created you loves you deeply. Believing in the healing power of Christ's love is the most effective way to overcome this problem.
2. **Seek Help.** Your resolve to stop on your own won't work. You will need to the help of other people to stop your sexual activity. You need to talk with someone who can help you deal with issues in your life (such as loneliness, desire for intimacy, and how you can build healthy relationships). You may well need to seek help from trusted professional counselors.
3. **Seek Accountability or a Support Group.** You especially need to begin developing relationships that bring accountability. Support groups or 12-step programs, or one-on-one mentoring could be the answer. Because of the shame attached with sexual temptation, many people find it difficult to be open and vulnerable in a generic recovery group. People who are struggling with sexual temptations such as pornography need a group where everyone is dealing with the same issue. In such a group, the addict is more likely to be completely honest, and will be helped by those who have the knowledge and experience needed to talk him or her through to a successful recovery.<sup>63</sup>
4. **Develop True Intimacy.** You will also need to work on your relationship with family and close friends. Intimacy with them may have been a real challenge for you. This will take time

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<sup>62</sup>These recommended steps toward recovery have been adapted from Focus on the Family materials. Mark Laaser, "One Man's Struggle," *Pure Intimacy* Web site, Available from <http://www.purintimacy.org/online1/essays/a0000018.html>; Internet; accessed 13 July 2002.

<sup>63</sup>*Prodigals International* Web site, "The Five Stages of Recovery," Available from [http://www.iprodigals.com/dox/prg\\_stages.htm](http://www.iprodigals.com/dox/prg_stages.htm); Internet; accessed 13 July 2002.

to heal and will most likely require guidance from a counselor. If you are married, your spouse may need just as much help as you do. Many who have used sex to address hurts were deeply wounded early in life, from sexual abuse to abandonment.

5. **Protect Yourself.** You will need to manage the sexual messages around you. You need help responding to the constant deceptive message about sexuality that are so prevalent in our culture—from subtle messages on television to blatant enticement on the Internet. Many professionals who work with people overcoming sexual temptations recommend that for time the individual give up access to the Internet entirely (or whatever the source of temptation). They feel that it is like telling a newly-sober alcoholic not to drink, but seeing nothing wrong with him hanging out in all the same old watering holes. Relapse is virtually inevitable. For Internet porn addicts, many recommend a “no Internet” policy for at least 90 days, with stringent restrictions applied after that.<sup>64</sup>
6. **Review the consequences.** When you are feeling vulnerable, it may be helpful to review the consequences of using pornography.<sup>65</sup> Involvement with pornography...
  - Grieves the Lord who redeemed me: one day I’ll have to look Him in the eye and account for my actions
  - Brings great pleasure to Satan, the enemy of God and of all that is good.
  - Inflicts untold hurt on my spouse, hosing his/her response ad trust.
  - Forms memories and flashbacks that could plague future intimacy with my spouse.
  - Destroys my example and credibility with my children, and hinders my teaching them to obey God.
  - Brings shame upon and hurt to my family and friends, especially the church.
  - Creates guilt that is hard to shake, influencing my actions and attitudes.

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<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

<sup>65</sup>*Literature Ministries International* Web site, Available from <http://www.thesafesite.com>; Internet; accessed 13 July 2002.

### *Conclusion*

Clearly, the challenge for society is to maximize the great potential of cyberspace for human benefit, while minimizing its great potential for harm. The Internet is arguably the greatest communication asset of our day. As ministers travel on the superhighway they should exercise wisdom, caution and self-control. How we use the Internet reflects our own discipline and moral integrity. Christian leaders have an obligation live exemplary lives that can withstand full scrutiny.

Although it is difficult in today's culture to avoid suggestive images, you can avoid the consequences of giving in to their pull, especially the lure of Internet pornography. By committing to a high standard of purity and setting up an accountability structure, ministers can avoid the devastation that comes with a secret porn habit. If you have already been drawn in by pornography's lure, there is hope and healing for you. Now is the time to allow God to erase the images of your past and to recast you in His image.

## Appendix A “SAFE Surfing” Resource List

### **Service Provider Selection**

Select Internet Service Provider (ISP) can filter out pornography and other unwanted material.

- ViaFamily ([www.viafamily.com](http://www.viafamily.com))
- Family Connect ([www.familyconnect.com](http://www.familyconnect.com))
- Integrity Online ([www.integrityonline.com](http://www.integrityonline.com))

• Rated-G Online

#### *Helpful Resources*

- Filter Review ([FilterReview.com](http://FilterReview.com))
- Get NetWise ([www.GetNetWise.org](http://www.GetNetWise.org))

### **Accountability**

Some Web-based accountability sites combine personal accountability and virtual accountability by automatically emailing to your chosen accountability partners a regular log of all of the sites you visited, including the Web addresses and amount of time you were on the Internet.

- American Family Filter ([www.afafilter.com](http://www.afafilter.com))
- Covenant Eyes ([www.Covenanteyes.com](http://www.Covenanteyes.com))
- XXXChurch ([www.xxxchurch.com](http://www.xxxchurch.com))

### **Filters/Blocking Software**

Computer-level filtering programs can block selected Internet material from your computer.

- American Family Filter ([www.afafilter.com](http://www.afafilter.com))
- Cyber Patrol ([www.cyberpatrol.com](http://www.cyberpatrol.com))
- Cybersitter ([www.solidoak.com](http://www.solidoak.com))
- Cybersnoop ([www.pearlsw.com](http://www.pearlsw.com))
- FamilyClick ([www.familyclick.com](http://www.familyclick.com))
- NetNanny ([www.netnanny.com](http://www.netnanny.com))
- SurfControl ([www.surfcontrol.com](http://www.surfcontrol.com))
- SurfWatch ([www.surfwatch.com](http://www.surfwatch.com))
- X Stop ([www.xstop.com](http://www.xstop.com))

### **Education**

Several Internet sites provide helpful resources to assist ministers in understanding and addressing the problem of Internet pornography.

- Focus on the Family, Pure Intimacy ([www.pureintimacy.org](http://www.pureintimacy.org))
- Prodigal International ([www.iprodigal.com](http://www.iprodigal.com))
- Enough is Enough ([www.enough.org](http://www.enough.org))
- Obscenity Crimes ([www.obscenitycrimes.org](http://www.obscenitycrimes.org))
- Covenant Eyes ([www.covenanteyes.com](http://www.covenanteyes.com))
- eXXit ([www.exxit.org](http://www.exxit.org))
- Literature Ministries International ([www.thesafesite.com](http://www.thesafesite.com))

## Appendix B

### Preventive Precautions When Working with Children<sup>66</sup>

- **Learn more.** Take the initiative to become more computer literate and Internet savvy. Know the potential dangers and well as preventive resources available to you.
- **Install filters.** Select a filtered Internet service provider or install filter software programs on your computer.
- **Monitor the monitor.** When working with children, it's important to place the computer in a central location in the home. This will enable you, or other adults, to monitor what your child is viewing on the computer. Most of the children who become snared by Internet pornography, developed the habit on a computer in their bedrooms, behind a closed door.
- **Spend time with your children on the Internet.** Be a participant, not a spectator. Introduce them to sites that will be both fun as well as educational.
- **Check the computer.** Regularly check the computer cookie trail (refer to Part 2).
- **Supervise the chat.** Don't allow your children to enter chat rooms without your presence or participation. Remember, some of the "children" in these chat rooms are actually adults wanting to contact children for immoral purposes. Train your children how to respond. Counsel them to leave the site immediately if anyone pressures them to talk, asks for personal information, or make comments that are suggestive, belligerent, abusive, or degrading. Don't allow your children to fill out questionnaires online or give out their name, address, telephone number, school, or any other personal information.
- **Model high standards.** Make sure that both of you, as parents, set the highest possible standard in what you view on the Internet. Kids are quick to pick up on the hypocrisy of "Do as I say, not as I do."

#### *Additional Resources:*

Focus on the Family, "Principles for Guiding Your Children's Internet Use"

Available at [www.pureintimacy.org/online2/essays/a0000029.html](http://www.pureintimacy.org/online2/essays/a0000029.html)

Enough is Enough, "Tips for Parents to Protect Children from Internet Predators"

Available at [www.enough.org/safeguards.htm](http://www.enough.org/safeguards.htm)

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<sup>66</sup>Adapted from Pat Means' article "Christian Kids: Online and In Trouble," on the *Prodigal International* Web site. Available from [http://www.iprodigals.com/dox/prg\\_kids.htm](http://www.iprodigals.com/dox/prg_kids.htm); Internet; accessed 13 July 2002.

## Appendix C Sexual Addictions Self Test

*The following questions may help you determine if your involvement with Internet pornography has developed into a compulsive habit.<sup>67</sup>*

1. Do you routinely spend significant amounts of time viewing pornography or visiting chat rooms with the intent of finding sexual stimulation?
2. Do you hide your online interactions from your spouse?
3. Do you feel guilt or shame from your online use?
4. Do you experience significant physiological changes when you visit sex-oriented Internet areas (e.g. increase in heart rate, sweaty palms)?
5. Do you feel preoccupied with using the Internet to find online sexual partners?
6. Do you frequently use anonymous communication to engage in sexual fantasies not typically carried out in real-life?
7. Do you anticipate your next online session with the expectation that you will find sexual arousal or gratification?
8. Do you masturbate while online?
9. Are you less involved with your spouse because of your experience with Internet sex?

### Is It Possible You're Married to a Sex Addict?

*Following are warning signs that someone may have a secret problem with pornography, cybersex, or other forms of sexual addiction.<sup>68</sup>*

1. Preoccupied with looking at the opposite sex or other visual, sexual stimuli
2. Flirtatious behavior
3. Evidence of pornography usage on the computer, or with video tapes or magazines
4. Insisting on his or her own Internet account and email address
5. Unexplained credit card bills (or having a separate personal credit card)
6. Unexplained absences or patterns of late-night working
7. Staying up late, after everyone's gone to bed, in order to log onto the Internet privately
8. Emotional and spiritual distance developed between you and your spouse
9. A sudden increase in demands for sex and more deviant sexual practices
10. A sudden decrease in interest in sex because sexual energy is being channeled into pornography, fantasizing, and masturbation (low or no interest in physical intimacy within the marriage)
11. A sense that the person is "not there" mentally and emotionally during lovemaking?  
An increase in moodiness, anger, and harsh blaming

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<sup>67</sup>Focus on the Family Web site *Pure Intimacy*, "Are you addicted to Internet sex?" Available from [http://www.pureintimacy.org/online1/primary\\_test.html](http://www.pureintimacy.org/online1/primary_test.html); Internet; accessed 13 July 2002.

<sup>68</sup>*Prodigal International* Web site, "Self Tests for Sexual Addiction," Available from <http://www.iprodigals.com/dox/selftests.htm>; Internet; accessed 13 July 2002.

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