



Shhhh.....

Shhhh.....

It's a secret. Over 24 million websites are devoted to it and it generates billions of dollars in revenue each year. A majority of pastors admit that it's a personal temptation. Over 40% of Christians say that it's a problem in their home. It's free, accessible, anonymous and growing. Yet we don't talk about it.

It's dangerous, and powerfully destructive. It lures people in, then traps them in patterns of behavior that become increasingly out of control. What starts out as recreation can quickly become an obsession or an addiction, equal to or stronger than that of any drug. Yet we don't talk about it.

False thinking prevails about internet pornography: It's no big deal; it's just pictures, no harm done, a victimless pastime; it's normal, something to be tolerated in the broken world in which we live.

The negative impact of pornography IS a big deal! We must not minimize its effect in our churches and our society. In the pictures, people look happy, hiding the fact that many are forced, manipulated or threatened to produce them. Children are exposed to graphic images as they do their homework. Marriages, relationships, and individuals are harmed by its use. Yet we don't talk about it.

Internet pornography doesn't belong in Christian community. It does not honor God or others, but debases, rather than celebrates, His gift of sexuality. Let's talk about it.

Safe Church Ministry helps maintain safe places to worship and to grow in faith, places where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. We put windows in doors of classrooms so that what goes on inside can be seen. We have procedures in place to prevent harm and to hold people accountable. Let's also put windows in our souls, to reveal what may be hidden there. Let's put procedures in place that hold us accountable, make internet porn less accessible, and help us respond with effective support to those who struggle with it.

Our churches can only become safe places of hope and healing when we choose NOT to keep secrets. Visit www.crcna.org/safechurch for more information about breaking the silence that hides pornography and other kinds of abuse.

