



SUNDAY SUN Sunday 1 August 2010

NOW HEAR THIS! WITH **KENNETH MESHOE**

Yes, porn is harmful. We should get rid of it!

A TWO-DAY A two-day symposium, hosted by the Film and Publication Board in partnership with the Family Policy Institute, took place in Cape Town recently to discuss what needs to be done to safeguard children from pornography. Research carried out by Doctors for Life (DFL), which links contact with pornography in young children to later deviant behaviour, was debated by participants that included the Department of Education, Freedom of Expression Institute, Childline and the SAPS.

According to the DFL Head, Dr Albu van Eeden, research shows that the primitive brain (limbic system) matures in a child long before the thinking brain.

He said “that means the child can “feel”, “experience” and “taste” sexual images/touches from an adult before the child can even express himself or herself. These memories are stored, sometimes subconsciously, and can lead to deviant behaviour later in life.”

“Pornographic images cause a combination of feelings of lust, fear, disgust, anger, etc. All these feelings form part of the addictive nature of pornography. However, in children, fear is often the primary response due to the fact that they do not have the emotional not cognitive skills to handle the impulses,” says Dr van Eeden. “The results are clear, life long memories and mental scars.”

Furthermore, Dr van Eeden has noted that since children’s weak ability to differentiate between fantasy and reality, they easily adopt attitudes and behaviour seen in pornographic material as acceptable and normal thus making them even more vulnerable to abuse.

Pornography has become so readily available that children now view it on their cellphones during school hours.

Film and Publications Board CEO, Yoliswa Makhasi, urged greater responsibility at all levels of society to protect children from exposure to pornography and other forms of undesirable content. Makhasi said that “We believe those who should know better are not taking the care they should to protect our

children.

Can a person in their right mind deny that pornography is harmful to one’s soul, dignity, morality, marriage and family life? Can it be said that those who equate naked bodies to a form of art are perverse in their thinking? I’m just asking.

There are men today who have lost their families and who are receiving sex addiction therapy who say it all started with pornography. Young boys under the age of 10 who have raped girls their age or younger have said they were only “doing” what they saw on TV, in videos or in pornographic magazines. I strongly believe that pornography is a scourge that must be removed from society.

Before some porn addicts scream “censorship” or that their constitutional right to freedom of expression is being threatened, I must hasten to say “the rights in the Bill of Rights are subject to the limitations contained or referred to in section 36, or elsewhere in the Bill.”

Where there is a conflict of rights, a limitation of rights is necessary.

Does pornography not undermine the right to human dignity? Does it not undermine children’s right to be protected from exploitation, abuse or degradation? Does it not undermine children’s rights to sexual purity and innocence? Which right is more important? The right of children and women to be protected from harm, or the right of individuals with lustful eyes that want to see the nakedness of immoral individuals? I’m just asking.

Pornography does not add any value to society. It undermines family values and the sanctity of marriage, robs women of their dignity and fuels the lust of rapists and paedophiles. South Africa will be better and safer without it. Let’s get rid of it!

■ **The Rev Kenneth Meshoe MP is the president of the African Christian Democratic Party**