Joint Statement on Pornography

06.12.1993 | The Synagogue Council of America and The National Conference of

The statement was developed in the course of twice-yearly meetings, begun in 1987, covering a wide range of issues of common concern.

Joint Statement on Pornography

by The Synagogue Council of America and The National Conference of Catholic Bishops

December 7, 1993

As Jewish and Roman Catholic leaders in America, we recognize the importance of the constitutionally recognized right to freedom of speech. At the same time, however, we are greatly concerned about the alarming growth of

pornography. Graphic public displays, books, videocassettes, advertising displays and even telecommunications frequently portray degrading and violent sexual behavior, which demeans the human character, debases the individual and is openly pornographic and morally offensive.

As Jews and Catholics, we teach that the creator fashioned each person in the Divine image. Any material that demeans the inherent dignity of women, men and children by removing sexuality from the context of meaningful interpersonal relationships denies the image of the Creator within all of us. In our view, pornography and the portrayal of sadistic violence debase sexuality, corrode human relationships, exploit individuals -- especially women and young people -- undermine marriage and family life, foster antisocial behavior and weaken the moral fiber of society itself.

Copyright JCRelations

As religious leaders, our first responsibility is to teach -- openly and consistently -- important moral truths, including truths about sexual morality. The so-called "ethic" of immediate sexual gratification is fundamentally opposed to integral human growth and fulfillment. We must educate about the values of family life and responsible life in society. We must teach that pornography degrades those used in its production, as well as those who are desensitized or whose values are perverted through its consumption. We denounce pornography because we believe that it reduces the Creator"s gift of sexuality to a level that is devoid of personal dignity, commitment and spirituality.

We call upon our fellow citizens to help stem the proliferation of pornography in our community by refusing to purchase or to view such materials. We

Copyright JCRelations

further call upon all members of our religious communities to foster a true respect for human sexuality among all those with whom they come in contact. We especially appeal to parents to give guidance to their children in this area. In addition, we believe it is incumbent upon teachers and religious leaders to openly address these issues.

Copyright JCRelations