



How the media is SEXUALISING YOUR CHILDREN

— by Taryn Hodgson

“Do not be afraid of them... Remember the Lord, Who is great and awesome, and fight for your...daughters, your wives and your homes.” Neh 4:14

Teen idol Miley Cyrus, caused controversy at the MTV Video Music Awards earlier this year with a raunchy performance with Robin Thicke - which saw her shaking her bottom while thrusting her hips. Along with her explicit music video 'Wrecking Ball', this has led media commentators to wonder if she is the new Madonna.

EXPLICIT ADOLESCENCE

In 2006 Cyrus rose to prominence after being cast in the Disney Channel television series 'Hannah Montana', in which she portrayed the starring character Miley Stewart, who leads a double life as pop star Hannah Montana. As per usual in the movies, she has the perfect body and hooks a

'cool' boyfriend in the end.

In 2010, pictures of girls, some as young as eight, dressed in red and black lingerie performing a racy dance routine to Beyoncé's 'All the Single Ladies' at a dance contest went viral, parents around the world were shocked. Yet what was just as shocking was that the parents of the girls involved approved!

ALARMING EXAMPLES

A Sketchers 'naughty and nice' advert featured pop star Christina Aguilera dressed as a schoolgirl in pigtails, with her shirt unbuttoned, licking a lollipop. Bratz and Barbie dolls come dressed in sexualised clothing such as miniskirts, fishnet stockings, and feather boas. G-string panties sized



From sweet to sexual



Parents have used TV as a babysitter for years, but just because you know where they are, it doesn't mean they are safe.

for 7 to 10-year-olds, are printed with slogans such as "wink, wink". T-shirts for girls display slogans such as "hot chick" and "boyfriend material".

THE MESSAGE IN THE MEDIA

Girls get this message repeatedly: What matters is how 'hot' or 'sexy' they look. It plays on TV and across the Internet. You hear it in song lyrics and music videos.

women: eating disorders, low self-esteem, and depression.

Frequent exposure to media images that sexualise girls affects how girls conceptualise femininity and sexuality. Girls who more frequently consume mainstream media tend to accept sexual stereotypes that depict women as sexual objects. They also place sexual attractiveness at the centre of their personal value.



Who are the role-models in your child's life? Do you really want them to admire celebrities who live immorally?

Hypersexualised imagery desensitises your child's God-given conscience

You see it in movies, electronic games, and clothing stores. It's a powerful message.

Most of us are concerned about the intrusion of pornography into every facet of society, yet we should be just as concerned about the portrayal of girls and women as flirtatious sex objects which fuels the pornography and prostitution industries.

GIRLS AT RISK

Research conducted by an American Psychological Association Task Force links sexualisation with three of the most common mental health problems of girls and

Why have parents uncritically accepted these sexually immoral messages marketed at their children?

Are we perhaps like the proverbial frog in the slowly heating pot, that we haven't noticed just how sexually immoral our society has become? Have we failed to study and obey God's Word?

GOD'S WORD

What does God's Word say? A woman is first and foremost valuable because she is made in His image. "Unfading beauty" comes from a "gentle and quiet spirit," »



What kind of an example are you setting for your children?



The sad progression of Miley Cyrus which unfortunately grew along with her influence





HOW ADVERTISERS TARGET TEENS

The constant stream of hypersexualised imagery and content that boys and girls are subjected to daily desensitises their God-given conscience, encourages selfishness and lust, and reshapes their sexual desires and actions in immoral, risky and even violent ways.

Maggie Hamilton, in an article "Groomed to Consume Porn: How Sexualized Marketing Targets Children" summarises how advertisers target teens:

- The methods corporations use are the very same techniques used by sexual predators to hone in on unsuspecting kids, as they meticulously groom them for their own ends.
- Like the sexual predator, corporations market their products to young people by pretending to be their friend.
- They offer gifts and incentives.
- They flatter them and talk in their own language.
- They assure kids that they 'understand' them.
- They deliberately use sexualised content because they know how irresistible sexual material can be.
- They work to separate a child victim from his/her parents, leaving them isolated and vulnerable.
- Media critic, Professor Mark Crispin Miller puts it this way: "The official advertising worldview is that your parents are creeps, teachers are nerds and idiots, authority figures are laughable, nobody can really understand kids except the corporate sponsor."
- Sexualised content is so prevalent among manufacturers of teen products, that most of us scarcely give it a thought.
- What would have been inconceivable a decade ago, has very quickly become an integral part of teenagers' lives.
- When a child grows up in a toxic sexual atmosphere, accessing porn seems a natural progression.

Why have parents accepted sexually immoral messages marketed at their children?

1 Peter 3:4. "Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised." Prov 31:30.

Bringing back Biblical girlhood, "In a world that frowns on femininity, that minimises motherhood, and that belittles the beauty of being a true woman of God, we should dare to believe that the Biblical vision for girlhood is a glorious vision. It is a vision for purity and contentment, for faith and fortitude, for enthusiasm and industry, for heritage and home, and for joy and friendship. It is a vision so bright and so wonderful that it must be boldly proclaimed."

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Teach your daughter that her value comes from who she is in Christ, rather than from how she looks. Help her to understand that the images of women in the media are usually unrealistic.

Don't buy your children clothes that have sexual connotations or slogans. If you don't like a TV show, CD, video, pair of jeans, or doll, say why. A conversation with your child will be more effective than simply saying, "No, you

can't buy it or watch it." Support campaigns, companies, and products that promote positive images of girls.

Complain to manufacturers, advertisers, television and movie producers, and retail stores when products sexualise girls.

BRING BACK BIBLICAL GIRLHOOD

Parents must teach boys to value girls as friends and sisters in Christ, rather than as sexual objects. Remember, your children will copy the way you dress and what you watch. What kind of an example are you setting for your children?

Let's bring back Biblical girlhood. Please join Africa Christian Action in praying and working for true justice, righteousness and truth in South Africa. "Who will rise up for Me against the wicked? Who will take a stand for Me against evildoers?" Psalm 94:16. ■

TARYN HODGSON is the International Co-ordinator of Africa Christian Action and co-author of 'Pornademic: How the Pornography Plague Affects You and What You Can Do About It'. She is available to speak at schools and youth groups on these issues. For info: info@christianaction.org.za.

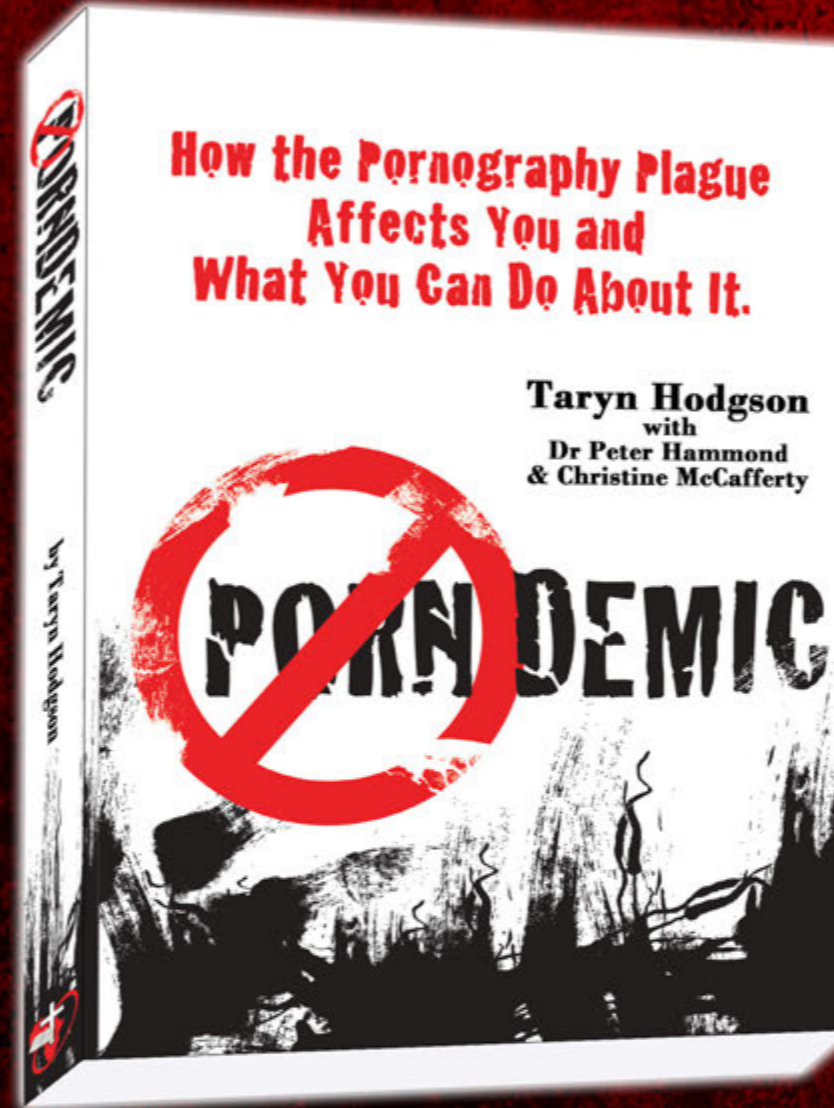


When Justin Bieber first became famous he was an innocent Christian boy, now he is infamous for his rebellion



Africa Christian Action

On the Frontlines of the Fight for the **Faith**, the **Family** and our **Future**.



PORNDEMIC:

How the Pornography Plague Affects You and What You Can Do About It

By Taryn Hodgson with Dr Peter Hammond and Christine McCafferty

"We need to understand the times we are living in and take decisive action against the pornography plague in our own lives and in our communities. If we do not put an end to it, it will end us." Rev Erlo Stegen, Director of KwaSizabantu Mission

"Pornademic shows us why we must all be involved in cleaning up our society from this threat to our families and to civilisation itself. More importantly, it shows us how to defeat it. This is a winnable war." From the Foreword by Dr Peter Hammond

"Every responsible adult should read a copy of this book... We must preserve the future generations and fight this insidious evil - accurate knowledge is critical if we are to be taken seriously."

Erin Georgiou, Editor - JOY! Magazine

R85 (excluding postage) 256 pages, with 22 infographics and 23 pro-family action pictures.



"Do not be afraid of them... Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes." Nehemiah 4:14

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