

Ministers have responsibility to report child porn users

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DENTON—Ministers who learn church members view child pornography have a responsibility to report what they know to law enforcement, a licensed professional counselor told a Denton Baptist Association seminar.

“Once you have the knowledge, you are responsible for it,” said Cathy Champ, a counselor and therapist at Ranch Hand Rescue Counseling Center in Argyle. She led a seminar on “When Sex Comes to Church” at First Baptist Church in Corinth.

Ministers are most likely to learn about a church member’s use of child pornography after a spouse discovers it, Champ said.

Let the police investigate

“Always do a police report,” she said. “Let them investigate.”

Perpetrators are unlikely to be prosecuted, unless they have downloaded images to their computer and are in possession of them, she noted. Individuals who are convicted for possession of a single image of a minor whom authorities can identify often possess hundreds of other images of young girls whose ages cannot be verified.

“Keep in mind, when people are looking at child pornography, these are crime scenes,” Champ said. “These are frightened little kids.”

Who uses child porn?

Child pornography users are 99 percent male and disproportionately are well-educated Caucasians with no previous criminal history. But at least 40

percent of confirmed child pornography users ultimately commit contact offenses, such as sexual abuse of a minor, she said.

In many cases, people who view child pornography say they were appalled the first time they saw such an image while viewing other pornography, said Champ, a licensed sex offender treatment provider.

However, the nature of pornography is that the dopamine rush it provides “changes the brain,” she said. “It becomes over-stimulated and seeks out more extreme stimulus.”

Nature of pornography

Of the 10 most widely viewed pornographic sites on the Internet, 90 percent depict violence, Champ said. About 43 percent of Internet users view pornography, and the average age of initial exposure to Internet pornography is 11.

Internet pornography is more enticing than the magazines and DVDs sold in “adult” bookstores because it is “anonymous, instantly accessible and offers an online community of acceptance,” she said.

Pornography not only “perpetuates a destructive industry ... and terrible sexual myths,” but also destroys marriages, Champ said.

“Sex becomes about one person’s pleasure instead of a relationship and mutual pleasure,” she said.

Although pornography triggers chemical and neurological responses that imprint the brain, the damage can be reversed, Champ insisted. She recommended a series of psychosexual evaluations and intensive counseling for anyone addicted to pornography—particularly child pornography.

“If sexual interest in children is indicated, they need to be accompanied by

trained chaperones whenever they are around children,” she said.