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I explained the gist of this article to one senior pastor who agreed with my viewpoint but believed the situation hopeless, saying that society and the church are too far into this to ever be changed. I must disagree. The naked truth of reality changed me. Porno-prudery is a learned attitude that can be unlearned through repentance. Gnostic ideas that devalue matter and flesh can be dispelled from our pulpits. Preaching theologically-correct body acceptance can bring a reformation in Christian thinking that restores the strong incarnational message our modern world needs to hear.² Although it means swallowing our pride, even the last step is possible: restitution. If our porno-prudery has played a role in the development of a society riddled with porn addiction, body-image dysfunctions, gender confusion issues, human-trafficking, and more, we must confess our error, ask forgiveness, and start behaving as if the “fearfully and wonderfully made” naked human body never stopped being “very good” (Gen 1:31).

¹ For further study on this, see my article, “Incarnational Truth about Humanity’s Sexual Nature” (Google search it....).

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beautiful or significant of the laws of the universe than the nude human body. In fact it is not only among artists but among all people that a greater appreciation and respect for the human body should develop. When we respect the nude we will no longer have any shame about it.”

But before ordination or art classes, I was an L&D nurse, and still am. I work routinely and intimately with bare female anatomy. If this raises any brows, I’ve hammered out my own quote that brings Wojtyla’s and Henri’s together: “A Creator-honoring, incarnational view of the naked human body dispels the fantasy-laden, porno-prudish conception religiously taught and pornographically exploited in Western culture.”

For almost 25 years, I put up with the uncomfortable contradiction between my experiential view of hospital nudity and the one taught by my Christian upbringing. Finally, when God opened my eyes to the dysfunctional immaturity of our culture’s reaction to public breastfeeding, I did my homework. Through intense research about the phenomenon of human nakedness biblically, historically, culturally, and psycho-socially, I experienced a radical paradigm shift in my thinking. My studies showed me the American church’s urgent need of repentance, reformation and restitution for having adopted and promoted Victorianism’s *flight from the body*.

The bottom line is this: a prudish view of the body is a pornographic one. Religiously placing an obscene or indecent sexual connotation on the sight of gender-distinguishing body parts creates a sexually objectified body. Such legalism, if

Embracing Nakedness: Adopting God’s View of Bare Anatomy

By David L. Hatton - published on Seedbed.com , Jan. 9, 2014



I’m a Wesleyan pastor who is grateful for the landmark *Theology of the Body* by Karol Wojtyla (late Pope John Paul II). No theologian ever dealt so comprehensively with God’s purpose for gendered human embodiment. This quote summarizes his theme: “The body, in fact, and only the body, is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and the divine. It has been created to transfer into the visible reality of the world the mystery hidden from eternity in God, and thus to be a sign of it.”

As an art lover and amateur artist, I was surprised to read Wojtyla’s ideas somewhat echoed by Robert Henri in his book *The Art Spirit*: “There is nothing in all the world more

socially embraced, becomes the conceptual foundation for a pornographic culture, as ours is now. Also, this objectification trivializes the body language of human genitalia, allowing them to be ignored as features of personal gender identity and distinction. Take some time to do the math on this, and it should cause tears.

Theologically, beyond shining a spotlight on the church’s notorious support of Victorian prudery, these personal insights showed me how Gnosticism’s influence on the early church still lingers in popular Christian thinking.¹

Practically, my discoveries led me to join some other pastors in creating a website to fight porn addiction. Our message at MCAG (mychainsaregone.org) is *body acceptance*, calling men to see women as the Creator does, in opposition to the traditional body-shame approach, which tells them, “Bounce your eyes!”

Ministerially, I feel like “the voice of one crying in the wilderness.” Christian porno-prudery is so well established as a virtue that most are blind to its real nature as a vice. Yet it has kept Christians from being the world-renowned experts in sex education that our understanding of creation and the Incarnation ought to have made us. It has stopped multiple thousands of Christian art students from ever becoming skilled with the nude. If we hadn’t abandoned the human body by surrendering God’s image and temple into secular hands, these young artists might have become modern Michelangelo’s painting contemporary “Sistine-Chapel” ceilings. Such a holy

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