

D. Pornography Reporting & Restoration Procedures

Because of the pervasiveness of and ease of access to pornography in our society, we recognize the power of the temptations that can bombard a Christian individual in our day. ABWE desires to help our missionaries overcome sinful behaviors, including the use of pornography, which is a form of moral failure. Pornography may be presented via internet sourced media and communication, websites, and other media including books, magazines, postcards, photographs, sculpture, drawings, paintings, animation, sound recording, phone calls, film, video, video games, etc.

We want to promote a culture where individuals struggling with temptations of pornography feel the freedom to seek help from fellow Christians (Gal. 6:1; James 5:16) in order to put to death the deeds of the flesh and overcome it (Rom. 6:12-14, 19; 8:13; Eph. 4:22-24; 5:3-4; 1 Peter 2:11). We welcome missionaries who are struggling with pornography to come forward so that we can come alongside them. We want them to seek help without fear of reprisal, shaming, or condemnation in order to find victory over it. ABWE has created a caring process to help implement biblical practices aimed at restoration with God, family, ministries, and those who are also impacted.

ABWE's desire is for restoration. This requires active intervention, honesty, vulnerability, and on-going accountability for those pursuing help and who have a serious desire to repent and overcome the use of pornography. While restoration on all fronts is our primary focus, ABWE acknowledges that there are consequences to pornography use. Therefore, the process may also include ongoing counseling, an absence from ministry, and possibly resignation or termination from the mission.

We offer the following steps in order to provide a path towards restoration without excusing the sin. The goal of each step is to see the individual walking in repentance in order to experience spiritual victory, growth, and restoration. The following are *guiding principles* for our care of the missionaries:

- 1. Care and Confidentiality for the Confessor.** When a missionary confesses sins of pornography, we will step into action alongside the missionary in a way that balances confidentiality with addressing the seriousness of the sin. We realize that there are times where we must weigh confidentiality with issues of righteousness and justice so that confidentiality does not mean that a sin is ignored or hidden in secret.
- 2. Careful Assessment.** Any process we enter with the missionary begins with determining the level and use of pornography and evaluating the heart response of the missionary. The assessment phase will be careful, objective, fair, and according to Biblical principles by a person of qualified spiritual maturity (ex. someone from Member Care [MC] or a licensed Christian counselor). The assessment will include evaluation to determine the cause, frequency, and sources of this sin. The above principle of confidentiality is limited by the level of severity (e.g. necessary referrals and reporting).
- 3. Establishment of a Plan.** A plan is essential for any recovery and potential restoration. If restoration looks promising based on the assessment and the heart and spirit of the offender, an initial plan will be created and regularly assessed. We will work through an accountability plan with the person. If there is evidence of a repentant spirit and a desire for help, we will proceed

with steps of care to a path of restoration; however, if the severity of the problem warrants and/or if the missionary is unrepentant, a process may proceed to resignation or dismissal.

4. **Involvement and Communication.** If the situation warrants it and if not already involved, others may need to be informed and engaged in the process. This includes the RD, the ED, and possibly the FTL. There will be further assessment and a plan. The RD/ED will invite the Sending Church into the care and restoration process. There may need to be a change in the missionary's status (e.g. time off field, leave of absence, loss of responsibilities, etc.) and/or the involvement of a licensed Christian counselor.
5. **Restoration.** The ultimate goal is for the missionary to experience freedom from the enslavement to this sin and to walk in the victory and restoration of living out a life transformed by the gospel. If at any point it is determined that restoration is not probable or there is insufficient progress, ABWE may determine it is necessary to proceed to resignation or dismissal.

Pornography Policy Process:

