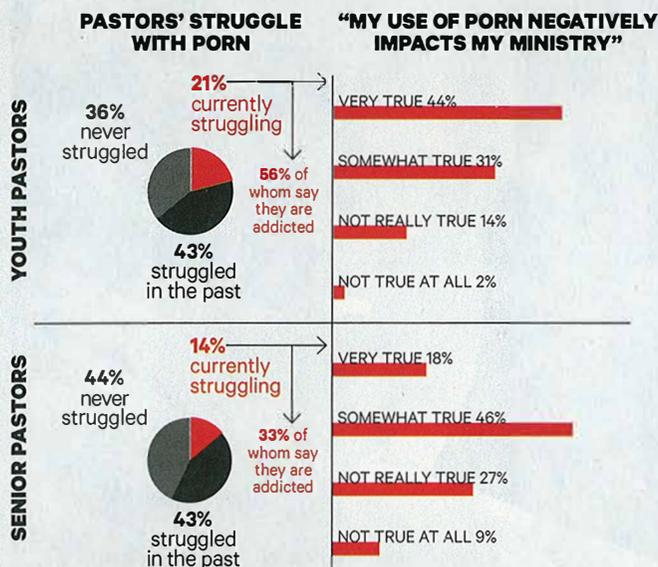




PORN IN THE PULPIT AND THE PEWS

At what they claim will be the most comprehensive Christian conference ever on the problem of online pornography, this month Josh McDowell's ministry and Barna Group will present their survey of how 770 pastors and 2,000 teenagers and adults use porn. Some highlights:



IF PASTORS USE PORN ...

ADULT CHRISTIANS THINK PASTORS SHOULD:

- 41% be fired or asked to resign.
- 29% take a leave of absence until no longer using it.
- 16% be allowed to teach and given help to deal with it.
- 5% have no action taken against them by their church.
- 4% remain on staff but no longer teach.

OTHER PASTORS THINK PASTORS SHOULD:

- 82% find a professional counselor.
- 59% find a group of mature Christians to hold them accountable.
- 58% tell their spouse.
- 45% find a counselor who is also a pastor.
- 21% tell the elders/deacons/board of their church.
- 8% resign.
- 1% tell their congregation.



SYRIA

ISIS releases last of captured Christians

One year after ISIS beheaded 21 Coptic Christians on a Libyan beach, believers celebrated the release of the group that was feared would become the next propaganda massacre. In the wake of the videotaped martyrdoms in February 2015, Islamist extremists kidnapped 230 Assyrian Christians in Syria's Hasakah province as ISIS quickly captured more territory. After a year in captivity, the final 43 hostages were released. Supporters worldwide donated millions to secure their ransom. The Assyrian Church of the East Relief Organization asked for prayers for healing for the former hostages.



CHINA

House churches defend official churches

The pastor of the 10,000-member, state-approved Chongyi Church was arrested after he protested China's removal of

hundreds of crosses from churches. Most of China's persecution of Christians has targeted unofficial "house churches," but a campaign by officials in Zhejiang province to de-Christianize the skyline of "China's Jerusalem" has affected even official Three-Self Patriotic Movement churches. The silver lining: the growing unity between Three-Self and "underground" Christians. House churches have petitioned in support of official churches, noted David Ro, the Lausanne Movement's international deputy director for East Asia. "For the first time, house church leaders have crossed the divide to stand beside their former adversaries."

Gospel for Asia sued over 10/40 Window donations

An Arkansas couple has filed a lawsuit against one of the world's largest mission agencies, alleging that Gospel for Asia (GFA) used only a fraction of the \$115 million it received in 2013 on aiding Christians in the 10/40 Window (the land

between 10 and 40 degrees north of the equator). Despite fundraising materials that promise 100 percent of donations will be used in the field (primarily India), only about 13 percent were, the lawsuit claims. The couple alleges most of the money was used on administration, a new headquarters in Texas, and a for-profit hospital in India. GFA, which lost its 36-year approval by the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability in October, pledged to "respond accordingly and transparently" to the allegations. "We consider it a blessing to finally have the opportunity to bring this matter to full resolution," said the ministry founded by K. P. Yohannan. "We will come out of this stronger."



MEXICO

Pope quiet on Catholic-Protestant tensions

During Pope Francis' February visit to the Mexican state of Chiapas, he encouraged its poor, indigenous population in

WHO SEEKS OUT PORN REGULARLY (MONTHLY OR MORE)

42% Non-Christians

 72% ages 13-24
55% age 25+

 36% ages 13-24
17% age 25+

13% Practicing* Christians

 41% ages 13-24
23% age 25+

 13% ages 13-24
5% age 25+

36% teen boys
36% single men
18% married men

5% teen girls
9% single women
2% married women

*Self-identified Christians who have attended a church service in the past month and say their faith is important to them.

HOW PORN USERS FEEL

% PRACTICING CHRISTIANS % ALL OTHERS

I AM COMFORTABLE WITH HOW MUCH PORN I USE.

39% 73%

I WOULD RATHER NOT USE PORN AT ALL.

40% 14%

I FEEL A SENSE OF GUILT WHEN I USE PORN.

34% 15%

PORN HAS NEGATIVELY AFFECTED MY SEX LIFE.

6% 5%

PORN HAS POSITIVELY AFFECTED MY SEX LIFE.

25% 28%

I HAVE TRIED TO STOP USING PORN, BUT STILL USE IT.

16% 7%

HOW WRONG IS PORN?

Today's young adults (ages 13 to 24) view not recycling as more immoral than porn:

MOST IMMORAL

- Stealing
- Adultery
- Lying
- Not recycling
- Thinking negatively about someone else
- Overeating
- Wasting electricity or water
- Coveting others' possessions
- Viewing pornographic images
- Reading erotic or pornographic content
- Watching explicit television or movies

LEAST IMMORAL

an attempt to bolster sliding Catholic numbers. Like much of Latin America, Chiapas's Catholic population (now 58%) is shrinking as Protestant churches grow. Francis has welcomed the region's indigenous-Catholic mix, but didn't mention the persecution leveled against local Protestants, including cutting off their utilities and expelling them from their homes. While Mexico's constitution guarantees freedom of religion, the local autonomy it grants to indigenous people leaves Protestants virtually unprotected.

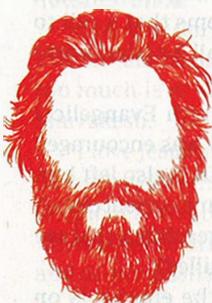
Judge approves Ark park

The Ark Encounter, a tourist attraction of literally biblical proportions, is entitled to the same tax rebates as non-Christian attractions, a federal judge has ruled. The Kentucky tourism board rejected the Ark's application because the rebate "cannot be used to fund religious indoctrination" and because its operator, Answers in Genesis (AiG), only hires those who share its beliefs. But the US district judge said the First Amendment guarantees AiG can't be discriminated

against based on its religious beliefs, and that it can hire based on them. The Ark, a 510-foot replica of Noah's, is set to open in July. A state consultant projected it will attract about half a million visitors in its first year, while AiG projects 1.4 million.

Leaders mull immovable Easter feast

Anglican, Catholic, and Orthodox church leaders want to fix the date of Easter—which falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox—to the second or third Sunday of April. Eastern Orthodox churches, which follow the Julian calendar instead of the Gregorian and require that Easter come after Passover, celebrate later than the other churches. Coptic Orthodox Bishop Angaelos believes celebrating together would be a powerful act of unity. Anglican leader Justin Welby would like to see the date fixed within the next 5 to 10 years, but acknowledged that "the first attempt to do this was in the 10th century."



"In our area, there are three main groups: the poor, the cool, and the Muslims. And beards cover at least two groups reasonably well."

Adam Atkinson, an Anglican priest in London's East End, on how his own bushy beard helps him minister to his neighborhood, which is 85 percent Muslims from Bangladesh. The strategy has drawn the Bishop of London's praise. THE TELEGRAPH