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Moral Groups Fighting Pornography

IT was somewhat surprising to read in the Wall Street Journal that television networks and advertisers screen commercials for decency, pornography and other aspects of content.

As an occasional viewer, I had gotten the impression that all the bars were down. And I never stay up to see late shows nor do I have a cable connection to bring in X-rated movies.

Pornography did not seem to be the biggest concern TV people had but the story reported they had put wedding rings on a man and woman in a cologne commercial and required several young women to wear one-piece bathing suits instead of bikinis in another.

They had carefully checked to see that Japan still had bathhouses before showing an apparently naked couple together in a tub.

Of greater concern than decency, it appeared, were such things as how to knock a competitor's product and get away with it and how to avoid trouble about ethnic stereotype characters.

Nevertheless, a lot of people are concerned and much disturbed

about the tidal wave of pornographic material that is sweeping the country by broadcast, print, film and in person. Although some laws exist to prohibit the worst kinds, readers advise that district attorneys and other enforcement officials merely laugh or ignore those who may come in to file complaints. Some have tried it.

Recently, a group led by the Rev. Floyd Sheely brought Brad Curl of Washington, D.C., to Oklahoma City to generate support for an "Oklahoma City Statement" concerning a well-known magazine. It was similar to a "Chicago Statement" condemning the same publication.

They objected to the "pornographic mentality" it was said to generate, and various ways of persuading merchants to discontinue its sale were discussed, including boycott of advertised products.

Even if this campaign should squelch this magazine (which is not likely), dozens of others already are on the market to take its place and rake in profits by appealing to baser tastes of humanity.

Another group is called STOP, meaning "Stop Tragic Spread of

Pornography." Laurence Justice, Baptist pastor, is president. This group has designated the week of Oct. 24-30 as National Pornographic Awareness Week, and will hold a rally on Oct. 18 at Sunnyside Baptist Church.

It is difficult to imagine anyone who is not already aware that the display of prurient, lewd and obscene materials exists on all sides. It is almost impossible to avoid daily contact with it.

Justice says the purpose of awareness week is to make the public and parents realize that continual exposure to such materials results in immorality and often leads to utter depravity.

Since the Supreme Court holds that freedom of the press applies to the bad as well as to the good, the only recourse citizens may have against the objectionable is to take profit out of it.

This apparently may be accomplished only by changing the attitudes of the people and inspiring individual citizens to seek higher standards of decency and morality. Difficult but not impossible!