

# Frontline

AMERICAN DECENCY ASSOCIATION  
Volume XXIII Issue IV April 2008

## Victoria's Secret CEO says "VS is too sexy." ADA awaits change. No alterations yet.



### Does this look like a positive change?

This picture was taken at the Rivertown Crossings Mall in Grandville, Michigan on Tuesday, March 18. It has been nearly three weeks since Sharen Turney, CEO and President of Victoria's Secret Megabrand and Intimate Apparel, stated that Victoria's Secret has become "too sexy" and as a result would tone down their image.

### Tilting at windmills?

By Bill Johnson

As I was boarding an airplane at Gerald R. Ford International Airport in Grand Rapids on February 28, I received a call from Kimberly, ADA's administrative assistant, stating that CNN wanted to interview me. I asked what the interview was regarding and was told that the CEO of Victoria's Secret had announced to investors that Victoria's Secret had become "too sexy" and that the company was going to make some positive changes to improve their image.

In addition, news agencies were reporting that Victoria's Secret was in financial difficulty.

As you know, ADA has been leading the charge against Victoria's Secret pornographic mall displays and advertisements. For a number of years we have been involved in standing against the erotic assault upon shoppers by Victoria's Secret.

We've urged people to boycott the company and to divest from Victoria's Secret/Limited Brands, providing a listing of the mutual funds that include VS.

We have assisted concerned citizens who have led protests at their local malls. We've encouraged you our readers to express your displeasure with the blatant use of eroticism by Victoria's Secret by way of phone calls, letters, postcards and emails to VS, your local mall, and the mall's corporate office.



### A simple telephone call

The CEO of Victoria's Secret Megabrand and Intimate Apparel says that Victoria's Secret has gotten "too sexy", yet three weeks after the announcement it is business as usual. The picture above is yet one evidence.

We encourage you to tell others of your concerns at church, at family gatherings, and at the workplace. We also urge you to call or use the enclosed postcard addressed to VS to let them know that you are expecting their actions to match their words.

**Victoria's Secret: 614-415-8000**

## Personal note



We are David.

I'm not as dumb as I look. I know that Victoria's Secret is a giant in the corporate world. We are David. We continue to use that which is available to us to press forward using the humble tools that we have. The use of public opinion, bumper stickers, interviews, prayer, public protests (pickets), letter writing, boycotting, influencing family and friends, divesting from Victoria's Secret.

Using careful discernment in where we have our monies is being a good steward. If we have investments in money markets that support Victoria's Secret (Limited Brands, Inc.) then we need to get out of them.

I might add that if you have made such changes, you should check your investments because the top 10 Mutual Funds with holdings in Limited/Victoria's Secret have changed as recently as March 4. (See page three for more information.) That should be encouraging to you as it is to me. It tells us that there is a lot of volatility with money investors and Limited Brands. Also note the article from the Wall Street Journal on page three. Here's one incredible quote: ***"...Standard & Poor's Ratings warned it may cut the credit rating of Limited Brands to junk status because of growing concern about the company's debt."*** The battle is on. Are you with us or watching from a distance? We need your help and prayers.

## Some troubling trends regarding Meijer



For those of you outside of the midwest, you may not be aware of Meijer Superstores based in Grand Rapids, Michigan with many locations throughout Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Ohio and a few in Pennsylvania.

Meijer has been a highly regarded shopping center for many years and has been one of those burgeoning corporations that still seems to listen to their customers. We hope that remains true, although we have some doubts. Listed below are growing concerns I've had over the last several months regarding Meijer's merchandising decisions.

DVDs. Some of you will remember that in the 1990s, ADA (then AFA of Michigan) continued to faithfully and regularly express great concern regarding Meijer's video rental department. They carried numerous video tapes with material detrimental to the family.

Finally, after exerting perhaps the strongest boycott that we had ever unleashed, Meijer got out of the video rental business. However, in recent years, they began to carry an ever-growing DVD section. I have recently noticed that Meijer has begun to sell some very concerning DVDs. [I list a few of them below.]

On three occasions in recent months I have spoken to managers of local Meijer stores, and one in particular near the Lakes Mall at Harvey Street in Muskegon, MI. On each of these occasions I directly pulled off the shelf a number of DVDs and asked to speak with a manager. I asked if they remembered the concerns that our ministry had with their video rentals in the 1990s. Each of them recalled this. I stated clearly that our concerns were returning and showed them the various troubling DVDs. I mentioned the following: *Wild Things*, *Old School*, *The Girl Next Door*, *Tripping the Rift*, *Jack-ass the Movie*, *Who's Your Daddy*, *Basic Instinct 2*, *The Amityville Horror*.

In a letter to Mr. Rick Zehr, Store Director at Meijer in Muskegon, I provided the following documentation (in part) regarding the content of *The Girl Next Door* obtained from the movie review site, [www.screenit.com](http://www.screenit.com): "Here's a brief summary of the content found in this R-rated sex comedy. Profanity consists of at least 49 "F" words, while plenty of other expletives and colorful phrases are also uttered. Sexually explicit dialogue is present (including in song lyrics), as is all sorts of sexually related material.

"That includes but isn't limited to some footage from a porno tape (nothing X-rated, but definitely hard R), real and imagined sex with movement and sounds, gay humor, and imagined female to male oral sex (movement seen) and then lesbian material.

"Female and male nudity is present (breasts and butts) as are various scantily clad women, while various phallic and other sexual objects (including a furry, erect penis on a human-sized animal costume) are seen." [source: [www.screenit.com](http://www.screenit.com)]

In addition, we also expressed our concern regarding *Cosmopolitan* magazine. Several months ago we applauded Meijer for actively and seemingly aggressively using blinders for Cosmo at the check-out counters. I have no doubt but that they were sincere. Yet, over just a few months, we have discovered again and again that in one aisle Cosmo may be covered and in the next aisle it isn't. This has been true at numerous Meijer stores. I also urged the local managers I spoke with to take this up with Meijer's corporate office, requesting a corporate-wide policy directing an employee at each store to conscientiously insure that these blinders are in place.

**We urge you to send the enclosed postcard to Meijer and/or write your own letter expressing your concern.**

## Victoria's Secret Is 'Too Sexy,' Says Brand's Chief Executive

By Amy Merrick, Wall Street Journal  
February 28, 2008 12:06 p.m.

The chief executive of the Victoria's Secret lingerie chain — known for its provocative, televised fashion shows and eye-popping stores — admitted something shocking Thursday morning: The brand has become "too sexy."

"We have so much gotten off our heritage," said Sharen Turney, chief executive of Victoria's Secret, during an analyst call with investors.

"We use the word 'sexy' a lot and have gotten off 'ultra-feminine,'" said Ms. Turney, explaining that she wants to bring more-sophisticated, higher-quality products back to Victoria's Secret stores.

But that will be a huge task. Victoria's Secret has shifted drastically from its image in the 1990s, when working women shopped its pastel-painted stores for stylish but practical bras and underwear. Back then, classical music played quietly in the background, while saleswomen discreetly offered help.

Today, Victoria's Secret stores have been remodeled, lacquered black with neon-pink accents. Pounding music pumps through the loudspeakers. The brand has added new merchandise lines that are much less modest than its traditional styles. Malls routinely endure protests from parents who are outraged by the stores' window displays, which often feature suggestively posed mannequins in over-the-top lingerie.

Victoria's Secret is owned by Limited Brands Inc., which on Wednesday reported a 12% decline in net income for its fiscal fourth quarter. Sales at stores open at least a year dropped 8% at Victoria's Secret, as the weak economy and stale product offerings kept customers from spending. ...

Victoria's Secret has been pouring money into a major program of remodeling and enlarging stores. While the refurbished stores have produced

sales gains, Ms. Turney said, they haven't performed as well as the retailer had hoped.

Ms. Turney said Victoria's Secret still plans to hold a fashion show this year to kick off the holidays, but it may look different. "We want to continue to reinvent the fashion show," she said.

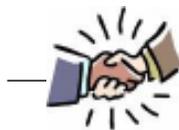
She pointed to the company's recent Super Bowl television commercial, which she described as "less seductive," as the future direction of the brand.

### S&P Ratings Warns of Potential Cut

Meanwhile, Standard & Poor's Ratings warned it may cut the credit rating of Limited Brands to junk status because of growing concern about the company's debt.

Analyst Diane Shane cited "the soft U.S. economy, weak mall traffic and declining consumer confidence" as factors for a possible downgrade. The ratings agency plans to resolve the matter after it meets with Limited's management to discuss the company's current and future strategy to navigate current market trends.

She noted S&P has a "growing concern that the company will not be able to improve its credit metrics as quickly as we had expected." The firm's current rating on Limited is BBB-, the lowest investment-grade rating.



### There was no handshake between Victoria's Secret and American Decency Association but ...

When a company CEO makes such large statements, we expect their actions to match their words.

Their words, acknowledging that they have gone too far and committing to make a change for the better, are meaningless without real change. Does the

leadership of VS think that we are so gullible that we'll accept their words at face value? The proof is in the pudding.

It's clear that Victoria's Secret continues to display their products in the same pornographic way, but also clear is the fact that they are hurting financially.

**Please send in the enclosed postcard and let them know we are watching.**

### If you have investments in any of the following then ....

If you have investments in any of the following 10 mutual funds then you have dollars supporting Victoria's Secret (Limited Brands). You may want to consider transferring to THE TIMOTHY PLAN - morally screened mutual funds that have zero tolerance for investments in Victoria's Secret or any other company linked to pornography or anti-family entertainment. You can contact [www.timothyplan.com](http://www.timothyplan.com) or call them at 1-800-846-7526.

### Here are the 10 leading mutual funds of Limited Brands, Inc.

- Investment Company of American
- Capital Research Global Investors
- Washington Mutual Investors Fund
- Growth Fund of America Inc
- Oakmark Select Fund
- Oakmark Fund
- Hartford Capital Appreciation Fund
- Hotchkis and Wiley Mid-cap Value Fund
- RS Investment Trust-Value Fund
- Fundamental Investors Inc.

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## The passing of my Dad.

My Dad was 84 years old. He was a veteran of World War II. The folding and presentation of the United States flag, the firing of the guns, and the playing of “Taps” culminated a powerful service. God’s presence was with us throughout the service.

What a privilege to have a father who loved me. Though he wasn’t a Christian in my years under his roof and was very busy with his automobile business, I never doubted his love for me. I could see it so readily in his eyes.



Dad told me many times in recent weeks “You know I love you very much.”

How proud I am of him for the gracious manner in which he conducted himself over these ten months, despite his severe dementia and having to be confined to a wheel chair since his fall on July 5, 2007. He never complained. He expressed gratitude. I visited him nearly every day and most every time he would say “I have had a wonderful life. I have no complaints.” Or as he would often say, “I have no squawks.” When he looked at me I saw an intensity that I greatly appreciated, a great dignity as he aged, and evidence of a faith that developed in his later years.

Below are a few pictures of my dad. Above is a picture of the two of us right before he was admitted into a nursing home.

This is not about activism, but there is nothing better than active love and a love that will never fade. My love for Dad will never fade. For those of you who still have a dad or mom alive - no matter what his/her condition - love him/her. And if there is not a unity, ask God to help you to establish unity and love back into your relationship.

Years ago there was a division in our relationship. With time and God’s help, that was put aside. I rejoice that I asked for God’s help long ago to heal breeches and restore our relationship. He answered the prayers of my heart!

Bill Johnson,  
son of Robert J. Johnson (Born 9-21-23. Died 3-10-08)



**This picture was taken at the World War II Memorial in Washington DC.**



**A picture that is worth more than a 1000 words.**



**This picture was in recent weeks. Dad didn’t give in to self pity. He never gave up.**



**More and more I saw this look of love and tenderness in his eyes. I cherish my Dad and I cherish the memories these pictures bring. I am so proud of my DAD.**