

The emphasis on discipleship training will increase, he says, as the distance between unbelief and belief increases. We will need to learn how to evaluate everything through 'Gospel lenses'.

There are points where Christianity will have to part company with postmodernity.

1. Postmodernity's propensity for collapsing the past and the future into the present.
2. The pessimism of postmodernity.
3. The rejection of any kind of metanarrative.
4. The acceptance of alternative religiosities.
5. The insistence on entertainment.
6. The focus on the superficial.
7. The preference for mobility and lack of commitment.

Carrell calls the churches to authentic community, worship, message and confidence as they face a new century with a critically changed environment.

### Evaluation of the Book

*Moving between Times* is an easy to read introduction to some of the major changes that are occurring in contemporary culture. It picks up a wealth of important themes which will help us to make sense of the changes and provides some indicators which can be used in their evaluation.

As with any overview, it has great value in that it provides a general picture which can be useful in interpreting the significance of the detail. At the same time, the book has not been able to deal with the debates about the detail and thus presents a simplified account of the cultural movements.

As in other literature in this 'Gospel and culture' movement, it is not always clear what culture is. Carrell defines 'culture' as 'that pattern of unspoken assumptions and commonly held values that provides parameters for a community's behaviour' (p.23). Yet, there is no reference to empirical work about what people actually believe or the assumptions they actually hold. In practice, the book deals primarily with 'high culture', summarising some of the themes that have emerged in discussions about modernity and postmodernity, rather than dealing with the culture of ordinary people, despite the references, for example, to consumerism. Culture, at the level experienced by ordinary people, is more complex and more multi-textured, than the broad themes of modernity and postmodernity can explain, and so will be the Christian responses.

*Philip Hughes*

*Moving Between Times* is available for \$29.95 from The DeepSight Trust, PO Box 87-362, Meadowbank, Auckland, New Zealand.

## The Sex Industry

(A PG rated article)

One area which has probably rated a mention in the newspapers or in the electronic media on at least a daily basis over the last year: the sex industry in Australia.

This is partly because many of the issues within the industry are also "hot" topics within Federal Parliament and significant topics for influential politicians like Senator Brian Harradine. Some of these matters have been the subject of protracted negotiation in the Parliament and have recently had legislation enacted, including regulation of telephone sex services and censorship of certain sites on the World Wide Web through the online services act.

The other reason for the interest is probably the same reason for interest in sex in general. Sex as a topic sells - it attracts readers and listeners in a way that many other topics do not.

The C.R.A. publication, *Australian Life and the Christian Faith: Facts and Figures* contained many statistics on a wide range of areas, including some on sexual matters and censorship, but one area of neglect was the sex industry.

The Sex Industry is a very broad term, but over the last few years it has become a focussed area, particularly because of the establishment and work of the Eros Foundation in late 1992. (A prior movement with similar objectives as the Adult Video Industry Association.) The Eros Foundation has two full-time lobbyists, Fiona Patten and Robbie Swan, both familiar names to people who have kept up with these issues over the years. The clear aim is to place the sex industry and its many dimension as a legitimate business within Australian society. Thus there is not only long term lobbying, but lobbying related to specific events and matters as they arise within the parliamentary scene.

As well as its industry base, the Eros Foundation also provides support to workers in the industry, particularly for educational purposes and for businesses in their support for the sale of classifiable material only. The Eros Foundation lists 14 areas within the industry (with always room for more): Adult (sex) shops; Brothels;

Escort agencies; X and R rated video production and distribution; table or erotic dancing; erotic publishing; erotic massage; safe sex and sex education production; adult broadcasting and narrowcasting; sex surrogacy and counselling services; adult cinema; adult products manufacture; erotic artists.

The Eros Foundation produce a regular journal, *Adult Industry Review*. This is produced partly for its members, but is also used as a tool of sex education and promotion of its work. One of the interesting facets of this publication is the number of religious references and comments, particularly related to problems of churches in the sexual area: paedophilia, sexual practice within churches such as women who have had children to priests. One regular article entitled 'God's Little Acre', is actually a satirical focus on the failures or inconsistencies of churches and church leaders and discussion of conservative politicians and churches. One issue of the review even contained a review of *On Being Alive* (a non-denominational evangelical publication) because it had articles on sexuality.

The Eros Foundation also provides a service in collecting statistics and information which is used for its lobbying work. Their statistics are often quoted in articles and occasionally on the television (e.g for *The Big Picture* program on Marrickville Council/area and Prostitution).

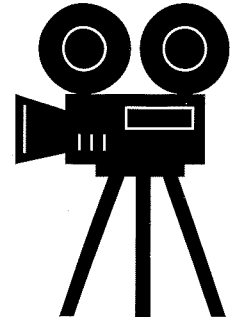
Statistics on sex industry areas are difficult to find, but there has been a consistent attempt to collate material and present a picture, because lobby groups need to show how many people are using the services of the industry and how much economic significance the industry has.

Many of these statistics were published in a promotional book in 1997: *Laughter and Light: Inside the Australian Sex Industry* (note: this is for adults only and contains some sexually explicit material). This book was a reference guide and report for parliamentarians about the sex industry and some of the issues, such as censorship, public opinion polls and media reporting and Internet and web access, a very topical area at present due to the major debate around censorship because of the move to restrict Internet access. Phillip Adams wrote the foreword and David Haines contributes an article on censorship. Haines was, at one stage, Deputy Censor for the Office of Film and Literature Classification, before recently embarking on a career making X-rated films, through a production company Redstone Films, with the first feature being *Buffy Down Under* (nothing to do with the cult 'slayer' figure).

## A brief picture

**The X rated video industry** is clearly a substantial business, with about 2.4 million videos duplicated in Australia (through legal rights), with another 720,000 illegally duplicated.

At least 500,000 are sold each year through mail order, with most being sold through stores in the ACT and NT, which are the only two jurisdictions to have legal sale and rental, while the ACT also has legal production and duplication.



The combined mailing lists of the mail order firms is around 640,000, though there would be some duplication in this. Overall it is the second largest direct mail group in Australia and it provides a ready database which can become a strategic lobbying initiative as witnessed during some election campaigns in recent years.

Most videos are bought through mail order, though sex shops also sell videos to an estimated 85,000 direct customers. It is estimated that about 1 million videos are sold in a year through all the various purchase options with a market value of about \$34 million dollars, with Queenslanders buying more than 1/3 of the videos sold by mail order compared to their population profile of 19% of all Australians. Eros estimate that there are 20 million X rated videos at present in Australia.

Between 1/4 and 1/3 of the films and videos classified each year are X rated, with the overwhelming majority of these coming from the USA and a smaller number from Europe.

Eros estimates that about 7.5% of the adult population are regular viewers of X rated material. Overall as everyone notes there has been little academic research into these areas, with one report from Dr Hugh Potter quoted in the Eros publication. This outlines statistics comparing male and female viewing and age. One interesting statistic from Potter's sample: watchers of X-rated videos who claimed a religious affiliation (49%) was nearly equal to those who indicated no religious affiliation (51%).

*In terms of other areas:*

**Non-video publications:** About 1.5 million sexually explicit publications are sold each month, with the

majority (1.3 million) comprising the various publications available in newsagents. Imported publications represent only about 50 000 per month.

**Sex Shops:** There are at least 250 shops selling sex material and goods, mainly in the cities of Sydney and Melbourne. They employ about 2300 people for point of sale and mail order. The turnover is over \$100 million per year.

**Sex Workers:** It is estimated that there are about 800 legal brothels, escort agencies and massage services, with several hundred more which are not registered or legal (depending on the state).

Various estimates for the number of client visits are provided, with a lower figure of 12 million up to 16 million. Given that there are between 10 000 and 16 000 sex workers at any time (the nature of the industry is sometimes seasonal and people may not work full-time), the average number of clients seen per year could be around 750 or 15 per week. One survey found that only about 10% were street workers.

Given that the average charge is \$100.00 the turnover could be over \$1.2 billion in any one year, with approximately half going to the sex workers and half to the owners/operators of the facilities.

**Table Top/Erotic Dancing:** This activity has established itself in most capital cities in Australia, though its initial encouragement came in Melbourne, where in 1994 the Eros Foundation conducted a vigorous campaign against initial reaction to its development. There are now over 15 table top venues

employing several hundred women, with another similar number of stripping agencies as well as other Venues. The Eros Foundation publication article in *Laughter and Light* even contains a brief reference to erotic dancing in the history of the church, which would probably provoke more debate than that encouraged by Boswell and his studies on homosexuality in the church.

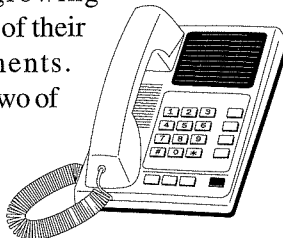
**Phone sex services:** Up to last year around 1.4 million calls were made using these services in Australia. Over the last year debate has increased about the proliferation of these agencies and also

the growing explicitness of their advertisements.

These were two of the factors significant in the development of recent legislation, moving the system to an opt-in registration rather than being freely available to all telephone subscribers. It is likely that these changes will significantly affect the Australian base of this area, with the international ramifications to be determined.

**Condoms:** 55 million condoms are imported in an average year.

**Vibrators:** There have been changing trends in the use of sex aids, mainly reflected by the growing interest of women in areas including lingerie and 'sex toys'. Hard to believe is the claim that about 1 million vibrators are sold in Australia each year. Robbie Swan provided one explanation, namely that 80% from a certain country were very badly made and broke down quickly, so people often bought a large stock at one time.



## Response of the churches

Usually the response of the churches to the sex industry is avoidance or basically negative in terms of publicly condemning certain sexual practices, such as prostitution and the proliferation of material like X-rated videos and publications. Most readers would be aware of their own denomination's position on many sexual topics and issues.

Two interesting responses I have come across:

**\* A safe place:** An inner city church provides support for street prostitutes, with showers and a place to refresh and talk to friends. There is no pressure or overt church emphasis, with the church and its supporters providing a safe place and just being with them at their place. Some church-based missions also provide counselling and support.

**\* A "dialogue" with the sex industry:** Reverend Bill Huff-Johnston (a vocational deacon in the Anglican Church - Canberra Goulburn diocese, also working in the A.N.U chaplaincy team) has been exploring with the sex industry, through the Eros Foundation, the possibility of a dialogue. This is within a broad reflection and examination of sexuality within society and the churches. Bill in his proposal talks about 'risk taking', though within church circles this term would have different meanings. He has already featured in an interview/comment in an edition of the Adult Industry Review and has plans for an occasional reflection in this publication. This is clearly a different approach to ministry and a different way of responding to the industry.

Peter Bentley