

Existing boundaries to new fields

Paper 1:

The future of theological publishing

Warren Schirmer & Mark Simpfendorfer

We appreciate being asked to speak to you today because we, like most of you are serving Australians and New Zealanders in the book area, and listening to each other will help us do our job better.

Australian Publishing is made up of approximately 140 publishers - 90 of these have a turnover of less than \$2,000,000. The majority of small publishers are small niche specialist publishers. These small publishers find it difficult to survive unless they are in a specific market, supported by author or market networks. They also find it difficult to market into larger book chains unless they form a marketing group with other small publishers.

Book retailing in Australia is about to change with the introduction of large superstores. The Christian Booksellers Association of Australia has been through many changes. Today the smaller independent shop finds it very hard to compete with larger chains. Internet bookselling has become a reality. Small shops find it difficult to compete.

Australian Christian publishing has changed dramatically in recent years. A number of publishers have ceased operating. However there still is a place for the Australian publisher. The Australian Christian publisher can survive, but to do this one has to be aware of all factors affecting the market.

Small publishers in the future need to have a passion for their publishing. There is a real concern about the future of good theological publishing worldwide. While we currently have many good theological publishers at present, what plans are put in place to ensure this will continue?

The Australian Territorial Copyright Act has changed in recent years. These changes have had a positive effect on book distribution in Australia. Changing and new technology is playing an important role in publishing, However small publishers need to be careful not to move too quickly. Sometimes it pays to be a follower.

What about Australian theology? Are we old enough to have one? Do we understand enough about indigenous people and their "dreamtime" to work towards our own theology? I think we're well on the way. There are various books out now on Australian Spirituality, and Australian theology (the one that is making a big impact is called *Rainbow spirit theology*). Groups like the Australian Theological Forum have produced their first journal, containing mainly essays on reconciliation. There are two books on the market about the history of Christianity amongst the Aborigines. So the future of Australian theological and religious publishing is bright, as long as a 'niche' market is

found, like the work being done by The National Church Life Survey, the Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity, the Australian Theological Forum, The Christian Research Association, Albatross Books as well as some of the secular publishers like Allen and Unwin, Oxford, Harper Collins, etc. They are all doing their bit towards Australian religious publishing.

Computers - slave or master?

In about the year 1450, Johannes Gutenberg invented the movable type printing press. 500 years later, some interesting changes started to occur. As we move toward the year 2000, a vast array of books is being made available in electronic format. Most of these were old, but of copyright but things are starting to change. In 1997, *Encyclopedia Britannica* brought out a CD-ROM, at about a quarter the price of the bound and printed edition. What if you want to buy a printed edition? I think the only way you can get one now is to go on Wheel of Fortune or Sale of the Century and win one!

What does this say for us? Will there be books in 50 years? If you don't 'get on the net', or buy a computer, will you miss the boat? When my son was 2 years old he could get in and out of Windows. We all know there are plenty of good things about computers. They are great for cataloguing, cross referencing, searching, reporting, space saving, these things save us time and in the long run, money - let's face it. They produce, print, store and think for us. You can carry a large volume of works in your pocket, not that any library has a space problem...

What are the dangers with computers? Losing the ability to think - losing the ability to problem solve - not having any social skills - finding it hard to hold an eye to eye conversation with someone - listening - becoming addictive - I'm sure there are plenty more. Were these questions asked when TV was invented?

What's available?

Logos, probably the largest independent software company around (there are about 12 reasonable sized ones), in the last two years put out 100 new titles each year - things like bible translations - at last count, they had 39! - reference works like dictionaries, encyclopedias and other works such as *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, some biographies like John Bunyan, St Augustine - those that are out of copyright, some Christian living/church such as the works of eg, John MacArthur, Oswald Chambers, RC Sproul, JI Packer (and these are not always available in printed form as well!), commentaries - Matthew Henry, but that's about it! More are coming, eg the Word Biblical Commentaries, probably this year. Volumes currently available number 52 so far; other theological titles : eg John Bright's *The history of Israel* and the five-volume *History of the Christian Church* by Philip Schaff; but not many more theological titles. Other stuff includes languages, Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic texts, worship resources, where the computer will play the instrument for you, or the organ for you, or transpose the music, not make a mistake for you - doesn't seem human, does it? There's nothing like playing the wrong tune or missing a verse is there?

Where are the other books? How come some academic theological titles are not around? Why can't you get most of the books we have in our New Testament section on disc? Some reasons : Computers are still too new. We've only just mastered the book production - not just the printing, the whole box and dice. Sixty years ago how many books had coloured covers? Not many. The production of the book is a large job now - publishing houses have people employed to work on "book covers" only - the cover is as important as the content. Part of the marketing is for people to pick the book up.

People still like to take a book to bed, to the beach, on holidays, to the toilet, - sure, there are such things as lap tops, but how long does the extension cord have to be or how long will the batteries last, and what if there's a power strike? A book looks good on the shelf. Believe it or not, some people will buy books, normally hardcover because it looks good. It suits the bookcase, the furniture, the style of the house.

Publishers are scared. Publishers and authors don't want to put things on the internet, because anyone and everyone can get to it. They would still rather you bought their book - authors still like their royalty cheque. If their book is available on the net, who can stop anyone taking parts of it for their own use? How can you police it? What are the copyright implications? How many people still photocopy chapters, books, music?

A lot of publishers are adopting the attitude "let's wait and see". Zondervan produced *The NIV Study Bible* on disc, but they should have waited. It's a lemon now, because that's all that is on it. People are wanting the extras bits, they want it to be compatible with other programs they have, they want to be able to link their software where possible, to be 'interlocking' - the *NIV Study Bible* didn't do any of that. Doubleday had immense trouble bringing out the *Anchor Bible Dictionary* on CD-Rom. - It was 18 months late, due to copyright problems. About 2 years ago, I wasn't sure if I'd have a job for the future. The computer industry was moving ahead so quickly, it was scary. It looked like printed books were a thing of the past. I'm not so worried anymore.

Openbook Publishers occasionally attends the Frankfurt Book Fair. This is the largest bookfair anywhere in the world, and we go to look at new titles and possibly co-publishing books and buying rights. 1995 was the last time we attended, and the following was reported: The CEO's of the larger companies - Penguin, Oxford, Random House etc said no more than 20% of books will ever be available in software.

We're privileged enough also to attend the meeting of the American Academy of Religion and Society of Biblical Literature each year. Like a lot of American shows, it's big. It's the one time in the world where theologians get together to give papers, but also buy books because all the academic theological and religious publishers are there - and I mean all of them - from Abingdon to Zondervan, Augsburg to Yale, publishers from Denmark, Germany, The Netherlands, England etc. Faculty, students, authors, editors, are there - about 8000. What struck me most was how much software I couldn't see. How much there wasn't. 99% were books.

We're a member of the Association of Theological Booksellers too. We're the only Australian bookseller that goes, and during the conference 16 of the larger publishers give a presentation of what's new, what's coming up, anything they think theological booksellers ought to know. One publisher showed software! One! Wm B Eerdmanns, one of the fastest growing religious publishers in the world, do not have any plans for software. Publishers like Fortress have plans to make Luthers works available - the whole 55 volumes, but not in the near future. Ask me again in 10 years and we'll see where they are at.

The *New interpreter's bible* - (eventually 12 volumes) is available in bits and pieces but it's a hassle for Australians. We can supply it, but then when another volume comes out, we ask you to return it, we credit you, we send it back to Abingdon, they update it with the latest volume, we send it back to you and recharge you - too much mucking around. We'll wait until all 12 volumes are out, late 2001 and then promote it.

The software industry is moving ahead very quickly - who knows what Bill Gates has in store for us next? Books and software do have a place in the future, but neither will dominate. They'll work side by side, we'll all have jobs in 15 years, and the two things we need to remember are : computers are programmed by humans, and we all know where the 'off' button is.

Warren Schirmer
General Manager
Openbook Publishers

Mark Simpfendorfer
National Theological Manager
Beacon Hill Books

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Paper 2:

A Library of the future before its time?

The experiences of Central Queensland University Sydney International Campus Electronic Library and Resource Centre.

Jackie Slee

There has been much discussion in library literature in the last 10 years concerning the future of libraries and our profession. Information is increasingly available electronically but few have had the experience of working in a completely electronic library. Consequently little has been written concerning the everyday practice of running an electronic library. This paper presents the experiences of managing a one-person electronic library for Central Queensland University Sydney International Campus. The development of the library, its advantages and disadvantages and the key issues for the library will be discussed.

The development of the library

Central Queensland University (CQU) is a new and geographically dispersed university,