

# **S.T.O.P. ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2007**

Two meetings were held during 2007, the first being the Annual General Meeting on 27 March at 7.30p.m. in the Bergvliet High School hall. Attendance was 42 with 22 apologies. The second was on 29 October at 7.30p.m. in the Meadowridge Library with attendance of 16 and 10 apologies.

The June meeting was cancelled and replaced with a letter which updated supporters on the main happenings of the first half of 2007.

What of general trends during 2007? It appears that we continued to gain credibility and recognition as has been demonstrated by, firstly, increased "networking" initiated by other organizations and, secondly and more significantly, by our being in ever-increasing demand as speakers and as participants in radio and television programmes.

How true it is that nothing succeeds like success!

The sequel of the increased publicity given to S.T.O.P. in this way resulted in ever-more requests for counselling via Email and phone from desperately unhappy men and women. Hits on our Website also increased noticeably, particularly after T.V. broadcasts. These aspects are dealt with more fully elsewhere in this report.

The following report summarises events of year 2007:

## **1. A.G.M. 26 March '07 at 7.30p.m. in the Bergvliet High School Hall.**

There were 42 persons present with 22 apologies. 15 of those present were "first-timers". The program focused mainly on the presentation by Clive Borman, Film and Publication Board (FPB) Compliance Officer. This included a D.V.D. on the role of the FPB in protecting children. His talk was received with much interest and relevant questions were asked. Given the topicality of the subject, and the known concern of parents at the widespread availability of pornographic material, the attendance numbers were disappointing.

## 2. Legislation

### 2.1 Film and Publications Amendment Bill

Our input proved to be a time-consuming exercise. We forwarded our second submission in April (the first had been in October 2006) and attended the Public Hearings held over 2 days in early May. Our request to present an oral submission had been granted. The hearings proved to be an interesting, informative and (until our slot was over!) somewhat nerve-racking experience. The presence and input of the top-level representatives of the press, broadcast and cell phone industries, together with their batteries of lawyers was somewhat overpowering whilst the representatives of civil society were in the minority. Evidence that our submission had been well-received came in the form of a follow-up request from the Home Affairs Committee to be present at another of their meetings on 16 May. We were the only civil society organisation to be so invited and again the media contingent presence was heavy.

The above events, together with many ensuing Home Affairs Committee deliberations, resulted in the tabling of new proposals by the ANC on 25 May. Several improvements are visible in these, including provisions which can be applied to the regulation of sexual content in mainstream magazines. Opposition to the Bill by the media and some political parties, on the grounds that the regulatory provisions are the first step of a potential "slippery slide into censorship", is ongoing. The Bill is presently awaiting discussion by the National Council of Provinces and, if approved, will be signed into law by the President.

### 2.2 Doctors For Life

In April we were contacted by Doctors For Life legal department who requested copies of the Film and Publications Amendment Bill and our submission. We also forwarded relevant Australian legislation which we had found helpful. As Doctors For Life are now extending their concerns to pornography it was agreed that a networking relationship between our organizations would be mutually helpful. We also received a copy of their submission on the Amendment Bill. This included an outstanding piece of academic work (162 references) citing a wealth of up-to-date scientific findings on the effects of exposure to both pornography and violence.

### 2.3 Sexual Offences Amendment Act

This long-awaited Act was gazetted at the end of the year. We found two aspects of the Act encouraging. Firstly, there was a broad definition of

pornography – something which had been avoided in all previous legislation. Secondly, comprehensive provisions had been put in place regarding exposure of a child to pornography, this being a punishable offence directly enforceable by the S.A. Police. We believe this could be applied to the ubiquitous display and sale of the mainline magazines containing pornographic material.

### **3. Tabloids**

#### Child Porn and Bestiality in "Daily Voice" 9 and 16 March.

The lead "Child Porn" article in the 9 March edition, ostensibly intended as an exposé of child porn activities in Cape Town townships, included suggestive "action" photos of allegedly young teenage girls. Another item in the same paper featured bestiality (sex with animals) with photographs (fortunately blurred) and descriptions of a man and his dog. As the publishers had clearly contravened the law governing such descriptions and depictions we felt that there was a strong case for prosecution. An associate accordingly laid a charge with the Police and there was immediate high-level interest and activity including a response from W. Cape Intelligence Commissioner Petros, with the case finally proceeding to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

The publishers, having no doubt been gratified by the circulation figures, then chose to repeat the same lead story in the following Friday edition!

We delivered copies of the above tabloids to Mr. Patrick Chauke M.P., Chairman of the Home Affairs Committee and we kept him informed of ongoing events. We subsequently made "good use" of both papers by presenting them as "exhibits" during our oral presentation to the Home Affairs Committee (referred to above). Mr Chauke ordered that the Cape Town Director of Prosecutions should forthwith personally inform the Committee re progress with prosecution.

Thus far we have not been informed of any further developments.

### **4. Advertising Billboards**

In early January Bryanston Methodist Church, contacted us for advice on their envisaged campaign against the "outbreak" in Gauteng of sexually orientated billboard advertising by strip clubs and escort agencies. These were frequently situated inappropriately near schools, residential areas and in family shopping outlets. We initially advised on their pamphlet, to be widely distributed in their area, and continued to provide other necessary

information. Their actions involved, amongst others, alerting the public, organizing petitions (supported particularly by schools and churches), initiating articles in their local press, and forwarding a complaint to the Advertising Standards Authority (A.S.A.). Interestingly, Kate Turkington of Radio 702/Cape Talk picked up on the issue, with virtually all the respondents being supportive of disallowing such billboard advertising.

The success of this campaign became evident when the A.S.A. upheld their complaint.

## **5. "Cosmopolitan" magazine**

The February 07 "Cosmo" once again contained an explicit "Sealed Sex Section" and was displayed without the customary plastic wrapper. We notified the Film and Publication Board (FPB).

We alerted Pick-n-Pay, Woolworths and Clicks with the result that Pick-n-Pay recalled the magazine nationally, Woolworths "called in" representatives of Cosmo (and also "Marie Claire" magazine) and warned them.

A group of ladies wrote letters of complaint to the FPB but the response was unhelpful on the grounds that the complaints raised were not sufficiently specific. This highlights the gap which exists between public opinion and the legal parameters which prevent many complaints from being upheld – an ongoing bone of contention!

## **6. Support Groups for Pornography Addicts**

The support group, with three male facilitators, has continued to function with very encouraging results.

In March, with the backing of Meadowridge Baptist Church (MBC), a support group for young people with porn problems was started under the leadership of a young former addict.

## **7. Interviews and Talks by Committee Members – T.V. and Radio included**

### 7.1 Talks

- 12 March: Two-hour presentation at Baptist Seminary, Athlone.
- 8 August and 23 August: Two lectures/talks to students doing the Pastoral Counselling course at Baptist Seminary.

- 24 August: Address to an early-morning Men's Breakfast at St. James Church, Kenilworth.
- 21 September from 6a.m. to 7a.m: Address to 70 men at Vredelust Gemeente Kerk, Bellville. This was the first time this issue had been openly discussed and the session had to be extended to 8.15a.m.
- 13 November: Talk to the ladies group at Vredelust Gemeente Kerk following on from the above address to the men.
- 17 November, Saturday morning: Presentations at the "Media Workshop" hosted in Athlone by the Islamic Unity Convention Women's Forum. Live coverage of proceedings by Radio 786.
- 4 December: Audio interview on porn addiction (to be used in Ghana).

## 7.2 Radio

- 28 March: Interview on Voice of the Cape.
- 28 June: Live interview on Radio 786 (Muslim) in hour-long broadcast. An Imam's wife phoned in to say the programme was excellent and "we must do more of this" It was subsequently aired several more times.
- 12 July: Participation in Africa Christian Action's 9 p.m. Radio Tygerberg broadcast on porn addiction.
- 10 October: Interview on Radio 2000 "Bravo Brava", an alternative lifestyle programme from 10 to 12 p.m.
- 13 October Saturday morning: Participation in a half-hour Radio 2000 programme. Interesting that a young black girl (14) subsequently phoned us saying she "wanted to join STOP" as porn was ruining the lives of so many young people. A black gentlemen from "the far North" also phoned to express appreciation of the "excellent programme". This response is mentioned here because porn is commonly seen as a "white man's problem"
- 17 October: C.C.F.M. Participation in live 2-hour afternoon programme to discuss porn addiction and problems associated with porn. There was a response via phone-ins and S.M.S.
- 29 October, 10 to 12 midnight: Interview on Radio 2000 as "studio guest" on "Anonymous on Air" – a programme which deals with various addictions.

## 7.3 Television

- 21 June: Telephonic participation in a live T.V.3 broadcast – "Noeleen on 3 Talk" June being Child Protection Month the subject discussed was the harm of pornography to children.

- 14 August: Two STOP committee members participated from SABC 3 studios in Johannesburg in alive "Noeleen on 3 Talk" panel discussion on porn addiction. There was excellent input from them both. A clinical psychologist and the head of an addiction clinic with experience in porn addiction also took part. The "3 Talk" programmes have a viewer rating of 1 million. More about the response in the next item headed "Sequels ..."
  - November: Took part in, and advised on, a documentary on porn addiction for screening in the SABC 2 "Issues of Faith" programme in early 2008. Kairos Productions had been commissioned by SABC to produce this.
  - 19 December: Invitation from Mr. Molefi Le Bone of SABC2 to participate in the programme "Life 24/7" on pornography. As we were unable to be in Johannesburg for this, we sent articles and information.
- Note: 51.1% of South Africans have access to television

## **8. Sequels to above "3 Talk" T.V. broadcasts**

### 8.1 Phone and Email Response

This was immediate after the 21 June programme - 18 during the following week. After the 14 August programme the response from people crying out for help was immediate and also ongoing over a longer period (26 up to the end of October). Amongst these - during the two weeks following the August broadcast - 9 calls for counselling were received from despairing women in deep distress. The response of one caller summed it all up - "You'll never know how many marriages you've saved ....."

Calls were still being regularly received through November and December.

"Focus on the Family" in Hillcrest, Natal, had proved to be an excellent referral point for the people who lived beyond the Cape Town area and were in need of ongoing help. They are able to advise via phone and Email and where necessary refer victims to suitable counsellors nation-wide.

### 8.2 Website

Website traffic increased dramatically from a "normal" busy average of approx. five hundred to approx. four thousand hits. More specifically for July '07, after the previous "3 Talk" T.V. broadcast of 21 June, hits were recorded

as 1,463. In August in the week after the second "3 Talk" there were 3,961 hits. During September there were over 3000.

The S.A.B.C. producer of the programme confirmed that there had been a more-than-usual positive response from the public asking for contact details, etc. She felt that the subject, porn addiction, had been more topical than the previous "3 Talk", and that a repeat show on addiction should be mooted (The response to radio and T.V. broadcasts had once again highlighted the need for Churches to establish support groups – and indeed for Government to initiate porn addiction clinics for the many who cannot afford professional counselling).