

E.R.

PERSONAL AND IN CONFIDENCE

GRO-C

23/12
✓
SECRETARY OF STATE

23/12
✓
Copies: Mr. Newton
CMO
Mr. Heppell

AIDS - CHURCHES

I have contacted Bernard Thimont, Secretary of the Churches Main Committee (he is formerly Controller HMSO and my establishment officer for No. 10 - useful). We will furnish the standard briefing pack for the Committee and arrange a briefing for them on the leaflet and publicity programme immediately after Christmas, by e.g a Minister, with support from CMO/Dr. Harris, Mr. Heppell/Mr. Barton and Ms. Christopherson, if they wish.

2. I have also had an informal meeting with Cardinal Hume at Archbishop's House. I left him the briefing pack. (My contact with him derives from business in Northern Ireland over hunger strikers). He was his usual penetrating self - knowledgeable, wise, and very constructive. He has the advantage that his contacts with the sinners of this world give him a remarkable knowledge of London underground society. I now know more about the sex week at the local Hippodrome than I did. It was this knowledge which led him to keep the Terence Higgins Trust at arms length - he has his own sources among the London homosexuals.

3. I explained the Government's stance on the moral aspect, following Tony Newton's line: a duty to inform but individuals must exercise their own moral responsibility. He makes three points in reply.

- 1) The vice/immorality scene in the cities is bad and the Government should not be neutral about it;

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2) Preaching traditional Victorian values is worse than counter-productive: the Victorians had some appalling standards. Lectures on that theme, by the Prime Minister especially, would alienate not persuade. And the Roman Catholic message was a hard one.

3) Nevertheless, Ministers cannot say "not our business". "We can correct our behaviour," we can aspire to "a quality of life which is totally human, with the joy of freedom from danger" BUT "this needs to be conveyed by people like Bob Geldof, Frank Bruno, Peter Linacre etc. talking to the younger people in a way which, while based on moral presuppositions, is not moralising". These are his words and examples. I should add that he thinks Mr. Anderton got it wrong.

4. We concluded by agreeing that it would be helpful if you and/or Tony Newton could call on him after Christmas (I had in mind before the leaflet drop) to discuss these matters. He will be in the country for a few days: I have his direct telephone number.

5. We now need similar approaches to Archbishop Runcie and the Free Church Moderator.

GRO-C

K.R. STOWE
23 December 1986