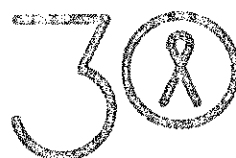


National HIV & AIDS Archive

Print Media

1st to 10th November 1987

HIV Ireland
1987—2017



Painful testament

IRISH-BORN priest Father Bernard Lynch — well-known for the explicit views on Aids he gave in a "Late Late Show" earlier this year — will be making more controversial disclosures on RTE this week in a special RTE documentary on his work among America's homosexuals.

The documentary, "A Priest's Testament", was filmed by Strongbow / Green Apple and highlights — "in painful detail" says RTE — the

spiritual dimension to the epidemic that has already killed 15,000 people in New York.

The film also features an interview, in London, between Father Lynch and Anglican priests. One says: "The gay community are teaching us how to bring compassion back into care". An Aids victim says: "Bernard gave me back my Catholicism and my belief that I was loved by God, that I hadn't been abandoned."



Father Brendan Lynch

Sunday Press
1st November 1987

Students told about AIDS and condoms

By COLM KEENA

AN AIDS education campaign operated by the Department of Health is underway in secondary schools around the country, clearly showing fifth and sixth year students how the disease can be caught through sexual activity or the use of needles by drug addicts.

No specific instructions on how to handle the subject of condoms is being given to educators.

The second stage of the Government's AIDS campaign is to include school education and an attempt to educate needle-using addicts. But at a recent meeting to discuss the organisation of the education programme by senior community care officials nationwide, health department officials found that in many health board areas the programme had already begun.

"There are people with certain views on sex education who are involved in a row here," said one department source. "They believe that this should be done in a more subtle way, in the context of attitude education, but we cannot wait for a long debate when we are dealing with a dreadful disease like aids."

In health board areas around the country, officials are approaching schools, and offering to give lectures to students or parents. As yet they are trying to cope with demand, and do not know if any schools object to the idea.

"There is a debate between factual or attitude education, and an isolated talk on AIDS may not be the best way of doing it," says Dr. J. H. O'Sullivan, of the Southern Health Board. "However, there is a time factor. A lot of children are leaving school, and perhaps going abroad. They should be in a position to know the facts."

A pretty factual account of

the illness and how it is spread is given and condoms are mentioned if questions on the subject are asked, says Dr. O'Sullivan. "It is important that the programme does not create any undue fears on the part of parents," he declared. "We do not want, and have not had, any opposition from parents to date."

In the north Western Health Board, the programme has been underway for some time, giving students a clear idea of how the disease is caught and how to avoid it. Condoms are discussed if "the subject comes up, but in schools you can have difficulty with this, especially as some are run by religious orders," said Mr. Brian McCauley.

An official from another health board, who did not want to be named, said schools often asked the lecturer before the talk began how the subject of condoms was going to be tackled. In some cases parents were being informed and their permission requested, before the talk is given.

Health department officials are overseeing the programme, and it will be further developed as it progresses. "There is no specific blueprint for the content of lectures," said one official, who added that "crude methods worked with polio and may work with AIDS." Some health boards were lagging behind, and "need some pushing."

Health officials will meet with members of the Catholic Bishops AIDS task force this week.

Sunday Tribune
1st November 1987

Aids victims to be deported

• JOHANNESBURG — The South African government will deport all foreigners infected with the Aids virus, cholera or yellow fever. The measure is aimed primarily at migrant workers carrying the Aids virus which has been found in more than 1,000 foreigners, most of them black miners. The government will also quarantine South African citizens for up to 28 days if they have Aids, the Aids virus, cholera or yellow fever or have been in contact with persons carrying the disease.

AIDS VICTIM DENIED CATHEDRAL MARRIAGE

The Rector of St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York has refused to perform a religious marriage ceremony for a man dying of AIDS who wanted to renew the civil marriage vows he made to his wife three years ago.

The man, David Hefner, said that he was told of the decision after a priest at the cathedral had set a date for the ceremony in which Hefner would have been married in the eyes of the church to his wife, Maria.

The Rector of the Cathedral, Mgr. James F. Rigney, said he had reversed the priest's decision because it was "my own pastoral judgment" that people in a "life-threatening situa-

tion," such as those with AIDS, would receive better pre-marriage counselling in their local parish than at the cathedral. The Rector said, however, that the policy would not effect those dying of such non-contagious diseases as cancer.

At the couple's Manhattan flat, the 38-year-old Hefner said: "It is very hard to have this illness and now to get slapped in the face like this. I just feel it is wrong.

"I cannot understand how the Church of God would do something like this," he said. "If I were a killer, a hired murderer or a thief," he said, his voice trailing off, "but I'm just a person who just hap-

pens to have a sickness."

Rigney said that the policy was not connected in any way with the church's long-standing opposition to homosexual activity.

But the executive director of Lambda Legal Defence and Education Fund, Thomas B. Stoddard, called the Rector's reasoning "a subterfuge."

"This decision seems nothing less than an expression of institutional distaste and intolerance for those suffering from this terrible modern scourge," said Stoddard, whose organisation brings civil rights' test cases on issues concerning AIDS and homosexual rights.

Warning on gay blessings

MOVES TO bless unions between homosexuals could kill the Church of England, if they are successful, an MP has claimed.

Mr Harry Greenway, Conservative MP for Ealing North, spoke out against a proposal, to be put before the General Synod, calling on the Church to encourage "commitment and permanence" in all sexual relationships.

This proposal is an amendment to the anti-homosexuality resolution. The author of the amendment, the Rev Malcolm Johnson, rector of St Botolph's in the City of London, is part-author

of a pamphlet discussing a church service of blessing for homosexual couples.

Mr Greenway said: "It is very serious that anyone in the Church of England should be advocating the blessing of unions between homosexuals. This amendment, which seeks to show that homosexuality is as valid as heterosexuality, will kill the Church of England if it is passed."

Mr Greenway, a lifelong member of the Church of England, warned: "It will not be acceptable to the vast majority of members, and the Synod should take note of the damage it would cause even if a sizeable minority voted for it." — (PA).

AIDS 'major health risk in Ireland'

AIDS IS well established in this country, the Minister for Health, Dr. O'Hanlon warned today. To date, 27 cases have been reported and there have been 13 deaths, he told the opening of a conference on the disease.

The Minister also disclosed that the national AIDS antibody testing service had up to the end of August confirmed 638 people who were anti-body positive in this country.

But the true figure for those infected was almost certainly higher, the Minister warned, as not everyone who had put themselves at risk of infection would have come forward for testing.

"However, the figure of 638 confirmed HIV-positive Irish people is enough to show us that AIDS is now a major public health problem in this country," he said.

DRUGS

The largest number of those originated from the intravenous drug abusing community. These constituted 60 p.c. of the HIV-positive grouping. "It is amongst this group that the virus appears to be spreading most rapidly," he added.

The Minister also told the conference, organised by the Health Education Bureau and the AIDS Task Force established by the Catholic Bishops, that he had targetted secondary school children as a group requiring particular attention.

"It is my intention that no child should leave school without being aware of the facts about AIDS," said Dr. O'Hanlon.

He said AIDS patients would be treated in all major acute hospitals by the relevant consultants and he expected each hospital to repond fully so that the victims had hospital services easily available to them.

Marketing

Mick Doyle to conquer AIDS!

Fresh from his success coaching the Irish Rugby team, Mick Doyle has moved on to conquer fresh fields. He is now marketing the very latest disinfectant developed to neutralise the AIDS virus.

THE DISINFECTANT is being distributed in Ireland by Hijen Technology, the Naas-based company of which Doyle is managing director. The product which is known as V3 has been on the Irish market since July. Doyle reckons that the product which comes in fluid, aerosol and wipe forms will be a big seller to medical professionals, undertakers, beauty and hairdressing salons, catering staff, police and private individuals.

V3 was developed over a four year period by Protecto, a company based in Poole in Dorset. According to the company's managing director Tony Broughton: "We are exporting to Thailand, Denmark and France. In the UK we are selling to people like funeral directors. People who are at the sharp end so far as body fluid spillages and spoilage is concerned."

Hijen was founded in 1976 and is jointly owned by Doyle and his ex-wife. Doyle, who is a qualified veterinary surgeon, initially concentrated on animal hygiene: "Hijen was set up mainly as an answer to the intensive livestock industry with which I was closely associated as a vet. Then we moved into food hygiene, catering and hospitality. It was only then that Hijen moved into human hygiene."

Since the discovery of the AIDS virus in the early 1980s there has been no shortage of alleged and threatened "cures". Such has been their number that they are in grave danger of becoming the latter-day equivalent of the 19th century patent medicines.

The first thing Doyle emphasises is that V3 is a disinfectant not a cure. Despite the widespread publicity it has received, comparatively little is yet known about the AIDS virus. "The information on AIDS this month can be obsolete next month. The disease can mutate," says Doyle.

Doyle believes that it pays to take precautions: "What is the point of assuming the best and discovering the worst?" A constant theme running through his conversation is the need for "reassurance". "We are trying to bring to the public

Having concentrated initially on selling to the likes of doctors and dentists he is now promising to introduce an aerosol version to the retail market.

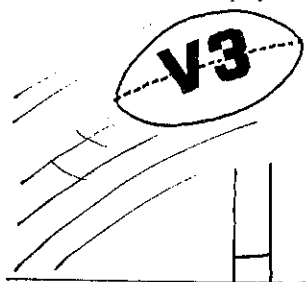
by
Dan White

attention that there is a product that can be used with safety and reassurance," he says.

Apart from the obvious at-risk categories such as undertakers, police, and medical staff, Doyle has identified what he believes is a whole new growth market for the product. According to Doyle we are all in serious danger from the telephones we use. "The telephone is a very serious medium of transmission for pathogens. Any one user can transmit a lot of diseases. We have a product that cleans and decontaminates."

Despite having a celebrity such as Doyle as managing director, Hijen is still in his own words: "A small company at the moment but we will become a sizeable company in the next few years. We have a blueprint for manufacturing and distribution in place." Present turnover is about £500,000. Total employment is three on the manufacturing side and another five including Doyle looking after the other aspects of the business. Hijen uses distributors around the country to actually sell its products.

Apart from the AIDS disinfectant, Hijen also markets other animal and human hygiene products. In the past year it has added a range of maintenance-type products from the Swiss company Rolith



● MICK DOYLE — Telephone is a health hazard.

to its range. These are aimed primarily at the catering industry. According to Doyle the products distributed and manufactured by Hijen are "probiotic" rather than antibiotic. They are also biodegradable which means that they break up naturally in the atmosphere. Hijen also distributes a number of products on behalf of Protecto's parent company Atom Chemicals.

Doyle emphasises that Hijen is not attempting to cash in on the bonanza which has resulted from the AIDS scare: "We are trying to be very sensitive about it. It is not our business to promote hysteria or hyped-up alarm. We are just saying that there are risks in many walks of life. There are various ways of contracting AIDS apart from the ones that have been highlighted most. People have to take precautions." V3 is also effective against several other diseases such as hepatitis B, he claims.

Doyle characterises Hijen's as being "positive health products". He sees it as being part of the company's whole philosophy: "People are going to have to change their ideas about personal hygiene."

According to Doyle, Hijen prefers to either manufacture or formulate the products it sells. Doyle hopes to build up the manufacturing side of the business at its new plant near Naas. Does this mean that the V3 AIDS disinfectant will be manufactured here? "It would want to sell phenomenal volumes," is all Doyle will say. It seems likely that it will continue to be imported even after the retail version which will sell in supermarkets for about £2 is launched shortly.

Doyle's spell as national rugby coach has given him a public profile which most other small businesses can only envy. How has this helped Hijen? If one were to believe Doyle, he is actually glad it is all over and that he can now concentrate on his business activities! "Now that I'm finished coaching the national rugby team I have more time for the business. I can get into work first thing in the morning. Being coach does tend to intrude on one's work," he claims.

Cork Examiner
5th November 1987

Screen preview by Mick Cody

AIDS and an Irish priest in New York

■ Pick of the night: *AIDS – A Priest's Statement* (RTE1, 9.30 to 10.30 p.m.)

A DOCUMENTARY, made by Irish companies Green Apple and Strongbow for Channel 4, about a remarkable Irish priest, Father Bernard Lynch, who has been ministering to AIDS sufferers in New York for the past five years, is probably the best TV on offer this evening.

Fr. Lynch, apparently, appeared on the *Late Late* last season and made something of an impact.

That's not surprising. His intense commitment and outspoken opinions make first-class TV. Statements such as 'AIDS will convert the Church. The Church will be judged on AIDS' and 'If I could take the Pope by the hand one day, I believe he would be converted to the Christ that is in our midst' ought to cause some gnashing of teeth.

Of course, there are more important questions involved here, but my concern is with TV and with what makes it good or bad. And it has been pretty bland of late.

Besides, controversy helps us to find out what our opinions really are. To change one word in an old tag, 'How do I know what I think, till I see what I say?'

The RTE Guide makes its usual hames of the programme synopsis, telling us that Fr. Lynch, has been ministering to AIDS sufferers for the past ten years – when the disease was not diagnosed and named till the '80s. A couple of pages later, John Walsh, in his article on the programme, gets the facts right. Don't they read their own features up there?

2.30 to 3 p.m. (HTV): *All Our Yesterdays*

Bernard Braden looks back at 1962, with the help of the film archives of Granada, ITN and Pathe News. That year, the BBC presented the Royal Variety Show, and ITV responded with 'an evening of high culture, including Maria Callas'. On the Royal Variety Show of that year were Bob Hope, Sophie Tucker, and the interminable Cliff Richard.

6.30 to 7 p.m. (RTE1): *Know Your Sport*

A wonderful programme for wives and non-sport fans – because during this half-hour you can find out just how little the sports bore in your family really knows about his chosen subject. George Hamilton is the presenter, and Jimmy Magee is the gancher.*

(* For non-Corkonians, a gancher is a swanker... If you don't know what a swanker is, God bless you.)

10.30 to 11.30 p.m. (S4C): *Damon and Debbie*

A variation on the soap opera ploy of hiving off another soap from a popular original, a *la* *Knots Landing* out of *Dallas* and *The Colbys* out of *Dynasty*. Here, Damon and Debbie go on the run from *Broadside* – I beg your parding! *Brookside* – and Liverpool, to York and a three-part drama of their own. The first part is tonight.

THE FILMS

★ *Iceland* (1942). (S4C, 2 to 3.30 p.m.).

Tedious rubbish popular at the time because it starred Sonja Henie, the ice skater who, probably because she had terrific legs and an excuse to wear short skirts, became a box office draw. Two dependable second rankers, John Payne and Jack Oakie, wasted their time and talents on this.

★★★★ *The Scarlet Pimpernel* (1934). (BBC1, 2.15 to 3.50 p.m.).

Splendid film version of the appalling Baroness Orczy's famous and reactionary adventure story. The stunningly snobbish Baroness's mind (please excuse the hyperbole) was entirely in sympathy with the aristocratic cause in the French Revolution – which is not very astonishing, as she treasured the sort of opinions and behaviour that helped to cause the Revolution in the first place.

However, the production and the stars are so proficient that they enable you to slip your brain into neutral and enjoy the fun as those demned Frenchies seek him here and seek him there. Leslie Howard and Raymond Massey are in top form, and Merle Oberon is lovely to look at.

★★★★ *La Ronde* (1950). (S4C, 12.20 to 2.05 a.m.).

Max Ophüls' risqué masterpiece, set in Vienna in the 1900s, evokes one of Anton Walbrook's best performances as the man-about-town compere who is our guide through this elegant search for the perfect partner in love. A sensationally gifted cast support him: Simone Signoret, Simone Simon, Serge Reggiani, Daniel Gelin, and Danielle Darrieux.

Films: Star Ratings Guide

★★★★★ One of the best. VTR owners, record this and keep it.

★★★★ Excellent. Make a point of seeing it.

★★★ Good. Worth watching.

★★ So-so. Don't bother.

★ Lousy. If you can find the master reels, burn them.

◆ Special category. One of the worst. So bad, it's enjoyable.

Re-think on that awkward question of V. D.

AN insurance company is to think again about a controversial question it is asking its Irish customers.

For couples filling in a proposal form for a popular new insurance deal could find themselves in a Catch 22 situation.

If they answer it truthfully, it could cause a big marital row. If they don't, it could lose them thousands of pounds.

The question is one of a number asked in connection with a master savings plan being promoted by the Automobile Association.

The questionnaire is a joint one . . . which means both husband and wife or other members of the family can join the scheme.

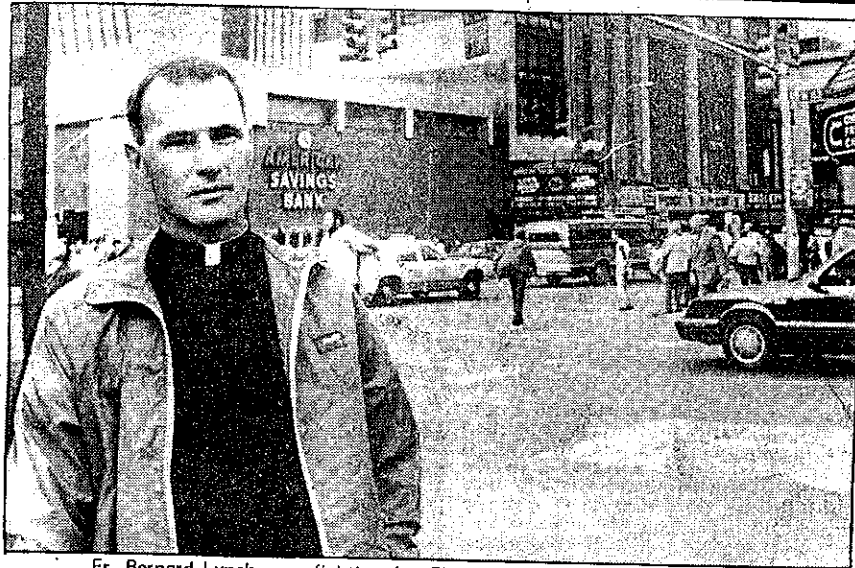
Question 3 on the proposal form issued by Friends Provident, deals with whether or not the applicant has ever been advised or counselled on Aids, or has ever had an Aids blood test.

But it also asks if a person has ever been counselled or advised in connection with any sexually transmitted disease. So a husband who had venereal disease and hadn't told his wife would either have to tell the truth and risk a row, or tell a lie and invalidate the policy.

Now Friends Provident, one of the biggest insurance companies, is re-thinking the question.

A spokesman at its head office in Dorking, Surrey, said: "The only way that people can get around this question is to submit a supplementary answer in some way or other in private."

He added: "We are trying to draw up a new type of question to resolve the problem."



Fr. Bernard Lynch . . . fighting for Church's acceptance of homosexuals.

The AIDS priest

WHEN Conor McAnally saw Fr. Bernard Lynch on the Late, Late Show last April he decided he just had to make a documentary about the man.

Dr. Lynch, an Irish born Catholic priest, ministers to people infected with AIDS in New York city, and he has fought to bring dignity and acceptance by the Church of gay men and women.

His outspoken crusade has caused him to be deprived of his ministry, and after five years of fighting the Church's attitude towards homosexuality, he has been ordered to Rome where he is presently on a "sabbatical." AIDS: A Priest's Testament will be screened on RTE 1 tonight, and also on Channel 4 on Sunday afternoon.

It is the first venture by Strongbow and Green Apple production companies since John Kelleher and Conor McAnally joined forces earlier this year.

An impressive and moving documentary its overtones of religiosity will not be everyone's cup of tea. It rather overruns with an abundance of the milk of human kindness. But that's hardly surprising given that the subject of the programme is a priest.

FR. BERNARD LYNCH, subject of a documentary on RTE television tonight, has worked with hundreds of AIDS victims in New York. BARBARA McKEON traces the conflict churchmen face in the face of AIDS.

The story is partly told in the form of a letter, written by Fr. Bernard to a cleric friend at home in Ireland.

Meanwhile we see the priest out for his daily five-mile jog around Central Park. Fr. Bernard's — as he is called — total sincerity in the rightness of what he is doing in the face of the wrongness of his church's attitude towards homosexual men and women, is almost intimidating. He believes PWA (Persons With Aids for those uninitiated in the jargon of the disease) have made him a better Christian.

There's no doubt he had become a great source of strength. The mother and sister of Stuart Garcia

who died of AIDS speak eloquently of their loss. "Those who cannot reconcile homosexuality and Christianity should remember if we love our brother then we love God," said Garcia's sister.

After watching her son die, Mrs. Nora Garcia felt she could never go through that suffering again: "You can't walk around pain, you've got to walk through it. And you find it doesn't hurt as much as you fear it will," she said, and now spends as much time as she can visiting and comforting others facing the same fate as her son, Stuart.

It takes great courage for IDS sufferers to go on screen and admit they are infected with a virus for which there is as yet no cure, and of which there is so much public fear, ignorance and hostility. The Irish film crew were treated warily first and received full co-operating in the end.

Not all PWAs are gay. It is a disease that affects heterosexuals just as effectively, but in the US it is predominantly a gay disease. Added to their burden of illness is the fact that for these Catholics their church abhors their sexuality and that their means of loving is consid-

ered sinful and cannot be condoned.

For Fr. Bernard Lynch there is also a theological clash, but so strongly does he believe that God loves gays as much as He loves everyone else that he preaches contrary to the Catholic Church's teaching.

"Dignity" is an association of gay men and women, but it has been expelled from church property. When dignity wanted to hold a special Easter Mass, it had to do in a member's apartment. About 30 people, plus a film crew were crammed into a small room.

"It was about 90 degrees, and no air-conditioning," recalled Conor McAnally. But the discomfort was endured because Fr. Bernard's celebration of the mass was so important to these gay men and women, some of whom have AIDS.

What will happen the priest's crusade now that he has been removed from his ministry to PWAs? who will provide the human care and spiritual comfort these people so badly need?

"AIDS will convert the Church," said Bernard. "The Church will be judged on AIDS."

A CHURCH DIVIDED

Divisions in the Church of England over the ordination of women have already seriously disturbed the ecclesiastical peace, and the matter is still far from resolved. The last thing the church needed, therefore, was another damaging public split on the even more controversial issue of homosexuality.

That it has occurred at this time is undoubtedly a by-product of the arrival of an Aids epidemic, from which even the clergy is not immune, and which has forced the church to attend to questions on which it is divided or uncertain. Some church leaders have been consoling themselves that their uncertainty is in fact a virtue, showing how attractively undogmatic and unauthoritarian modern Anglicanism really is; but for the great majority of Anglicans it is a source of dismay. Human sexuality is surely something on which a Christian church ought to have something clear and definite to say, all the more so when society at large is in such a state of sexual confusion.

Yet the price of a clear public witness, of whatever kind, will be bitterness and division in the church's ranks. A judgement against homosexuality will be called a witch-hunt. A judgement in favour will be called a sell-out. Given that damage is likely either way, it would be wiser for the General Synod in its considerations of these issues next week not to look too hard at the possible consequences of its various options, but to concentrate its attention on the basic moral issues. That would be the course which commands most sympathy and respect, whatever the outcome.

For the Church of England's authority is at stake here — not just its public relations image but its credentials as an authentic mouthpiece for the Christian Gospel. It cannot claim that authority if what it preaches as Christian teaching is no more than the product of the balancing of its own advantage and interest. It cannot claim it if it has not anchored its authority securely in the only specifically Christian sources available, the evidence of

Scripture confirmed by the witness of Tradition.

Where such sources conflict or are unclear, as seems to be the case over the ordination of women, the church must proceed with the greatest caution. But where they agree and admit little room for doubt, it really cannot be open to the Church of England, through a judgement of its General Synod, to go a different way.

In this case there can be no avoiding the conclusion that Christianity can never make room for homosexual behaviour while remaining true to itself. It cannot be accepted as morally licit conduct. It is, in a word, wrong.

The degree of permanence, or commitment of homosexual partners to each other may help to answer the question how wrong, but the synod would be resigning from its responsibilities were it to say that such situations may be judged morally equivalent to marriage, and therefore publicly acceptable. There is no warrant in the sources of Christian moral doctrine for such a position, however much it corresponds to the spirit of tolerance (or licence) of the modern age.

While that statement of principle from the synod is the only one possible, it does not follow that there has to be an Inquisition in the ranks of the clergy as a result. The church already has an elaborate disciplinary code, with various measures of varying severity, for dealing with the moral failings of the clergy; and vast experience in maintaining a humane balance between public teaching and pastoral practice.

In other circumstances it would be platitudinous to advise that cases should be dealt with on their merits, but that may need saying in this case in answer to certain exaggerated demands. Being homosexual is not by itself a sin at all. Homosexual activity, while serious, is not invariably the greatest of all wrongs a clergyman can commit. And participation in such conduct is always less serious than the encouragement of it by others.

S.A. WILL EXPEL AIDS VICTIMS

Their bags were packed for the annual trip home to Malawi in Central Africa. But for the first time, these migrant miners' anticipation was clouded by fear — the fear of AIDS — which has become a threat to their lives and livelihoods.

The South African government, fearful of the growing AIDS epidemic in other parts of the Continent is publishing new regulations that would permit the expulsion of foreign workers found carrying the deadly AIDS virus.

And according to a mining industry study released last year, Malawian workers are the group most at risk, with about 4 per cent of those in the study testing positive for the AIDS virus.

The plan, initially demanded by the Conservative Party, the official parliamentary opposition, has set off a fourway battle between the mining industry, the militant miners' union, the government and the medical profession.

Dying was one worry, keeping the job another.

Up to now, mine owners have been testing workers for the virus that causes AIDS, or acquired immune deficiency syndrome, and then counselling those found carrying the virus.

The National Union of Mineworkers say any release of the AIDS virus test results by the mining companies would be illegal.

The medical profession is

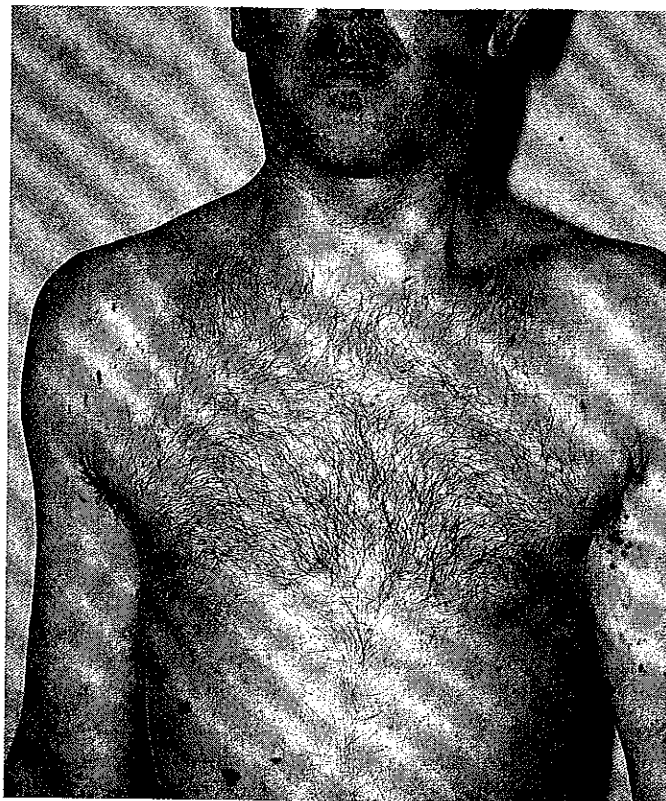
split over the size of the AIDS problem.

And the government says those exposed to the AIDS virus must be expelled from the country to prevent an AIDS epidemic in South Africa, which so far remains one of the world's low-risk areas.

"There is no question that these people will be rounded up, put in a truck and dumped in their home country," Health Minister Willie Van Nierck told a Johannesburg newspaper.

Survey shows AIDS campaign has failed

Irish Medical Times
6th November 1987



Kaposi's sarcoma due to AIDS.

THE massive TV advertising campaign to warn the British public against AIDS has been a complete failure. A recent survey shows that although the British public know a lot more about AIDS and its dangers since the advertising campaign, there has been no improvement in safer sexual practices.

Over 3000 adults, 1000 homosexual men and 800 young people were interviewed in a government sponsored survey to assess the response to the advertising campaign earlier this year. The survey had two purposes, firstly to determine if people are aware of the AIDS risk and secondly, do they take precautions to prevent it.

The results confirmed that the general public do know a lot more about AIDS since the campaign. Four out of five adults now know that a man increases the risk of contacting AIDS by having sex with many different women or prostitutes, twice as many as before the campaign. Some 95 percent were aware that people could reduce their risk by using a condom.

The survey revealed that there is still widespread ignorance about the way AIDS is spread. Almost 40 percent of those interviewed still believed that AIDS could be caught by giving blood.

More than one in two surveyed had little sympathy

for the AIDS victims believing that it was the persons own fault for contacting the disease. Forty percent believed that people with AIDS should be put in quarantine in special places to keep them away from the general public. Most people would want to know if a child with AIDS was attending a school.

Yet, despite the greater awareness of the dangers of the disease, the survey found that people are not taking greater precautions when having sex. Men and women have just as many sexual partners now as before the TV campaign and men still use prostitutes as often.

Also, fewer people in the survey reported using a condom during their last sexual encounter even though they knew of the risk.

Only among the gay community did the advertising campaign have any real impact. Results showed that homosexual men had fewer partners and were more likely to use condoms since the TV campaign. Yet, homosexuals were already well informed of the AIDS risk even before the advertising campaign.

These findings suggest that there will have to be a rethink about how to prevent the spread of AIDS. The findings are reported in last week's *British Medical Journal*, October 24, 1987.

6/11/87

Aids scientists claim laboratory success 6/11/87

By Andrew Veitch
Medical Correspondent

The first important step towards an Aids vaccine which may both prevent infection and treat people already infected, is reported by British and American scientists today.

Dr Angus Dalgleish and his colleagues in London, working with scientists in San Antonio, Texas, report that their anti-idiotypic (anti-id) vaccine does neutralise the virus in laboratory tests.

It is unlikely to be widely

available for at least two years, but its potential advantages over other vaccines may make it one of the brightest hopes for halting the Aids epidemic.

Test results of the vaccine, published in *Lancet*, show it can neutralise the second version of the HIV virus, HIV-2 which is spreading in West Africa and France, and that it should be effective against future mutations.

The anti-id vaccine works by locking the receptors on the body's cells, which the virus

uses to pirate its host's genetic material. Once locked out, the virus cannot replicate.

Dr Dalgleish, a consultant at the Medical Research Council centre at Northwick Park, Harrow, said: "Not only might we have a major component for a vaccine, but it could be given to someone who has been infected but is still well. That is the exciting possibility of this approach."

A Swiss bank, Lombard Odier, is funding development

of the vaccine through Hiver, a company set up to finance Aids research and market the results. The Medical Research Council, the Imperial Cancer Research Fund and University College, London, have swapped their rights to the vaccine for a share in the company.

AIDS victim's bid to donate blood

AN AIDS VICTIM who allegedly twice tried to donate blood has been arrested — but legal experts question whether he can be charged with any offence under existing legislation.

The first time he was unaware he was infected when he turned up at the Blood Transfusion Donor Centre in St. Paul's Street, Leeds.

Routine NHS screening detected the antibodies and the man was informed about his condition and counselled.

But he allegedly returned to the centre after changing his identity and attempted to contaminate blood supplies by offering more of his blood.

He was again identified as

an AIDS sufferer by the screening process and the police were called in.

The man, who has not been named, was arrested but later released on bail.

West Yorkshire Assistant Chief Constable Mr. Dennis O'Toole said yesterday: "I can confirm that West Yorkshire police have received a complaint from the Blood Transfusion Service in Leeds about the provision by a man of a donation of blood.

"The man has been arrested and interviewed and bailed to appear at a police station at a future date.

"Legal experts are meeting to decide whether he can be charged under any existing legislation."

Irish Times
7th November 1987

NORRIS JUDGMENT

Sir, — In the same week as we saw compassion and care shown to the two grey whales trapped in the ice in Alaska, we witnessed, closer home, bigotry, prejudice and hostility as a reaction to Senator David Norris's successful appeal to the European Human Rights court on the issue of homosexual rights in Ireland.

I find it very hard to view this decision by the courts, and hopefully the consequent changes, legal or otherwise, as a "promotion" of homosexuality. Surely it is no more than a recognition that such a minority group exists?

Young people growing up today have enough problems facing an uncertain future, without having to endure rejection or ridicule from the biased attitudes of an intolerant society if they discover they are homosexual. I, for one, wish to applaud Mr Norris's courageous stand, and support him in his quest for gay rights. — Yours,

etc.,

(Ms) FRANCES A. LONG,
2 Eyrecourt,
Powerscourt,
Waterford.

Sunday Press
8th November 1987

AIDS and education

WITH reference to Colm Keena's article on AIDS (Sunday, Nov. 1), may I offer some further elaboration on the North Western Health Board's schools' programme.

The initiative to teach about AIDS in schools in the North Western Health Board area came from concerned school principals. The principals met and discussed how AIDS education should be undertaken with school leavers and they specifically excluded discussion about condoms.

The North Western Health Board Education Department produced an education package for teachers and parents and this was disseminated at eight seminars in May to some 300 teachers and parents from second level schools in the North West. The package does not include any information about condoms. It provides simple and clear information about the nature of AIDS, how to avoid it and how we should act towards people who have contracted the disease.

In dealing with schools run by religious orders we have found that they do not have a "difficulty" in the area but have deep convictions that AIDS education should not be trivialised by

a simple debate about free needles or easy availability of condoms. What is required in schools is education for responsibility and an awareness of the great dangers posed by the AIDS virus.

BRIAN McAULEY,
North Western Health
Board,
Health Education Office,
Tirconaili Street,
Donegal.

SV

Sunday Tribune
8th November 1987

Gays offered new centre

FOLLOWING the recent fire at the Hirschfeld Centre in Dublin, the National Gay Society (NGS) has been offered temporary accommodation at 37 North Great Georges Street until their original offices can be rebuilt.

With no evidence having yet emerged as to the cause of the fire, building will not commence on the damaged premises for at least three or four months. NGS president Tonie Walsh is hopeful that the newly launched Hirschfeld Centre Redevelopment Fund will lead to funding for the centre with the fund currently operational through the Allied Irish Bank in College Green.

Sunday World
8th November 1987

AIDS TEST

Q I want to marry him but first I want both of us to have tests for sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS. We have not had sex and don't plan to until we are married.

But I am afraid to bring it up because it shows that I don't have as much confidence in him as I should. He has said he has never been at risk of these infections.

Do I have to give up my common sense to show I love him?

A If you do, ask yourself if this is the guy for a sensible woman like you. Why would it show that you love him if you were to go without the precautions you want? Doesn't it show love to say, "I want to take the test for your sake and mine, and I want you to take it for my sake and yours"? I don't like it when being stupid is supposed to prove love.

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The Independent
9th November 1987

Doctors with Aids will not reveal disease to patients

DOCTORS who have Aids will continue to treat patients without revealing that they have the disease. This is the official policy of the British Medical Association and has, in effect, been endorsed by the Department of Health.

However, doctors known to have Aids will be counselled on the way they practise medicine. Surgeons will be advised by the BMA to seek retraining, but so far no surgeons in Britain are known to have the disease.

The issue arose when the *News of the World* sought to publish the names of two general practitioners who had Aids. It had obtained the names after making a payment of £100 to a hospital worker. An injunction to prevent publication of the names was obtained by the health authority concerned.

Last week a number of expert witnesses, including Sir Donald Acheson, the Chief Medical Officer, gave evidence before Mr Justice Rose sitting in camera in the Queen's Bench Division. On Friday the judge granted a permanent injunction preventing the

By Oliver Gillie
Medical Editor

News of the World from identifying the doctors.

In a 44-page judgment, the Chief Medical Officer was quoted as saying that the risk of doctors infecting patients was "slightly more than negligible". This slight risk can be eliminated with counselling. Patients have no right to know if their doctor has Aids.

Official policy on maintaining confidentiality for Aids patients is based on a Royal Commission report on venereal disease published in 1916 — many years before Aids was discovered. Syphilis and gonorrhea had reached an unprecedented peak as a result of the 1914-18 war and the Government sought means of controlling the epidemic. It was concluded by the Royal Commission that people who have diseases considered by society to be disgraceful must be treated in the strictest confidence. Otherwise, they would not come forward for treatment and advice and so be more likely to

spread the disease. This is still the cornerstone of policy on sexually transmitted diseases, including Aids. However, the Department of Health has not yet decided what advice it will give to surgeons with Aids. It is possible that some surgeons may be allowed to continue to do certain types of operation, although the BMA advises against this.

So far, the two GPs who are the subject of the injunction are the only doctors known to have Aids. The BMA says it does not know how many doctors have the disease or how many have been infected with the virus. It has been reported that 10 doctors have the disease, but this figure is simply based on the assumption that doctors are equally at risk as the general population.

A BMA spokesman said: "We advised doctors more than a year ago that if they discovered that they are carrying the virus they should seek advice. But unless there is a risk of blood to blood contact there is no reason why they should not continue to look after patients."

Church, morality and sex

THE Church of England is once more about to back into the national limelight, sleepy, confused and bad-tempered, as it usually is on the occasions when its debates capture the imagination of the country. The cause is sex; though what the Church's General Synod will debate this week is the wider subject of morality. On Tuesday afternoon, the Synod will debate a report on Aids from its board of social responsibility; on Wednesday morning it will discuss, and may vote on, the Rev Tony Higton's motion calling for a return to "biblical standards of morality". Mr Higton would have the Synod declare that homosexual acts, adultery and fornication are sinful under all circumstances; that Christian leaders should be exemplary in these as in other respects; and consequently, that those who are not should leave the Church.

The report and the motion seem likely to form the occasion for one long debate on the subject of homosexuality among the clergy, and, by implication, on the question of whether homosexual acts can be justified in Christian terms. Adultery and fornication, curiously enough, are unlikely to preoccupy members of the Synod. They are the biblical terms for what is involved in the divorce and remarriage of clergy, which is all right for some priests and in some dioceses — even in some cathedrals — but which the Church prefers to maintain a decent reticence about. Its instinct with homosexual clergy is to do the same. But the question should not be evaded by talking Mr Higton's motion out. Most of the debates in the General Synod are held to regulate the affairs of something

between a comfortable club and an uncertain sect, but there are moments (not usually those the Church would pick) when it must recognise that it is neither wholly a club nor only a sect, but still discharges the functions of a national church and must proclaim the beliefs it holds, and the reasons it holds them. These beliefs are irreconcilable with Mr Higton's. They are not biblical if "biblical" means that there is a definitive and unambiguous interpretation of scripture sufficient to solve every moral dilemma.

The doctrine of homosexuality on which the Church acts, which may be presumed to be the one it truly holds, is that there are practising homosexuals who make good priests — and that there are others who do not. Judgement must be made from case to case and man to man. One of the things which weighs most heavily against a homosexual, according to this doctrine, is to flaunt his proclivities in a way liable to cause scandal — though what is scandalous in Worcestershire may be commonplace in north London, and *vice versa*. But even the most promiscuous homosexual is not lightly to be judged a greater sinner than those who would persecute him.

This doctrine is neither self-evident nor unarguable. But it is certainly moral; and the Church has an opportunity next week to give a moral lead. If prayerful reflection has led the bishops to their current beliefs and attitudes — as we must suppose it has — then they have a clear, Christian duty to expound and to stand up for what they believe. The question Mr Higton poses must not be fudged. His answer must be rejected.

Cork Examiner

10th November 1987

Good sex under siege says bishop

Report: Tony Purcell

IT would be better if sensible healthy sex were more in evidence in our time, declared the Bishop of Limerick, Most Rev. Jeremiah Newman, in Kilfinane, Co. Limerick, yesterday.

Speaking at Mass to mark the official opening of the new Scoil Pól Secondary School, Bishop Newman said: "Let us not deceive ourselves. In our very nearly upsidown world, good sex itself is under siege. Apart from the Mills & Boon novels that are read mainly by the oldies, one hears little talk of genuine delicate sexual love today - the kind of sex that would be both physically and spiritually rewarding to the partners".

Bishop Newman said that the main reason for this was not the AIDS scare - it is a profound change in ways of thinking. Students of the use of words must find intriguing the extent to which terms like 'relationships', 'encounters', 'commitments', 'feelings', 'preferences', 'choices', and such like, have come widely into vocabulary.

Quite a number of recent sociological and psychological studies, especially in America, draw attention to the implications of this evolution. One of them is that some such attitudes and language, even though they are thought conducive to an openness of mind, in reality, mark a closing of it. "The openness that is aimed at is not a proper openness", declared his Lordship.

Bishop Newman went on to say: "There is a right and a wrong kind of openness. It is good to have an

open mind, in the sense of being ready to seek after knowledge and certitude, wherever to be found. On the other hand, there is an openness of indifference, the sort of thing that would support the approach of believing in or being just whatever one - on one's own - wants to believe in or be.

A distinguished commentator has described the latter as an openness to being influenced by the views of all kinds of people, irrespective of whether they may be right or wrong, to all kinds of lifestyles, all ideologies, the only enemy being the person who is not similarly open to everything. "This is a flawed and dangerous approach, flawed educationally, politically, psychologically and even theologically."

Teachers have to realise that the family is the primary educator and that its duty must be upheld. The Church is in the position that it has a special duty, derived from its very nature, to put before men and women - and, of course, especially those who are Catholic - its teaching on what is right and wrong. But to imbue that teaching successfully is not always easy.

Bishop Newman said that the Church's mission cannot be unreasonably pressed, although at times Catholics may have to make, or be asked to make, a choice whether to follow the guidance of their Church or go it alone.

"Those in whom the teaching Church reposes confidence in the matter of teaching - at whatever grade - surely know that they themselves are part and parcel of a noble effort, and are expected to live up to it. It is scarcely for them to 'sit on the fence', and let the fashions of the day take over from them and their pupils. To do that would be seriously flawed educationally", stated the Bishop.

Dr. Newman said that anyone who acts sincerely in accordance with conscience cannot be guilty of sin. But conscience should be properly informed, and helping to inform it properly is one of the functions of the Catholic teacher. When so informed, it should

be followed. Otherwise there would be little point in either the preaching or practice of our religion.

Bishop Newman made a strong plea to the educational leaders of our country: please help us to continue the work of Catholic education.

Good sex under siege, says bishop

From Arthur Quinlan,
in Limerick

THE Bishop of Limerick, Dr Jeremiah Newman, said yesterday that "it would be better if sensible, healthy sex were more in evidence in our time. Let us not deceive ourselves: in our very nearly upside down world good sex itself is under siege."

Dr Newman was speaking at a Mass to mark the opening of a new secondary co-educational school for the Sisters of Charity of St Paul at Kilfinane, Co Limerick.

He earlier referred to parents getting "caught up in a discussion about the nature and value of a

lot of what now goes as art," and said: "Much of the contemporary music that is favoured in some quarters is crazy stuff leading only to gyrations and a lack of personal decorum that at times borders on the irrational."

The reply, said the bishop, could be that it is "but a healthy letting-off of steam. Sometimes, yes, I am sure, but sometimes, I think, no, as anyone who views a certain TV channel may be disposed to agree."

Bishop Newman said that apart from the Mills and Boon novels that are read mainly by the "oldies," one hears little talk today of genuine, delicate sexual

love, the kind of sex that would be both physically and spiritually rewarding.

The main reason for this, he said, is not the AIDS scare. "It is a profound change in the ways of thinking. Students of the use of words must find intriguing the extent to which terms like 'relationships,' 'encounters,' 'commitments,' 'feelings,' 'preferences,' 'choices,' and such like, have come widely into the vocabulary."

He said that quite a number of recent sociological and psychological studies, especially in America, had drawn attention to the implications of this evolution.

One implication, he said, is that such attitudes and language, which are thought to conduce to an openness of mind, in reality mark a closing of it. "For the openness that is aimed at is not a proper openness."

Bishop Newman concluded by saying that it would be a pity if those who would like to retain the educational institutions that are at present under Catholic auspices were to find themselves "overpressured by secular professional unions who would not in all historical likelihood be in any position to talk today about such institutions but for the brave efforts of the religious in this country during the last century."

Aids hits more heterosexuals

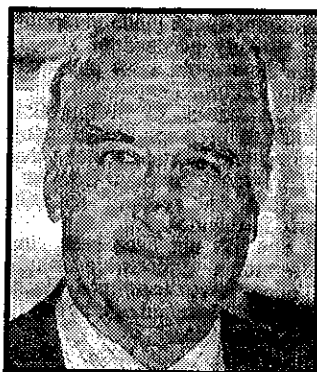
By Andrew Veitch,
Medical Correspondent

Another 56 people developed Aids last month and 19 died of the disease, according to Department of Health figures released yesterday. The UK total since the epidemic began is 1,123 cases, of whom 624 have died.

The disease is spreading among heterosexuals. Five cases attributed solely to heterosexual sex were reported last month — four were women thought to have been infected abroad — bringing the total to 25 men and 17 women, including 19 who have died.

Six more haemophiliacs, a baby girl, and one more female drug addict developed Aids last month, but most of the 43 new cases were homosexuals and bisexuals. Nearly 1,000 gay men have developed the disease, and more than half of them have died.

Sir Gerard Vaughan, the former Conservative health minis-



**Sir Gerard Vaughan:
"patients must be told"**

ter, yesterday repeated his call for patients to be told if their doctors have been infected by the virus. "I would not want to have wounds of mine dressed by a doctor who had Aids," he said in a Radio 4 interview.

Dr John Marks, chairman of the British Medical Association's ruling council, said there was no reason for patients to

know. The notion that an infected doctor could transmit the virus by giving an injection was preposterous, he added.

A Department of Health spokeswoman said that a surgeon with Aids might be advised to discontinue his practice, but there was no risk of transmission in GPs' surgeries.

A report in this week's New England Journal of Medicine says that 5.5 per cent of US patients with Aids worked in health care or clinical laboratories.

If the same proportion were applied to the UK, about 50 health workers and laboratory scientists would have developed Aids.

More than 1,000 people in the US developed Aids last month bringing the total to 43,500. In all, 126 countries have reported 64,000 cases to the World Health Organisation, but the true total is estimated by WHO at between 100,000 and 150,000.

BBC spreads condom message with doctored ads

By Andrew Veitch,
Medical Correspondent
Condom commercials which
have been doctored to remove
brand names are to be screened
on BBC television, the pro-
gramme director Mr Michael
Grade said yesterday.

The first of the advertise-
ments, made for Mr Richard
Branson's new protective,
Mates, and featuring a teenager
plucking up courage to buy a
condom in a chemist's shop, is
expected to be broadcast this
week. Mr Grade disclosed the

plan at the launch in London
yesterday of Mr Branson's new
charity, the Virgin Healthcare
Foundation.

He rejected suggestions that
the BBC might be seen to be
breaking its strict ban on ad-
vertising. "The BBC is not in
the business of selling Mates
condoms," he said.

"We are in the business of
changing attitudes to condoms
and trying to get more people
to use condoms, whichever
make."

"There will be no advertising

on the BBC." The doctored
commercials will be shown as
public information films after 9
pm.

The BBC had chosen doc-
tored commercials rather than
making its own information
films because it did not have
the skills of the advertising
world. "We have no one at the
BBC who knows how to make
60-second films," said Mr
Grade.

The first Mates advertisement
was shown on ITV last night
and full-page newspaper adver-

Mr Branson's own Virgin
record shops, Medicare chem-
ists, and The Body Shop chain
will sell them at no profit.

Four firms face prosecution
after four imported brands of
condom failed a safety test, it
was revealed yesterday. At
least 3 per cent of the
protectives had holes in and
leaked. Users would have
risked pregnancy or catching
Aids or other diseases. The
condoms, tested by London bor-
ough councils, fell short of the
British Standard.

Aids and the Church: two Viewpoints on the day of the General Synod debate

'Zapping' goes wide of the mark

IN 1894, the spire of St Mary's Church in Shrewsbury fell down, severely damaging the church. The Reverend Mr Poyntz, the rector, preached that the spire had been thrown down by God because people were organising a memorial to Charles Darwin. Such are the judgements of God, who (we are told) is keeping his eye in with flashes of lightning directed at York Minster, not to mention Aids. The authors of a recent pamphlet, *Aids and the Judgement of God*, take their fellow-evangelical Christians to task for failing to recognise and affirm that God singles out individuals and (to use their words) "zaps" them: "Twice in the Aids debate, in two separate Evangelical publications, it has been written that God does not 'zap' individuals. The Bible witness is, that he sometimes does."

Well: in all the debate and uncertainty about Aids, this at least

By John Bowker

all Christians should agree on, that Aids is not the wrath of God striking down particular sinners. It cannot be, in relation to those who acquire the virus through blood transfusions; it cannot be, in relation to infants in the womb; it cannot be, in relation to the animal populations in which the virus is present. In any case, to suppose that God invented a virus and put it in a population of green monkeys (supposing, for the moment, that that theory of its origin is correct) in order to infect the heterosexual population of central Africa, in order to punish a group of men in San Francisco and west Hammersmith, is absurd — quite apart from the fact that it attributes to God as Father a character and behaviour which, if it occurred among us, would lead to a prosecution by the NSPCC.

Could it, then, be a gracious judgement, a kind of "marker" that God has put in the universe to remind us to keep in line?

Certainly, there could not be a universe and there could not be a "you" or a "me" if there were not stable conditions and constraints which run down, in the end, to the laws of motion. Without the consistency of those conditions no life would be possible: the spire of St Mary's Church might otherwise have fallen up and not down, much to the confusion of Mr Poyntz. And if we ignore the conditions of the universe, the consequences in the universe are likely to come up and hit us with a sand-bag. In that sense, Aids, if it is spread by sexual promiscuity, is no different from syphilis or gonorrhoea: it is a reminder that gene-replication and human maturity are surrounded by conditions which, if we ignore them, will result in a whole range of miseries.

So what we are talking about here is the stability and reliability of the universe with which we can cooperate, or which we can despise or neglect, with consequences that are obvious all around us. In the famous remark of Carlyle to Margaret Fuller, when she proclaimed "I accept the universe", "By God, she'd better".

But the connection with the judgement of God can only be made by way of an adequate doctrine of creation: because the reliability comes from the unproduced Producer of all that is, we are able to live with confidence, not only scientifically, but religiously and morally as well.

But we live at a sufficient distance from God for our actions to be genuinely our own.

If we have sold our souls to the devil, it has at least been a free(ish) transaction. And the response of God has not been to

obliterate that freedom by zapping us and getting us back into line, but by respecting us in love so much that he gave himself, in the frame and context of a human life, "that all they that believe in Him should not perish but have everlasting life".

That redemption is not compelled upon us. So the only judgement is the final judgement, when it becomes clear (as it already is becoming clear in this life) what we are and what we have made of all that has been entrusted to us in the boundary of this body and this life. And that final judgement will be made by one who has known the partial judgements of Pontius Pilate and the sorrows of unmerciful rejection: *Qui mariam absolviisti, Et latronem exaudisti, Mihi quoque spem dedisti.*

■ The Rev John Bowker is Dean of Trinity College, Cambridge, and a member of the Church of England's Doctrine Commission.

• God's judgement on promiscuity?

THE QUESTION, "Is Aids the Judgement of God?" arises naturally because of its association with homosexual promiscuity generally and the biblical response to homosexual practice particularly (*Lev. 20:13; Rom. 1:26ff*). Up to now, speaking generally, the answer "Yes" has come from certain Evangelicals, "No" from spokesmen of the Gay Christian Movement and a moderating view that Aids is only the consequence of sin.

Jesus embraced the Old Testament categories of judgement but applied them to a city (*Matt. 11:21ff*), religious groups (*Matt. 23:13ff*) or a generation (*Matt. 23:36ff*) but never to one individual (*cf. John 8:11*). In other words, Jesus pronounced judgement upon people collectively but never one person individually save for the implicit warning for not believing the gospel (*cf. John 3:16*).

By RT Kendall

Those who hastily condemn the homosexual who has Aids have not looked carefully at Jesus's observation concerning the 18 who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them. Such were not "worse sinners" but in the category of all men, who are commanded to repent (*Luke 13:1-5*).

There are no fewer than five categories of judgement in the bible. 1. retributive judgement: when God gets even. He said to Adam: "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (*Gen. 2:17*). "The wages of sin is death" (*Rom. 6:23*). 2. Redemptive judgement: retribution combined with immediate promise. A promise of a Redeemer was made to Adam and

Eve (*Gen. 3:15*), God even clothed them with coats of skins (*Gen. 3:21*). 3. Gracious judgement: God's wrath mixed with mercy. It is partly retributive, mainly warning. God judged Israel for heterosexual promiscuity (24,000 died) but the plague was stayed when the survivors repented (*Numb. 25:1-9*). 4. Natural judgement: the consequences of sin. This is retribution owing to reaping what one sows (*Gal. 6:7*). 5. Silent judgement: when God seems to do absolutely nothing for the time being but delays the revelation of His feelings until later. "Fret not thyself because of evil doers... for they shall soon be cut down." (*Psa. 37:1-2*). But "soon" may seem like an eternity.

The first time the word "plague" appears in scripture is when Abraham lied about Sarah, claiming she was his sister. When Pharaoh took her to his house

God sent plagues. Such plagues, however, eventually indicated gracious judgement (*Gen. 12:14-20*). The first time the word "judge" is found is when God promised to judge Egypt (*Gen. 15:14*). God sent plagues upon Egypt. The first nine were gracious judgements (warnings); the tenth, slaying of the first-born, was retributive for Egypt (*Exod. 12:29-30*) but redemptive for Israel (*Exod. 12:13*). The first time the word "judgement" is found is when God showed Abraham what He would do to Sodom and Gomorrah. There is no sign that they were ever warned. It was silent judgement followed suddenly by retribution upon "grivous sin" (*Gen. 18:19-20*).

If the Aids plague is God's judgement, in what sense is it such? To say it is only retributive is to speculate while the jury is still out.

And yet the condescension of the Aids epidemic and the permissive age is surely far from coincidental. Is it not gracious judgement — not upon individuals who unfortunately contract Aids but upon a promiscuous age? As for Aids only being the consequence of sin, this suggests a Deistic theology by which God as an absentee watchmaker does not sovereignly intervene in history.

Aids is essentially a disease of promiscuity. Lifestyles are being urged to change. Should this follow indeed, and Aids signal an eventual end to the permissive society it would indicate at bottom God's gracious judgement upon the world He loves.

"There's a wideness in God's mercy Like the wideness of the sea, There's a kindness in His justice Which is more than liberty."

■ Dr RT Kendall is Minister of Westminster Chapel.

THE CHURCH'S ONLY ANSWER

The Church of England has been faced in recent years with a series of questions which so far it has found impossible to answer. The ordination of women, the remarriage of divorcees in church, and the acceptability of homosexual conduct, are three examples of the church's difficulty in reconciling its traditional doctrine, particularly in matters touching on sexuality, with the liberalism of the modern age.

Tomorrow's General Synod debate on homosexuality will involve a collision between those for whom traditional answers are not negotiable, and those for whom they are merely a starting point for new thinking. Homosexual conduct according to both the Old and New Testaments is, to say the very least, wrong. Until recently nothing in the later tradition of the church has questioned that. Before the present generation scarcely anyone in the Church of England would have disputed it. Since the law was changed English society's strong distaste for the idea of homosexuality — a distaste originating in that constant teaching of the church — has by no means totally gone.

Lately, society has accepted the principle that only those actions which do objectively identifiable harm should be crimes. The judgement of what is or is not a sin has to be left to the individual conscience. But by legalizing homosexual conduct between consenting adults Parliament unwittingly made room for the ideology of "gay liberation" which insists on equating the moral value of homosexual and heterosexual conduct, and which logically demands that this equality of treatment extends even to the classroom.

Personal morality certainly should be a matter of private conscience and should not be laid down by Parliament unless crime is involved. But Parliament's refusal to preach morality should be seen as what it was — a distinction between crime and sin. It did not change the nature or seriousness of the sin.

None the less some in the Church of England have reacted to the decriminalisation of homosexual conduct as if that change had taken place. Given the complex historical and constitutional relationship between Par-

liament and the Established Church, the mistake is not altogether surprising. Parliament is one of the ultimate sources on which the church's authority rests. But in leaving the ethics of homosexuality to private conscience, Parliament was not intending to alter the moral doctrine of the Church of England.

Surprisingly for a body of many faiths and of none, Parliament has seen its duty towards the church as one of conservation, and as a check on theological innovation. Indeed if Parliament is no longer in the business of propounding traditional morality, it all the more needs an Established Church which will do so. This, churchmen would argue, is a simplistic view. It corresponds in many ways, however, to the general but implicit terms of the church-state compact at present: for the sake of the common good the Church of England is called upon to "uphold standards", even by some who do not always uphold them very well themselves.

In this case there is little room for disagreement about what those standards have to be. The church is committed to the moral rules it finds in the Bible which, even allowing for some latitude for interpretation, cannot countenance homosexual behaviour as compatible with the Christian gospel. The burden of proof lies heavily on those who say otherwise, and they have by no means discharged it. But they have taken advantage of a climate of tolerance, and of an unwillingness by the church authorities to seem narrow-minded or old fashioned, to establish their bridgeheads.

As a result, the impression is widely given that homosexual practice is not a bar to ordination, appointment or promotion in the church — as it ought to be. In practice and even in theory it amounts to a departure from the moral code of which the church is trustee. If the church stuck more closely to that code, some of its recent dilemmas would disappear. Christian sympathy with the predicament facing a homosexual is one thing. It is not the same as condoning clear violation of biblical principles.