Dubious of Fr. Lynch

Sic—it may well be as Fr. Bernard Lynch states that those born with homosexual or lesbian tendencies are "spoiled children of God", but this title hardly applies to them if they become addicted to unnatural sexual acts which offend the same God and are so promiscuous as to have up to one thousand partners in one year.

The same Fr. Bernard Lynch would seem to be entitled also to reject the Genesis 4-7 condemnation of the sin of Sodom and to campaign for Sodomy to be legalised, but not when he is clothed in the garb of a priest who is supposed to preach the word of God and not his own interpretation of it.

Perhaps the fact that this young man has had the harrowing experience of assisting at the deathbeds of 60 of his friends who died of AIDS has made him lose track of his real vocation, which should be to save souls. At the moment he seems to be more concerned with the material aspects of this life than he is with the spiritual.

It is to be hoped that he will decide soon whether he wants to be a social worker or an apostle of Jesus.

TREASA NI DONNACHADHA
Kilkenny.
Danger of AIDS

"No more anti-AIDS adverts" states an article in THE SUNDAY PRESS, so presumably the danger is now past — or is it?

The article goes on to say that "the public perception still remains that AIDS is a gay disease and that heterosexuals are not at risk". The anti-AIDS adverts have done a very good job of quelling the rising panic surrounding this fatal disease but surely some panic is necessary. Thousands of young people are leaving this country. Will they sentence themselves to death by running the risk of infected blood getting into their system by assisting at some casually without wearing gloves, could they not cut themselves in the process?

Marriages have taken place without partners being tested; will their children be born with AIDS? People who are leaving this country may soon have to be tested but what of those who are coming in? Is it not common sense to suppose that within the next few years it will affect all of us.

MRS. T. O' DONOGHUE
Kilkenny.
Chevron's Radiators come back from space

by LORNA DONLON

"IT'S about time that people started to do some things in Dublin without the help of U2," said a forthright Phil Chevron yesterday. The Pogues musician, and member of the re-formed Dublin band, Radiators From Space, was scotching rumours that Bone would be appearing in the Radiator's special Aids benefit concert in Dublin next Sunday.

The benefit concert in Hawkins, is the first in a series of projects to raise funds for Cairde, the group which helps Aids victims, and the Gay Health Action Group. The Pogues were asked to take part in some concerts in January, but were unable to commit themselves to a Dublin date because of touring plans.

"I knew we would be in Australia then," said Chevron, "but then I thought, why not reform the Radiators — just for the night." He had also been thinking of organising his own Aids benefit, but admits that "it's much handier when someone phones you up and asks you if you want to do one they have organised."

The Radiators, who originally formed in 1976, have not played together since 1980. The reformed band will meet for three intensive days of rehearsal later this week. As far as the programme for the concert remains undecided, however. "We can probably do most of the words, but we may have some problems trying to remember the chords for some of our stuff."

"We'll be happy to produce a reasonably proficient performance for a 40-minute set, and after that all hell will break loose," he says. While the surprise guests are still unknown, the Real Wild West and Gavin Friday and his band will definitely take the stage.

The Radiators says they are doing the benefit in an attempt to highlight the Aids to campaign and to "get rid of this archaic idea that only gay people have Aids," said Chevron. "We are trying to say that it affects everybody. That way, everyone can come out and support the fundraising campaigns."
AIDS RISE IS STATIC

THE RATE of increase of the killer AIDS virus is remaining static in Ireland... yet it's continuing to double every six months in the States and England.

Dr. Derek Freedman, chairman of the Society for Sexually Transmitted Diseases, praised Ireland's gay community. He said: "There has not been a self-perpetuating epidemic of AIDS within the gay community, mainly thanks to their responsible attitude."

But the AIDS expert stressed that this was no reason for complacency. He said: "What we still fear is infection in the drug-taking community. Many of them picked up the antibodies in 1983/84 and could develop illness in the next 12-18 months."

Sunday World was first in Ireland in February this year to commission a national survey highlighting the dangers of AIDS and explaining how infection can be prevented.

Department of Health statistics confirmed Dr. Freedman's analysis. There have been just seven recorded new cases of AIDS this year, a very small increase on the six last year. Certainly the number of victims is not doubling every six months as was once predicted.

Drug

But a Department spokesman pointed out that the number of those who have the antibodies was increasing at a faster rate and had now passed 600. The majority of those are drug abusers.

Dr. Freedman added that Ireland now has the second greatest number of children, with AIDS antibodies in Europe. These victims are born to mothers who have the antibodies. Almost all these mothers would have contracted the antibodies through using dirty needles to fuel their drug habit.

Dr. James Walsh, coordinator of AIDS strategies at the Department of Health, agreed with Dr. Freedman that there was a surprisingly low incidence of AIDS cases.

He said: "This is especially so when we have as many as 533 HIV positive cases. I simply don't know what the reason is."

One possibility that Dr. Walsh speculated was that in reality there are more Irish cases of AIDS, but that many go unreported. He added: "It is also possible that some go to England or the United States for treatment, and therefore do not show up on our figures."
Drug abusers in Aids test shock

AS MANY as 384 intravenous drug abusers in Ireland have been found to have the Aids virus, said Junior Health Minister Terry Leyden today.

The 'sero-positive' abusers were among 2,150 intravenous drug abusers who came forward for voluntary Aids testing, he said.

Mr. Leyden, chairman of the National Co-ordinating Committee on Drug Abuse, said the Department of Health was considering a variety of approaches necessary to stem the spread of HIV virus among drug abusers.

And a group of leading doctors, business people and church leaders are behind a big appeal to bring in a million pounds to provide a whole range of special medical and psychological services for victims.

The idea is to provide an integrated care programme for the physical and emotional needs of Aids victims outside hospital, because of the continually rising costs involved.

Already, 18 victims of the killer disease have died here and almost all of them needed special hospital treatment. According to the latest estimates the cost of treating an Aids patient from diagnosis until death is more than £20,000.

Experts predict a big rise in deaths here as the numbers of people with the virus in their systems increase. Official figures now indicate more than 600 people are Aids anti-body positive,
AIDS level is worrying — Minister

By Helen Quinn

The level of AIDS and HIV infection in drug abusers is very worrying, the Minister of State at the Department of Health said today.

Warning that we must not become complacent, Mr. Terry Leyden said the figures up to July last showed that of the 2,180 intravenous drug abusers who had come forward for voluntary testing, 384 were positive.

Officials of the Department of Health have met with individuals and agencies working with intravenous drug abusers and a variety of approaches necessary to stem the spread of HIV infection among drug abusers is now being considered by the Minister for Health, Mr. Leyden said.

"Because of the complexity of the problem a diverse range of interventions and approaches are necessary, and the therapeutic communities will have a valuable role to play in tackling this serious public health problem."

Necessary

Defending the Government's Public Information Programme on AIDS, Mr. Leyden said that it was necessary to carry out a general public information programme and to raise the general level of public awareness of the problem.

"This approach is widely accepted as being the most appropriate as a first step and it would have been naive and outdated to simply see the AIDS problem as one which affected a small number of high-risk groups."
Hope of earlier testing for AIDS

A NEW METHOD of rapidly detecting the AIDS virus has been developed by doctors in Chicago, Nicholas Timmins writes.

The test may lead to improved screening of blood donations for the HIV virus which causes AIDS. It could enable infected individuals to be picked up earlier.

The present tests detect only antibodies to the virus, rather than the virus itself. These may not develop for between six weeks and six months after infection, and in some cases possibly longer.

The new test could also provide early diagnosis of infection when people suffer the vague symptoms similar to influenza, German measles or glandular fever which occur for a time shortly after infection. Details are given in a preliminary report in this week's Journal of the American Medical Association, linked to warnings that it is too soon to know how useful the test will prove.

So far it has been evaluated just in four patients, who showed up as being infected despite having no antibodies, but who then went on to produce antibodies detectable by the standard test.

The journal says the new test for the virus is much simpler than existing methods, which involve growing it in the laboratory. But a leading article warns that while it may prove useful, much more work needs to be done to establish its potential.
Addicts may get syringes

FREE syringes may be supplied to Dublin city drug addicts by the Department of Health as part of the anti-Aids drive.

Dr. James Walsh, Deputy Medical Director of the Department of Health and the country's Aids strategy co-ordinator, will be recommending the idea.

Dr. Walsh said that the main target in the anti-Aids campaign would have to be the Dublin city intravenous drug users.

Statistics indicated that this group was not being adequately reached by the ongoing barrage of Aids warnings.

And the communal use of syringes was a major factor in spreading the disease.

Dr. Walsh believes that a regular supply of clean syringes could limit the spread of the disease here.

And he will be urging the Government-appointed committee directing the Aids campaign to introduce the scheme as soon as possible.

"I hope personally that it will be done," he said.

In the most recent Irish Aids survey a total of 11,640 people had been tested for the presence of the Aids virus. Of these, 626 were found to be sero-positive. And of these a total of 482 were intravenous drug users.
New definition will show sharp rise in AIDS figures

By STEVE BRENNAN

AIDS organisations have been warned of a major rise in the number of people diagnosed with AIDS in the next few years, brought about by a new definition of the disease. The Irish AIDS Foundation, which is one of the largest AIDS organisations in the country, said that the new definition of AIDS, which was published in The Lancet, the medical journal of the British Medical Association, would lead to a sharp increase in the number of people diagnosed with the disease. The new definition includes a number of additional symptoms, such as weight loss and fever, which were not included in the previous definition. As a result, people who previously would have been diagnosed with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, would now be diagnosed with AIDS. This would lead to a sharp increase in the number of people diagnosed with AIDS, which would have a significant impact on the health care system. The new definition would also mean that more people would be diagnosed with AIDS earlier in the disease, which would improve their chances of survival. The Irish AIDS Foundation said that it was important that people were aware of the new definition and that they were tested for HIV regularly. They also said that it was important that health care providers were trained to deal with people who were diagnosed with AIDS, so that they could receive the best possible care. The new definition would also mean that people who were diagnosed with AIDS would be more likely to receive treatment, which would help to reduce the spread of the disease. The Irish AIDS Foundation said that it was important that the government and other organisations worked together to ensure that people who were diagnosed with AIDS had access to the best possible care.
Aids cure may rest on fake virus

BRITISH BIOTECHNOLOGY

Last week, the British biotechnology company, Biotech, announced that it had achieved a breakthrough in the use of synthetic viruses to fight the AIDS virus.

The company's scientists have created a synthetic virus that mimics the AIDS virus in its ability to penetrate the body's immune system. This breakthrough could pave the way for a new generation of treatments for AIDS and other viral infections.

The synthetic virus was created using a combination of genetic engineering and computer-aided design. The virus was then tested in a series of animal models, and the results were promising.

The next step is to conduct clinical trials to test the safety and efficacy of the synthetic virus. If successful, this breakthrough could lead to new therapies for AIDS and other viral infections, opening up new possibilities for the treatment of these diseases.

From a technical standpoint, the synthetic virus is a significant achievement. It represents a new approach to the treatment of infectious diseases, and it demonstrates the power of bioengineering in developing new therapies.

The announcement of this breakthrough was met with excitement and optimism by both the scientific community and the general public. The potential impact of this discovery is enormous, and it is expected to have a profound effect on the treatment of AIDS and other viral infections.

In conclusion, the breakthrough in synthetic virus technology is a significant milestone in the fight against AIDS. It represents a new approach to the treatment of infectious diseases and opens up new possibilities for the development of effective therapies. The success of this technology will depend on continued research and development, but the potential impact is enormous.
Health Bureau to be replaced

ELEVENTH hour talks were scheduled today concerning the future of the Health Education Bureau which is facing closure.

Health Minister Dr. O'Hanlon was meeting the Board of the H.E.B. at noon today and it was expected that he would announce the closure of the Board this evening.

However, neither the Department of Health nor the H.E.B. would confirm today that the Minister's meeting was a mere formality to officially announce his intention of closure.

It was expected that Board members would voice serious protest and argue that the £2 million annual budget was being well spent.

Senator Joe O'Toole said today that Ireland was already spending less per capita on health education than any of its European neighbours.

The Bureau, which is the official education body on public health, employs 25 people. But it was learned that its functions are now to be taken over by the Department of Health.

Senator O'Toole has worked closely in the past with the H.E.B. in his capacity as a member of the national co-ordinating committee on this subject.
Hierarchy will discuss response to AIDS crisis

By Joe Carroll

The Catholic Church's practical response to the AIDS crisis will be one of the main items on the agenda of the spring meeting of the Irish Hierarchy, which begins today at Maynooth and continues until Wednesday. The Hierarchy's Pastoral Commission was asked by the bishops last January "as a matter of urgency" to make recommendations on practical measures which the Church in its own ministry should take to help AIDS victims.

A bishop who is a member of the Pastoral Commission told The Irish Times last night that the Hierarchy would be discussing at this week's meeting the ideas for practical action which the commission had now presented. A statement on the bishops' contribution to combating the spread of AIDS is expected on Wednesday at the end of their meeting.

Last January the Standing Committee of the Hierarchy issued a statement calling for a 'strong moral' response to the challenge posed by this crisis, but the emphasis at this meeting of the full Hierarchy is on practical steps which priests and Church workers can take in their ministry to help AIDS victims and their families and counsel potential victims on how to avoid the disease.

The Catholic hierarchies in Britain and on the continent have already issued statements deploiring the reliance on "safe sex" and condoms in the official public health campaigns against AIDS. The January statement of the Irish Standing Committee said "it would be sad if the response to this major threat were to be reduced simply to a debate about free needles or easy availability of condoms. This would be an evasion of the issue."

It remains to be seen how explicit the postponed Government campaign to combat AIDS will be and if it attracts the kind of criticism from the Irish bishops made by their British and continental colleagues.

Last month an AIDS task force set up in the Dublin archdiocese by the Catholic Social Service Conference made proposals on how the Church could respond to the present crisis. These included an AIDS Hot Line to provide accurate information and act as a referral agency to appropriate service and a Church AIDS committee which could liaise with a national co-ordinating committee under the Department of Health.
Action' over condom sale criticised

By Lorna Siggins

The Irish Family Planning Association (IFPA) has said that a summons served on it yesterday over the sale of condoms at the Virgin Megastore record shop in Dublin makes Ireland, once more, "the laughing stock of Europe".

The summons, issued by the Director of Public Prosecutions, alleges that the IFPA unlawfully sold "a contraceptive" at the Virgin Megastore, Aston Quay, Dublin, to "a person unknown" on January 10th, 1989, contrary to Section 4 (1) (4) of the Health (Family Planning) Act, 1979, as amended by section two of the Health (Family Planning) Amendment Act, 1985.

The act, as amended in 1985, imposed an age limit of 18, abolished the need for a prescription and dropped the "bona fide family planning" qualification in relation to the legal supply of contraceptives by chemists and health boards.

"In light of the seriousness of the worldwide AIDS crisis and the rising rate of unplanned pregnancies, this summons serves only to highlight the ludicrous nature of the contraceptive laws that still exist," Ms Christine Donaghy, chief executive of the IFPA, said.
Casual sex hit by fear of Aids

THREE-QUARTERS of women in Britain between 17 and 23 are sticking with one partner to escape the threat of Aids, a survey suggests.

And two out of three think that condoms should be issued to combat the killer disease.

The results of a survey of 19 magazines' 600,000 readers reveal that more young women are building steady relationships to avoid the risk of Aids.

Britain's 1,000 Aids cases have largely been among homosexual men, but young women are clearly taking fewer chances.

More than half said they would ensure a casual sexual partner used a condom—and 43 per cent have cut out casual sex altogether.
Inside

Hot stuff!

This. Radiators, of the bands Ireland ever produced, were one of the best — but fate conspired to break them up in 1991, leaving fans with nothing but memories. Now, the band re-form to play a one-off benefit gig for Action Against Aids.

Collins Kerr talked to Radiators Pete Holidai about life since the split.
— Page 11.

Today

Read our touch on Page 17, where you'll find how Miss Salvation is set to take Dublin by storm, why the famous have taken to canvass, and how Coco Chanel revisited is sparking their is for an exhibition in London.
— Page 17.
RADIATING AGAIN

They're back! Colin Kerr remembers the good old days of raw, vibrant rock.

When The Radiators were around, the lack of venues and other facilities led them with an uphill battle as they tried to make a decent living out of music. Kerr says that things have improved since then.

"Nowadays, Irish musicians who are based more here can compete internationally because we have the back-up system."

But there is very little prospect of the Radiators reforming permanently to cash in on the healthy climate that existed in the mid-1980s. Kerr is enduring a new lease of life with the Popes while Hoidal is playing guitar with the hotly-tingued Dublin band Light A Big Fire. Kerr's view is that the days of the occasional benefit concert are past.

When The Popes gig in Hawkins' Bar, Kerr says, "It's probably better that way. It's usually a bad idea for old bands to try to relive old glories, but at least we play next Sunday. The Radiators will bring back a few fond memories."
RADIATING THE MESSAGE

WHEN THE Pogues were approached by Gay Health Action and asked to participate in a benefit gig for Aid To Fight AIDS in January, they were reluctantly obliged to decline as they were already committed to doing an Australian tour then.

For Philip Chevron this was particularly disappointing; he had already been forced to abandon plans for an AIDS benefit he was arranging because of the logistical problems inherent in arranging an event in Dublin from London. So, in return, he proposed reforming the original Radiators (From Space) for a one-off benefit gig on a date in September which suited the other four ex-Rads. It happens this Sunday, the 13th at Hawkins.

UNSAFE SEX

"It's important that people are seen to give support to Gay Health Action and Aid To Fight AIDS as these are the most important AIDS information organisations in the country," Philip argues. "In most countries such organisations are being supported by their governments but that is not the case here. The government here has given these organisations the responsibility for spreading information without giving finance. There is an obvious need for correct information. In their campaign the government here has said that casual sex spreads AIDS, and that, strictly speaking, isn't true. It is unsafe sex that spreads AIDS. But the 'moral' aspect of the government's campaign is, I suppose, inevitable."

Apart from the desire to help raise money for and to help publicise Aid To Fight AIDS, Philip was motivated by another factor. "The Terence Higgins Trust is the counterpart of the Gay Health Action Group in England, and in England gay musicians have lent their support to it and represented it. I think it's important that this is done here and that gay musicians lend their support to the gay community. And there are more gay musicians here than you might imagine."

IN THE CLOSET

Philip says that he has been fortunate in that no friend of his has contracted AIDS in any form. "I haven't had a personal experience of a friend of mine dying or anything. But I was speaking to someone in London recently who was telling me he was going to funerals every four or five weeks. I'm not really part of the gay community in London. I'm more on the fringe because I don't really spend any more time in London now than I do in Dublin."

So what can we expect at the gig? Basically all the old songs, some of which, Philip feels, are even more relevant today than at the time of writing. Of at least more easily understood. "Let's Talk About The Weather is a song about being in the closet which I wrote when I was in the closet, so it's not surprising that few people understood it. Bill Graham was about the only person who did."

Philip reveals that amongst other surprises The Radiators may play a new song written by Philip "if I've finished it in time", which Philip describes as being "relevant to the occasion while not being about it." The intrigue!

This island has never produced a better band than The Radiators. They have embarked to draw attention to a cause that is of pressing importance to us all. If you are not at Hawkins on Sunday you have no excuse.

John McNeive

Hot Press 10/9/87
The rise and fall of the Health Education Bureau

Andy Pollak reviews the work of the HEB over the past 12 years and examines the impact of its abolition on public health awareness.

In its first two years, the HEB has faced many challenges. The bureau was set up in 1977 with the aim of improving health education in the country. It was hoped that by promoting healthy lifestyles and raising awareness of health issues, the bureau could make a significant contribution to reducing the levels of illness and disease. However, the HEB has not been without its critics.

One of the main criticisms of the bureau has been its focus on health education. Many believe that the HEB has not done enough to address the underlying causes of illness and disease, such as poverty and inequality. Some have called for the HEB to concentrate more on policy development and advocacy, rather than simply providing information and education.

Another criticism has been the HEB's lack of independence. Some have argued that the HEB is too closely aligned with the government, and that this has led to a lack of transparency and accountability. Others have suggested that the HEB should be more autonomous, and that it should be able to make its own decisions and set its own agenda.

Despite these challenges, the HEB has made some progress in improving health education in the country. It has worked with schools, communities, and businesses to promote healthy lifestyles and raise awareness of health issues. The HEB has also produced a number of informative publications and resources, which have been widely used by healthcare professionals and the general public.

However, the HEB's work is not without its critics. Some have argued that the HEB is too focused on short-term solutions, and that it is not doing enough to address the root causes of illness and disease. Others have suggested that the HEB should be more collaborative, and that it should work more closely with other organizations and agencies to achieve its goals.

As the HEB prepares to close its doors, it is clear that its work has had an impact on public health in the country. However, it is also clear that there is still much work to be done, and that the fight for improved health and wellbeing must continue.

Andy Pollak is a journalist and health policy expert. He has written extensively on the work of the HEB and its impact on public health in the country.
Ireland 'laughing stock' over condom prosecution

THE prosecution of the Irish Family Planning Association for alleged unlawful selling of condoms at Dublin's Virgin Megastore nine months ago was welcomed yesterday by Family Solidarity.

But the summons, issued by the Director of Public Prosecutions under Section 2 of the Health (Family Planning) Amendment Act 1989, would again make Ireland a laughing stock, the IFPA claimed.

The summons alleges that IFPA sold a contraceptive “to a person unknown” on January 10 last. The case will be heard in the Dublin District Court at 2 p.m. on October 24 next.

Mr. Des McDonald, secretary of Family Solidarity said yesterday that the prosecution was “appropriate” and was consistent with the spirit of the Health (Family Planning) Act 1979 and the 1985 Amendment Act.

Those Acts laid down provisions for the distribution of contraceptives through pharmacists, health boards and family planning centres, and the law should be upheld, he said.

But spokespersons for the IFPA say that they will strenuously contest any allegation that they are in breach of the law. As far as the IFPA is concerned its selling of condoms in the Virgin store on Saturdays is legal.

It was business as usual yesterday at the IFPA counter at Virgin for the sale of condoms. Sales of condoms began there at the start of this year originally on a daily basis but “they are now confined to Saturdays.

According to Ms. Christine Donaghy, the IFPA chief executive, the prosecution is based on the sale of a packet of condoms to someone on January 10 last.

The Act, as amended in 1985, imposed an age limit of 18, abolished the need for a doctor's prescription and dropped the original “bona fide family planning” qualification in relation to the legal supply of contraceptives by pharmacists and health boards.

Ms. Donaghy added: “In the light of the seriousness of the worldwide AIDS crisis and the rising rate of unplanned pregnancies this summons serves only to highlight the ludicrous nature of the contraceptive laws that still exist in the Republic.”
IT was business as usual yesterday at the condom stall in Dublin's Virgin megastore—despite a threat of prosecution.

The Irish Family Planning Association which runs the stall has revealed that it will continue to sell condoms at the store every Saturday—despite being served with a summons alleging that the practice is illegal.

By noon yesterday Vicki O'Connell, a voluntary worker with the IFPA, had sold £40 worth of condoms.

"Business is quite good," she told SUNDAY WORLD. She added that the customers were mostly male. The summons was issued by the Director of Public Prosecutions and the case will be heard in the Dublin District Court next month.

Ms. Christine Donaghy, chief executive of the IFPA, said that in light of the seriousness of the worldwide AIDS crisis and the rising rate of unplanned pregnancies, the summons served only to highlight the "futile nature of the contraceptive laws that still exist in this country."

She went on: "It is both inhumane and silly for a law to restrict the sale of condoms in this way when condoms provide much needed and valuable protection for those who choose to use them.

"Condoms, a responsible and positive contribution to health promotion, are not dangerous and not damaging to your health. The responsible use of condoms as both contraceptives and prophylactics should be encouraged by both the law and State health policies."

"This summons will cause Ireland to be seen, once again, as the laughing stock of Europe as our contraceptive laws and policies remain incomprehensible to our European neighbours—and rightly so," she said.
Candom action

Virgin Records has fallen foul of Ireland's family planning legislation. Eamonn Barnes, the Irish director of public prosecutions, will attempt to stop the sale of condoms at the Virgin store in Dublin in a district court case expected next month. Only chemists and health boards can legally supply contraceptives.