

MORALITY FORUM UPDATE

Report by Bryan Warner

OUR RESPONSIBILITY

General Election in the Offing

We believe that we live in a democracy and, if we do, that means that our Member of Parliament goes there to express our wishes and support our views. However, it is an unfortunate fact that, after young people have been to university and studied "politics", they tend to think that they know best about anything and are capable of controlling everything. Clearly, the concept of serving the people and the country is still there in most MP's about the two Ps -Parliament Institutions and Power-a little overwhelming.

Since we vote for who shall represent us, it is up to us to vote for the best candidates rather than for their label. In the end we should get the government we deserve, not a bunch of party hacks.

Mediawatch-UK (previously Viewers' and Listeners' Association) suggest in their spring newsletter that we take action to see that our views are well represented. They say: "Find out who is standing for election in your constituency: write to each candidate asking what they would do to improve TV and Radio programme content; attend constituency meeting and raise this issue (especially if it is a marginal seat); let your local newspaper know what the candidates say; vote for the candidate who takes these matters seriously and promise, if elected to take remedial political action".

This is a jolly good advice and, in the view of Morality Forum could well be applied to any concerns we may have for a more harmonious and stable society. The tendency to use pornography, violence and obscene language in the media is only one of the pressures being applied to standards of behaviour

Write Letters

Letters to MP's, Managers and officials are effective in influencing the way that their organisation works.

Public opinion still counts for a great deal.

Media March.

The third Media March is planned for Saturday 19th May. This march is quite influential and has had good influence in the past. This time it looks like being bigger and better than ever, but it depends for its impact on the participation of as many concerned people as possible, so please try to attend.

The march is organised and run by volunteer at cost of at least £2,000, so donations (even small ones) are welcome.

If we remain silent, the excesses and steady corruption of the media will get worse and so "for the sake of our children and our society" your participation matters. Many organisations and influential individuals support the media march and want to see it succeed but the caring majority are needed to make the maximum effect.

Valerie Riches of Family and Youth Concern, Cindy Kent of Premier Radio and others will be speaking.

To join the march

Date: Saturday, 19th May.

Meet at 1.30 pm, for 2 pm start

Location: Tothill Street, London SW1, near St. James' park Tube Station

Route: Parliament Square, Downing Street and finally, Trafalgar Square Rally

SUBVERSIVE FORCES

Promiscuity Promotion.

A crude and offensive full page advertisement appeared in the ABC magazine "Match of the Day", which is read by many young football mad boys. It shows a rough sawing of moronic looking boy, with only three fingers, who can not understand why a girl will not go to bed with him. The copy, which goes all down the side of the page is unsuitable for publication in any decent magazine and ends with the question "SEX. Are you thinking about it enough?" and an invitation to teenagers who want advice about sex or contraception to "Phone in".

To our amazement and consternation, we find that this advertisement is issued by the Government Information Office in Lambeth, SE1.

John O'Neill wrote to Baroness Young about this and received the following reply: "Thank you for your letter and for enclosing an advertisement for an organisation called "Sexwise", placed in the "Match of the Day" magazine, which is also read by your eight year old son. "Sexwise" is a public-funded initiative headed up by Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Public Health, Ms. Yvette Cooper. I have asked the Minister's office for information about "Sexwise" including its aims, what funding it receives and summary of the results the initiative has achieved. Once I have this information, I shall of course pass it on.

In the meantime, I have forwarded your letter to the Minister who, no doubt, will want to address your concerns about the advertisement-which, by the way, I happen to share.

I have received letter from several people complaining about exploitation of young vulnerable people

and early teens by magazines such as "Mad About Boys" and I can assure you that I shall let you know when this issue is raised in Parliament.

Thank you again for writing to me."

"Sexwise" address is: Project Manager, Sexwise, POBox 5000, Glasgow G12 8BR, Tel: 0800 28 29 30

HOPE FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Sex Education

Dr. Trevor Stammers is to be congratulated on the publication of his excellent article on the importance of teaching abstinence, as opposed to safe sex, to young people, which was published in the British Medical Journal at the end of last year. This brought him into direct conflict with Roger Ingham of Centre for Sexual Health Research at the University of Southampton.

The exchange of views can be accessed on the Internet at www.bmj.com/cgi/content, together with a mass of responses from readers.

Dr. Stammers has made many valuable contacts with like-minded people all over the world. However, as usual, the fury of the birth-control lobby at any suggestion of teaching young people to resist pressure to become sexually active is awesome to behold.

Morality Forum is left wondering just what is the motivation of the so-called Health organisations such as

the Brook Institute, The Family Planning Association, Sexwise, etc., in promoting the use of condoms and abortion rather than wholesome, pure relationships?

The advice being handed out now is clearly not preventing teenage pregnancies, HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. Promiscuity is damaging both physically and psychologically. It is definitely not in the best interest of our children to believe that copulation is the same thing as love! In this view, we wonder if the kind of sex education being used in our state schools is not contributing to the difficulties faced by our young people rather than helping them to handle adolescence.

It seems as if everyone is falling over themselves to be thought trendy. As Joanna Bogle points out in her column in "Pro-Life Times", after many decades of giving really positive inspiration for life the Girl Guides have fallen into this trap.

She says, "I was appalled to be sent extracts from their new handbook Look Wider, which includes a horrible picture of a girl holding out a condom and advocates that Guides invite speakers from, among other groups, the Brook Advisory Centres, which offer abortion advice. Guide leaders are probably convinced that they are appealing to modern youth. They are not. Young people want something radical, truthful and challenging, not just more of the same failed messages". ■

Needed: a Code of Conduct

By Sam Brownback

(Article from "The World and I", US magazine, April 2001 Issue - Edited)

Every spring, thousands of young people visit the capital (of United States) to learn how their government works. Washington DC is considered by most to be the hub of the federal government and the seat of power.

But to visit the real seat of power and influence, they would need to travel to Hollywood. Throughout history, stories and songs, more than laws, have shaped individuals and nations. In many respects, Hollywood exerts a greater pull on the shape of the nation than the work of legislators does.

Such power can be used for good or ill. Certainly, many movies,

songs, shows and games inspire and instruct. But if a work can uplift and edify, it can also confuse and corrupt. Unfortunately there is increasing evidence that many of the largest and most prestigious entertainment companies promote and peddle such coarsening entertainment and actually target-market violent, adult-rated fare to children.

A recent report of an US trade Commission established that marketing violent entertainment to kids is widespread, deliberate and aggressive. Indeed, some of the most hateful entertainment appears to be actually made for the underage, impressionable and immature. Whether it is the nihilistic and gory violence of the *Scream* movies, the misogynistic rants of Eminem, or the highly

realistic murder simulation of "first-person shooter" (electronic) games, the primary audience is underage boys.

Marketing messages of hate and violence to children is not merely scandalous, it is dangerous. When entertainment that glorifies violence is honoured and celebrated, it signals that violence is widespread, normal and glamorous. Whatever we glamorise, we encourage: a society that glorifies violence—whether it is music, movies, videogames—will surely grow more violent.

Experts (from the American Medical Association, the American Psychiatric Association, etc) reported that studies point overwhelmingly to a causal