

13th Mar 2004

BBC Charter Review Consultation
Department for Culture, Media and Sport
2-4 Cockspur Street
London SW1Y 5DH

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing this letter in response to your invitation to comment on the future of the BBC. My comments focus mainly on the content of BBC broadcasting.

First of all, I would like to outline the material that the BBC presently broadcasts, which I believe is appropriate to the organisation. The BBC should continue to broadcast its news and current affairs programmes, its coverage of sport, programmes relating to culture and education. Such material enhances society, and this is consistent with the position of a public broadcast corporation, whose content should be such as to promote good citizenship and clean living.

I regret to say there is much material broadcast by the BBC that should be removed. The material can be summarized in the following topic areas:

- Sex content

Many programmes in the category of drama and film exploit sex in order to evoke interest. These programmes typically promote fornication and adultery, contrary to a more healthy treatment of sexual matters. It may be appropriate for the BBC to broadcast material of a romantic nature, but this should always be in the context of marriage. This is particularly important in the present society. Difficulties arising from lax attitudes to sex include sexually transmitted infections and marriage break-ups through illicit affairs where children often suffer psychological damage as a result. Children also suffer where mother has a string of live-in boyfriends, whose interests are not those of the children who frequently are the victims of abuse. In addition, there are the more widely published offences such as rape and paedophilia. In such cases, potential offenders may be less likely to offend if the media generally would remove explicit material from their productions. The BBC has a duty of care to the population in promoting a healthy attitude to sexual matters.

- Violence

There is a tendency in society to promote violence as "cool"; and this is often exploited in drama and film. It may be that from time to time a real life problem can be solved by shooting someone, but this is rarely the case. In fact, very often when guns are used, the wrong people are hurt. It is evident from all the cases of "road-rage" and similar manifestations, that society has taken it on

board to use violence as a means of solving disputes. The BBC should be active in countering this lie and promoting social consideration.

- Bad Language

It seems that the BBC displays double standards when it comes to the question of bad language, often euphemistically referred to as “strong” language. Whilst TV presenters will often rebuke the people they interview for using bad language, at other times the BBC broadcasts material containing the very same words. The BBC should aspire to high standards at all times, as befitting a public service broadcaster. I would make particular reference to the use of the names of God and Jesus Christ as swear words. Such references are offensive to those of the Christian faith and should be removed. The BBC should not be deliberately offensive.

As a guide to the suitability of programmes to be broadcast, should it be necessary to precede a programme with a warning of the nature of “Viewers are warned that the following programme contains [~~scenes of a sexual nature~~][strong language][scenes depicting violence]”, then it probably should not be broadcast at all.

In summary, the content of a public broadcast service should be entirely wholesome. If the BBC does not do this, then it is inappropriate for it to be funded by a television licence. The choice then will be either to change the BBC into a commercial broadcast company, or to scrap it completely.

Yours faithfully,

D.P. Andrews

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