

BPD - BBC White Paper
- log to Chris.

The Secretary, BBC Charter Review Consultation,
Department for Culture, Media, and Sport, London,
SW1P5DH.

27th April 2006

BBC WHITE PAPER ON NEW CHARTER

Dear Sir,

I write as someone who has been profoundly influenced by the religious programmes of the BBC over the last 70 years. In my youth, particularly the Christian and spiritual education these programmes gave me at peak viewing times for children, were very informative. As an adult the objective discussions presenting both sides of the religious case were very instructive as were the valuable archaeological programmes about the Bible. Films about Jesus Christ such as "Jesus of Nazareth" made by Zeferelli in the Seventies were extremely popular and educative. Unfortunately in the latter part of my life the above type of programmes have been diminished and sidelined and either removed from the viewing schedule or put on at non-peak viewing times. In effect the BBC at the present time has "privatised" Christianity and spiritual values violating the views of John Reith Founder of the BBC. I should therefore like to make the following proposals to put Christianity, the great world religions and spiritual values back on the BBC map:-

1. The New Charter should lay down that the BBC must help educate the Nation about religion and spiritual values regularly in its programmes and at prime viewing times.
2. As Christianity is the Established Religion in the United Kingdom it should have pride of place in implementing point 1 above. This must mean that the facts which we know from the Gospels are fully publicised and an objective account of the contents and history of the Bible given.
3. Similarly the objective facts about the teaching and literature of the other great world religions should be given and publicised.
4. The motto of the BBC is "Nation shall speak peace unto Nation". Religion is booming around the world. Only in Europe is it declining. Spiritual values are ascending in the rest of the world. This subject needs to be given great prominence by the BBC by discussion and debate if we are to have peace and justice and objectivity in the world. The BBC has a great part to play in doing this because of the respect it enjoys and the immense influence it wields.
5. Points 2,3, and 4 above need to be implemented on programmes aimed at all age groups particularly children.
6. Atheism is not a religion. Religion is defined as "human recognition of superhuman controlling power". Could the BBC please not confuse atheism with religion in its programmes.
7. Spiritual values determine the moral behaviour of the Nation. The BBC has a huge moral responsibility through the programmes it produces of influencing the behaviour of adults and particularly children and young people. People want to be entertained, educated, informed and helped by what they see and hear. The BBC is the ideal medium to do this "Whatsoever things are true,

whatsoever are honourable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report.....think on these things".(St Paul writing to the Church at Philippi chapter 4 verse 8). Could these sentiments be included in the New Charter as we consider the sex, abuse and violence shown and heard on BBC programmes today and the social state of our Nation now.

8. Lastly can I put in a plea for the elderly who cannot get to a place of worship? Acts of worship on the Television and on Radio are a lifeline for those interested in religion. Please could they be made obligatory in the New Charter. Also could the BBC be instructed to celebrate the major Christian Festivals in its programmes namely Easter and Holy Week, Christmas and Pentecost(Whitsunday), and also important religious festivals of the other major religions represented in the United Kingdom.

I have served as an administrative officer in Uganda for 13 years of which 5 years were in the Ministry of Education. After this I was ordained in the Church of England and served as priest for 25 years for 22 of which I was Vicar of Cumnor near Oxford. I have now retired to Norfolk. The above points are given as a result of my experience in both Government and the Church. I hope you will feel able to recommend them for inclusion in the New Charter.

Yours faithfully

N.D. Durand

(Revd. N.D.DURAND)

Department for Culture, Media and Sport		
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