

As corrected
by EF

(175)

Confidential

M E M O

To: The Archbishop

Date: 13 October 1994

From: Bishop Frank Sargeant

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Meeting with Lord Lloyd re Peter Ball

This meeting was held at 9 am on Thursday 13 October. Colin Fletcher was in attendance. I outlined the review of the file which I had read and pointed out to Lord Lloyd that this is a very delicate time with the Durham situation in hand. Lord Lloyd pointed out that in his view this was not the same and that the Durham situation, being in a public place, was a much more serious offence than the one involving Peter Ball.

He made great play that it was an act of gross indecency with consent but that although the boy was a minor he was over 16 years and was still to be regarded as consenting. He accepted the payment of £15,000 settlement as being the end of the case and saw that as being a positive outcome to this civil action. I pointed out that we are alarmed because there is evidence that the incident was not an isolated case and not as slight as he takes it to be. Lord Lloyd appeared to regard two men being together in the nude ^{and holding each other} as being not very serious. He takes no account of the fact that it was a bishop/member of religious community relationship, and what harm has been done to the perceptions of religious communities. ^{In addition he seemed}

unaware of what Peter said as about what he had done with Neill in terms of coaching each other
when soon after the case broke. This doesn't

immediately When the matter of finance was raised and I informed him that Peter had received £12,500 from Church sources he did not know why I had raised this matter as he realised there was no money available from Church sources for civil actions and that the ABC's funds were limited and that furthermore he thought that Peter Ball was quite well off and did not need any money from anywhere else. He agreed that Peter should leave the diocese of Truro because he thinks that would be good for both Michael and for Peter, but that Peter likes his cottage in Cornwall.

When we raised the matter as to whether Peter was actually fit for ministry he acknowledged that of course that would have to be investigated. I pointed out to him the guidelines which the Archbishop had set, namely that:

- (1) he was not to practice ministry in the Truro diocese until January 1995 at least;
- (2) that from 1 October he could find a gentle and private way into ministry conducting small conferences and retreats, and speaking to clergy groups; but
- (3) there was to be no public ministry of preaching and officiating; and
- (4) that if great publicity did erupt then there would be an immediate review of these permissions and otherwise the whole matter would be reviewed after Easter 1995.

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LAMBETH PALACE

Lord Lloyd does not accept in any shape or form that Peter should be restricted from public ministry and he stated that Peter should now have public approval and that the Church should be brave enough to take on any flak from the press which is likely not to be very extensive he didn't think. He thought that Peter's restoration should be for his own health and for Michael's health and in fact stated that he thought that there would be greater damage done to the Church if either of them were driven to a nervous breakdown or worse than if Peter was restored to a limited public office.

He then really came to the nub of the matter when he said that a downtown parish* in Portsmouth is vacant and that the Patron, Mr Nugey^e, is willing to offer this to Peter in order that he can find his way back into ministry. Lord Lloyd was really looking for permission for Nugey to approach Peter Ball on this one, but was not willing for Colin or me to approach the Bishop of Portsmouth to find out what his opinion is likely to be. There is of course the question as to whether the parish representatives would accept him.

I have two responses to make to this.

One is that this appears to be an old boy arrangement and there is a powerful group of friends who are coming to Peter's aid and also feel that the Church is being very negative and has colluded with the young man concerned in the case.

The second reaction is that if in fact Peter were to be offered this living there is little that ABC can actually do about the offer. It is possible that as Peter is under obedience to the ABC that if he were to say that this is not to proceed then that would have to be the end of it from Peter's point of view, but if it were offered then I think Peter would find himself that other people were not anxious to have him in ministry. But that is a risk which we would have to take. Of course it is the very risk that Lord Lloyd is asking us to make in trusting Peter.

My only other response is that I think that there are other ways of restoration for Peter which he has refused in the past and also there is the question of his disability pension, of which Lord Lloyd was not aware, will also have to be investigated, but that could only be done with Peter's permission.

Lord Lloyd appeared not to be concerned with public perception nor with press interest.

The problem of being even-handed in the treatment of those on the Caution List which he exercised as a diocesan bishop has to be taken into consideration.

The way forward may be for Peter to submit a list of possible engagements for scrutiny to see that they come within the guidelines, but this will be a tortuous way of procedure and I am not convinced that Peter will be compliant.

DPA

LEWIS P. J.