

JTA/MA

16 August 1988

Mr Denis Stanley
Prison Regimes Department
Northern Ireland Office

Stormont Castle
Stormont Buildings
BELFAST

I found my visits to the various prisons a most useful and enlightening opportunity. I should like to drop a note of thanks to each of the Governors, but my atrocious memory for names has let me down.

Would you be good enough to send me a list of the names and forms of address of the Governors of the 5 establishments.

With very best wishes.

Dr John T Alderdice
PARTY LEADER

Irish Christian Education Ministries

"Teaching them to
observe all things
that I have commanded
you . . ." Mat. 28. v. 20.



Director :
Ian Major
9 Carnegie Street
Lurgan
Craigavon N.I. BT66 6AS
Phone: Lurgan 6088

Dear

I wish to bring to your attention a life-sentence prisoner in HMP Maghaberry who will shortly be having an official review. I have pastored him for several years and hold him in the highest regard both as a true christian and as a truly rehabilitated citizen. This opinion is shared by many pastors, police officers, probation workers and fellow prisoners who know him.

Billy Mitchell is from Carrickfergus, where his wife Mena and children Julianne and Cameron still reside. His current address is:-

86/88 William Mitchell
Foyle House (1)
HMP Maghaberry (M)
Old Road
Upper Ballinderry
LISBURN BT28 2PT

I've asked Billy to briefly introduce himself to you:

" Prior to the outbreak of the 'troubles' I lived an ordinary run-of-the-mill life and, except for the odd youthful phase of reckless living, I was generally lawabiding and respectable (in a wordly manner). My involvement with politics started off in my early twenties through support for local Unionist politicians and Orange membership. As the political temperature rose during the late sixties I was drawn more deeply into politics and orangism and tended to support the Unionist 'right' led by Paisley, Craig and Boal. Being unrestrained by any depth of real religious principles I drifted towards political militancy and, when the troubles broke out into street violence, I was a natural candidate for the emerging paramilitary organisations on the loyalist side. As the street violence developed into terrorism and the paramilitaries became more organised structurally and more militant operationally I was soon playing a leading role in the organisational and propaganda strategies of my own group and, for several years, held a senior position on the command staff. At the beginning, and for the first few years of the troubles, I believe that I was genuinely motivated by political ideals and I was able (then) to justify my involvement with violence on the grounds of political expediency. About mid-1974, around the time of the UWC strike, I began to have doubts about the sincerity of the paramilitaries in general and many of my own associates in particular. Indeed I began to have serious doubts about the sincerity of Unionist-Loyalist politics as a whole. However I was so hardened to the violence and caught up in the web of the paramilitary sub-culture that I was content to go along with the crowd

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(Cont'd)



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and allow the momentum of the troubles to push me forward. Although neither I nor my co-accused were personally involved in the pre-operational conspiracy, or in the kidnapping of the victims or in their actual shooting, I have always (since becoming a christian) accepted the fact that I am morally guilty of complicity in the offence and hence morally guilty of murder. Not only so, I have also accepted the fact that as a high-ranking officer in a terrorist organisation I am morally guilty of all the offences perpetrated by that organisation during my term of membership; and I believe that I am also guilty for the legacy of hatred and violence which my generation of paramilitants passed on to the next, and succeeding generation.

My first few years in prison were spent in much soul searching as I attempted to analyse just exactly why I had been involved and where I was heading now that I had been hit with a life sentence. Outwardly, I remained a staunch paramilitary 'hawk' and played a leading role within the compound command structure; inwardly I was trying to find meaning and purpose to life. I am an avid reader with a natural gift for scan reading and retaining information in my head, so when I say that I read almost every book in the prison library that touched on politics and philosophy, I am not exaggerating. Not only so, I was 'into' the occult, para-psychology, and existentialism. By August of 1979 I was convinced that politics, philosophy, religion and psychology were all bunkum - man made devices to account for, or to resolve, human problems and to make some sense of life. For several months I drifted along believing that human existence was a huge accident - and a bad one at that - and that the only sensible philosophy was 'eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die (be annihilated)'. Then in November 1979, when totally hostile to all forms of religion and philosophy and without any evangelism from other folk, I became suddenly convinced that God existed and that meaning and purpose could be found in Jesus Christ. Whatever happened to me during those few November days led me to embark upon a spiritual odyssey which has taken me via conversion, consecration and commitment to my present state of absolute assurance in the truth and veracity of the Christian faith and my development of a distinctively Christian world and life view. It is almost nine years since I made that initial commitment to Christ and, notwithstanding the fact that I have undergone many traumatic experiences and crises of faith here in prison, the Lord has enabled me to grow in grace and maturity and has strengthened my faith and commitment beyond belief.

It is my belief, based on a variety of compelling evidences and 'leadings', that I have a contribution to make to society in the field of Christian Caring and Reconciliation amongst offenders, ex-offenders, potential

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offenders and people-at-risk. I believe that the Lord has equipped me spiritually and physically to engage in each a ministry when it pleases Him to have me released. Whether that will be full time or part time is something that the Lord will reveal when the time comes."

Billy is now in his 13th year of imprisonment and I am certain he (and others like him) would be a real asset to our community and a means of reconciliation and healing should he be released in the near future.

If you could offer Billy a job of any type, especially in the Carrickfergus or Craigavon areas, then I would be glad to hear from you. A short letter of support for his parole would be welcome in any case.

If you can, please reply within the next few weeks as a September Review is expected.

Yours sincerely,

Ian

P.S., You may remember me as the chap who rang you once about my daughter's incessant tears at school - I originally met you at your lecture in the Belfast Bible College.

For your interest I have also enclosed notification of the next meeting of XRES, of which I am convenor. Glad to see you if you can make it.

Every Blessing.



Minister of State

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
WHITEHALL
LONDON SW1A 2AZ

178 JUL 1988

Dr John T Alderdice
The Alliance Party of Northern Ireland
88 University Street
BELFAST
BT7 1HE

4 July 1988

I am pleased to confirm the arrangements which have been made for your forthcoming visits to prisons and young offenders centres in Northern Ireland. The agreed times are:

HM Prison Belfast, 26 July 1988 at 10.00 am
HM Prison, Maghaberry, 29 July 1988 at 10.30 am
HM Prison, Maze, 2 August 1988 at 10.00 am
HM YOC, Hydebank Wood, 5 August 1988 at 10.30 am
HM Prison, Magilligan, 16 August 1988 at 10.30 am

An official from Prison Service Headquarters will be available to accompany you on your tour of each establishment. At the start of your visit to Belfast prison, Mr Carol Jackson, the Headquarters Director of Regimes, will give you an introductory briefing to the prison system as a whole. At each establishment, lunch will be provided.

Arrangements have been made for you to see prisoners James Mervyn Stalford and Harold Baxter during your visit to HM Prison, Maze, and prisoner Robert Norman Davis at HM Prison, Maghaberry.

You should bring with you some means of identification to enable you to gain access to the prisons.

I hope that these visits will meet your requirements and I welcome and appreciate your interest in prison matters.

JOHN STANLEY

DMC/1861



Minister of State

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
STORMONT CASTLE
BELFAST BT4 3ST

Tel. Belfast (0232) 63011
Telex 74272

Dr John T Alderdice
The Alliance Party of
Northern Ireland
88 University Street
BELFAST
BT7 18G

11 April 1988

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter of 15 March. I shall be very happy to make arrangements for you to visit any or all the prisons, ie Maze, Belfast, Magilligan and Maghaberry Male and Female, and also the Young Offenders Centre at Hydebank Wood. I am asking a member of the Prisons Department to get in touch with your office at Alliance Party Headquarters to arrange suitable dates. Perhaps I should make the suggestion that if you can spare the time, you should allow a full half-day for all the visits, treating the Maghaberry complex as one; certainly at least that long is necessary to make a proper visit to the various areas at Maze.

There will be no difficulty about your seeing the prisoners at Maze individually. Perhaps you will give the details of those concerned when the visit is being arranged.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely
John

JOHN STANLEY

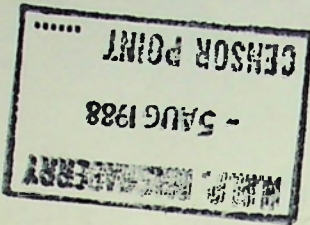
*PP. I was delighted that we would
meet last Friday and will
always be glad to do so.*

JW 10469

In replying to this letter, please address the envelope as follows:

Number 92/88 Name R. N. DAVIS

FOYLE 3 Prison



HM Prison Maghaberry (M)
 Old Road
 Upper Dallinderry
 U. BUN
 BT28 2PT
 Phone: Moira 611888

Thursday 4th August 1988.

Dear Mr. Alderdice,

You have been much in my mind since we had our short chat. First of all John I thank you for having the interest and for putting yourself to the inconvenience in coming to visit me. I hope that the facilities and the environment in which we live were to your pleasing - they are to mine. I won't ask you what your impressions are of our number one Governor. A reserved statement from me would be that he is very enthusiastic about providing the best possible prison environment under the circumstances that we have in Ulster.

On the 5th February I received your letter for which I was grateful. On the 14th February I wrote to you so I trust that that letter arrived. As promised to you in our meeting last week, I will now to keep you informed of my position. However I feel I would need to go back many years to give you some details of my past. You seemed quite unimpressed about my background when we had our chat.

In 1950 I was born of Christian parents and lived until my arrest in September 1974 on a rural farm, three miles outside Rathfriland village in Co. Londonderry. In my early twenties I joined the U.D.F. first as a part-timer and then full time. The Company of the U.D.F. in which I served lost their men at the hands of local republican (IRA) units. In doing duty, or socialising, in my days of hunting, in family ties, I had become very friendly with all these men. Their tragic deaths deeply affected me. Other neighbours and friends had also suffered at the hands of republican extremists. In those years of the mid-seventies I believed that not enough was being done to apprehend the perpetrators of these crimes.

My land was in turmoil. At that time 1974-75 I came into contact with a man 'X' who was linked to a paramilitary group. As a result of my links with him, I became involved in two armed robberies. I, along with another man was later to kill a man who offered to testify against 'X'. These offences took place in 1975-76.

September 1947 found me in Partlough Interrogation Centre where statements associated with my crimes were taken from me. In May 1948 I was given a life sentence for the murders and other charges, along with the other offenders.

Rather than reconstruct the events of these years which have passed since I committed these crimes I feel it's best that I write-out in full the submission I wrote and forwarded at the time of my ten-year review.

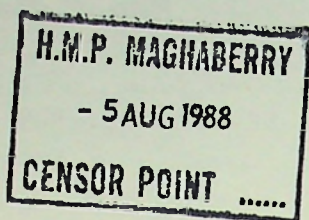
" Sir Madam,

It is difficult to know what to write on this but I feel I must make an effort to explain to you the changes that have taken place in my life, indeed, in my mind.

Time has moved on. That tragic event of twelve years ago will never be forgotten. Prison gives me time to think of the future perhaps, but most of the past time spent in the isolation of my cell has allowed me to replay over and over again the tragic events of the past. One hour of destruction, years of pain for many people. Suffering, evasions, of rage at myself, of sympathy for the dead woman and her family, of sympathy for my family relatives and friends who were much let down by my actions, who suffered initially and who continue to suffer much inconvenience and expense. All this as a result of my actions. My emotions have shifted over the years, from initial shock, from those of remorse as a result of my terrible actions, to accepting the reality of the situation to deciding that I must have a new role to play in life. This process has taken time.

My brother-in-law and sister-in-law have offered me employment in their engineering business at Colbyduff. Hopefully, my education and in particular the Open University Technology course I understand will be of assistance to me in that sphere of employment. Furthermore, I would welcome an opportunity to be of benefit to our society as a whole. In particular, and due to my love for all elements of natural history, I would like to become involved in some elements of conservation, possibly with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). Over these years in prison, I have corresponded with representatives of that group and my family have kept me continually supplied with their (RSPB) literature.

These passing years have given me an opportunity to see the waywardness of my past. However, I believe that I might not have the same attitude to the past, present and future were it not for the love and support given to me by my family and friends. Other people too have taken an interest in me, have offered the hand of friendship like I feel that educational study has



In replying to this letter, please address the envelope as follows:

Number 92188 Name R. N. DAVIS.

FOYLE 3

Prison

HM Prison Maghaberry (M)
Old Road
Upper Gallinderry
LISBURN
BT23 2PT
Phone: **Moir** 611888

CONTINUED.

allowed me to see and grasp more clearly, elements of my life, and that of those around me. From leaving school with no educational qualifications I have slowly progressed through several 'O' level subjects, through 'A' level Art, and I am now engaged in Queen's University study.

Whilst these educational successes are a bonus, the real advantage of prison confinement is that gained by learning to live in harmony with people, who in general do not go out of their way to be kind, truthful and considerate. These pasting years have given me an insight into aspects of human life which were not apparent to me when I was in my teens and early twenties. I'm happy to be able to state that I can be relatively happy, indeed happier, living in mixed wings with men of all religious persuasions, than in wings housing all protestant prisoners. However, I'll have to be honest and state that I prefer to be in the company of 'countrymen' - of any religious persuasion. That's not to say that I haven't been friendly with some Belfast men. Indeed, my best friend in prison was a Roman Catholic who formerly lived in West Belfast.

Through the tragic death of her husband a great little Christian lady (May) has come into my life. Her inner strength and courage has given me hope for the future. Her refusal to take money from paramilitaries at the time of her husband's death, to having no paramilitary trappings at the funeral, should be an example to others. Her heart, her mind is one of love for all, and surely she is a perfect example to all others who care to become so. Together we have built a relationship of respect, honesty and love. I hope May and her young son will be part of my future. Alas, I desire to be close to my ageing mother, brother and sisters.

I could keep on writing my heart's words to tell you, to tell someone, to tell everyone of the futility and distractions of crime.

I trust that this personal representation will allow you to look more deeply at the personality of myself and give you some idea of the changes that have taken place in my mind and life:

Since I wrote that submission there have been some changes in my life - I have moved to this prison, I have spent a further year in prison, I have had my review and was put back for three years, I am now in my last year of Open University study. The move to this prison at the beginning of June has left me feeling happier. Indeed almost everyone that I speak to here seems believed to have departed from the class. Even when I was in the mixed wings in the Haze I couldn't feel totally removed from all the political aspects of the prison and its inmates. I certainly couldn't get away from the high security profile of that prison. Having here I have taken a weight off my shoulders and I think I would be totally happy but for the fact that these constant rains that I am having in my lower back, hips and legs get me down. If I knew what the problems were, my problems could be diagnosed, then that might take the doubt from my mind.

Again, John, I send you much thanks for all your help. Trusting that you and your family circle are all keeping well.

Yours Sincerely,
Norman Davies

P.S. If possible, could you please confirm your receipt of this letter.

JTA/MA

24 August 1988

Mr Duncan McLaughlan
The Governor
HM Prison, Maghaberry
Old Road
Upper Ballinderry
LISBURN
BT28 2PT

Just a very brief note to thank you most sincerely for giving so generously of your time during my recent visit. A very serious situation is developing in the province, and it has been of great value to me to have seen the whole range of prison establishments, and to have had a chance to listen attentively to the views of people like yourself.

I trust that it will help me make political judgements with benefit of a fuller understanding of the prison situation.

Again my sincere thanks and best wishes.

Dr John T Alderdice
PARTY LEADER

JTA/MA

24 August 1988

Mr Bob Gibson
The Governor
MM Prison, Maze
Halftown Road
Maze
LISBURN
BT27 5RE

Just a very brief note to thank you most sincerely for giving so generously of your time during my recent visit. A very serious situation is developing in the province, and it has been of great value to me to have seen the whole range of prison establishments, and to have had a chance to listen attentively to the views of people like yourself.

I trust that it will help me make political judgements with benefit of a fuller understanding of the prison situation.

Again my sincere thanks and best wishes.

Dr John T Alderdice
PARTY LEADER

JTA/NA

24 August 1968

Mr Tom Murtagh
The Governor
The Young Offenders Centre
Hospital Road
Hydebank Wood
BELFAST
BT8 8NA

Just a very brief note to thank you most sincerely for giving so generously of your time during my recent visit. A very serious situation is developing in the province, and it has been of great value to me to have seen the whole range of prison establishments, and to have had a chance to listen attentively to the views of people like yourself.

I trust that it will help me make political judgements with benefit of a fuller understanding of the prison situation.

Again my sincere thanks and best wishes.

Dr John T Alderdice
PARTY LEADER

JTA/MA

24 August 1988

Mr Hugh McCutcheon
The Governor
HM Prison, Magilligan
Point Road
LINAVALDY
Co Londonderry
BT45 6LR

Just a very brief note to thank you most sincerely for giving so generously of your time during my recent visit. A very serious situation is developing in the province, and it has been of great value to me to have seen the whole range of prison establishments, and to have had a chance to listen attentively to the views of people like yourself.

I trust that it will help me make political judgements with benefit of a fuller understanding of the prison situation.

Again my sincere thanks and best wishes.

Dr John T Alderdice
PARTY LEADER

JTA/MA

24 August 1988

Mr Bill O'Loughlin
The Governor
HM Prison, Belfast
Crumlin Road
BELFAST
BT14 6AE

Just a very brief note to thank you most sincerely for giving so generously of your time during my recent visit. A very serious situation is developing in the province, and it has been of great value to me to have seen the whole range of prison establishments, and to have had a chance to listen attentively to the views of people like yourself.

I trust that it will help me make political judgements with benefit of a fuller understanding of the prison situation.

Again my sincere thanks and best wishes.

Dr John T Alderdice
PARTY LEADER