NOW IN A SHOP NEAR YOU: THE BARRIER METHOD OF CONTRACEPTION

On these six areas, the new

government gets a clean A+

Recents hoot-tokill order solves two critical problems

with only one wellplaced bullet. It is an example of brilliant,

out-of the-

box thinking by our leaders and we should all support it

Once, in a supermarket in a small

town, I asked for condoms. After a lot of

blushing by the cashier — and a bit of

uhh-ming and aah-ing — she told me the

establishment did not stock condoms.

Reason? The proprietor of the fine place

was “saved”. She did not say from what.

The owner did not think she should

be stocking up on johnnies as they could

encourage promiscuity. It was against her

beliefs, you see. She did, however, sell

cigarettes, which I suspect bear celestial

approval.

It takes a petty type of meanness

to impose your imagined morals on

everyone else, and it takes a special sort

of self-restraint not to wipe your bottom

on the curtains of such high-minded

hypocrites.

There is no tyranny as horrible as

that which pretends to know what is

good for you. Not stocking condoms

in a country which has declared HIV a

national epidemic seems particularly

mean-spirited.

This attitude just cocks the barrels

of loathing in me. These are the

sort of people you should have on

anthrax mailing lists. Their fake moral

“condomnation” of sex is part of the

reason the pandemic continues ravaging

the country, and I found out recently

that the town has one of the highest

prevalence rates of HIV in the country.

Sex seems to be had whether you provide

condoms or not. Better sell them than

not. One large supermarket chain places

condoms behind glass cabinets that

house alcohol. Alcohol, unlike condoms

— which are used for the ultimate

expression of human affection — is a

poison that is disgusting, contemptible,

and risible.

That explains why it is ghettoised

behind barriers. But placing condoms

behind bars next to alcohol means they

can only be accessed at the Mututhoapproved

hours. Or is there a message

that drinking should go together with the

expressions of a libidinous nature?

The method the supermarket employs

in some of its branches puts a new spin to

the phrase “barrier method”.

Cigarettes are far worse, destructive,

and disgusting, than sex, yet tobacco

is more prominently and tastefully

displayed. Tobacco kills more people than

STIs do globally, yet Kenyans go through

more cigarette packs than condom

ones. And tobacco causes deaths while

condoms stop them.

Putting condoms behind a glass

counter stigmatises them and detracts

shoppers from buying them. And scaring

shoppers from buying the sheaths will

not stop them from having sex. A teenage

girl would have to try hard to work up the

confidence to ask for them.

People go to supermarkets to buy

condoms and not their local kiosk in order

to escape the lecture or the leering look.

Our Victorian prudery, merged with

religious self-regard, is making Aids

continue its march.

The government, meanwhile, has

raised taxes on condoms, imposing yet

another barrier in the war against STIs.

That should show you how serious they

really are about beating the HIV scourge.