

SPECTRUM

Metanoia

Remembering and changing our ways

OPINION/ All too much lip-service has been given to correcting blatant, even subtle abuses and these abuses are being ignored by people who are in positions to correct them.

by John Valk

December 6 and August 24 are two dates that vividly stick in the minds of many people, especially engineers. The vicious acts perpetrated against fellow humans, especially women, on these two days starkly remind us all of the incessant violence we inflict on one another. We need not look south of the border or in far away lands; we need look only at home.

Humans have a disturbing dark side. The past and present reveals the atrocities. We, the enlightened species, who seek love, practice hate. We blame others for our misfortunes, and then we strike out. When in positions of power, we tend to oppress; we take advantage of and abuse the powerless.

In our history, women and children have disproportionately been the victims of this dark side of human nature. All too many suffer and live in fear. All too many more bear physical or emotional scars of past abuses, much of it never to be erased.

How do we stop such viciousness? One needs to have hope that the darkness will not always triumph. In the bleakest of moments, Christians cling to the hope that light will win over darkness, even if humans of themselves are not able

The first, best and most necessary place to begin to seek healing for our broken world is in the depth of one's own soul. Every person needs to examine and re-examine what it is that lurks deep in the human heart. Those in positions of power need to wrestle with the innate drive for advantage and control. Men in particular know all too much of gaining power for themselves, and all too little about empowering others.

Unless our own soul receives healing, restoration will be incomplete. In our present society, we all too frequently seek blame outside ourselves. "I am the innocent one," we say; "you are at fault." It is so much easier to point the finger at others — women at men, men at women.

Of course, some direct finger pointing is necessary. In fact, it has become rather clear that all too much has been swept under the carpet. All too much lip-service has been given to correcting blatant, even subtle, abuses. Daily we read about physical, sexual and emotional abuse that has been ignored by people who are in positions to correct it. That makes many quite angry and upset, and rightly so. Inaction, while injustice perpetuates, is not to be tolerated. We must change our ways.

Today there are many women and men who have begun to work together to change the ways of the past. Educating one another is a

major part of that work. Both the women's and men's movements have forced all of us to re-examine our attitudes and our actions.

Yet, changes, in whatever form they are expected, seem to be slow in coming. Gender equality and balance is not occurring overnight. Institutions — governmental, educational, ecclesiastical — are slow in responding. And, the wheels of justice also do not turn quickly. Male domination and violence continue.

Some are impatient with the process, and understandable so. In frustration, broad strokes are used to paint allies as opponents. Harsh words, inaccurate statements and half-truths alienate those striving for similar goals. As a result a new form of violence surfaces — verbal abuse — and allies are pitted against each other.

No one is well served when the means is political and the end is self-advancement, when hate, envy and distrust colours the discussions.

We have seen too much of that aired recently at the university. In the long run, it accomplished little, and credibility is too quickly lost. It is ironic that some who sincerely strive for the same peace, justice and safety for women are so distrustful of others who strive for the same goals but whose strategy may be different.

Searching one's own soul for its own motives is a necessary first step before the joining of hands is possible. But the joining of hands is

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necessary, in order that we do what needs to be done.

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NOTICE

Because this is the last issue of the Brunswickan, there will not be a Brunswickan general staff meeting this Friday.

The next general staff meeting will be after the holidays on January 8 at 12:30pm in room 35 of the Student Union Building.

A thank you

The Brunswickan wishes to thank all the writers who have contributed to the Spectrum pages this term. May each of you return back after the holidays to continue writing thought-provoking, sometimes humorous, and always well written opinion articles.

R A P

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