

The best news you could ever hear

When religion leads to corruption and intolerance

I was going through *The Daily News* the other day when my eyes were led to a question printed in very large bold letters: "IS GOD FAIR?"

It was an add for the Gardner Ted Armstrong Evangelist Association to promote the free booklet *Here's the best news you could ever hear*. You can also consult it on the GTAEA website — which I did, by pure curiosity of course.

The purpose of the homepage is to "spread the good news of the coming kingdom of God, as Matthew 24:14 states." There, pages and pages of weak explanations and quotes of the Bible are perverted to convince you that "God has a plan of salvation for humanity" and that "those who never had a chance to hear the name of Jesus are going to have one."

This Texan evangelist states that the more Christian you are, the quicker your resurrection. Also, he points out that "the Government of God will eventually rule over all nations on the Earth."

Even though Mr. Armstrong is not directly asking for your credit card number, there is a caption at the bottom of each web page saying

that the GTA Church is supported by donations freely given by Christians and co-workers. There is also an answer on the Frequently Asked Questions list reassuring people who order the free booklets and audiotapes that they are not taking advantage of the Church, because "who receives freely should give freely".

But I don't think we should worry too much about Mr. Armstrong's finances, considering the fact that he owns several TV shows in the USA, and that his newspaper ads travel all the

way to Halifax. Mr. Armstrong also gives talks in Holiday Inns and Convention centres around the world. All in all, he represents one of the strongest figures of the "Church-Mart", as I like to call it.

The pro-Christ (who, by the way, is an intergalactic traveller according to Mr. Armstrong) propaganda is nothing new. It has existed for centuries. It now uses media such as TV, radio and the Internet to try to convert more people to join "the Kingdom of God".

The bottom line is the same

though: people are trying to gain power and get richer.

The Catholic Church was the biggest power in the European middle ages, and starving people still had to pay their taxes to "save their soul". As power is addictive, the Church desired to reign on Earth, triggering the different crusades in the Middle East, genocide of Native Americans in the Americas and the Inquisition to discover and punish heretics. Blood spilled "in the name of God" is unfortunately a common feature of most religions.

The terror spread by muslim fanatics in Algeria, the conflict at the Israel border, in the former Yugoslavia and in Northern Ireland are just recent examples of a very long list of religious differences that led to a state of war.

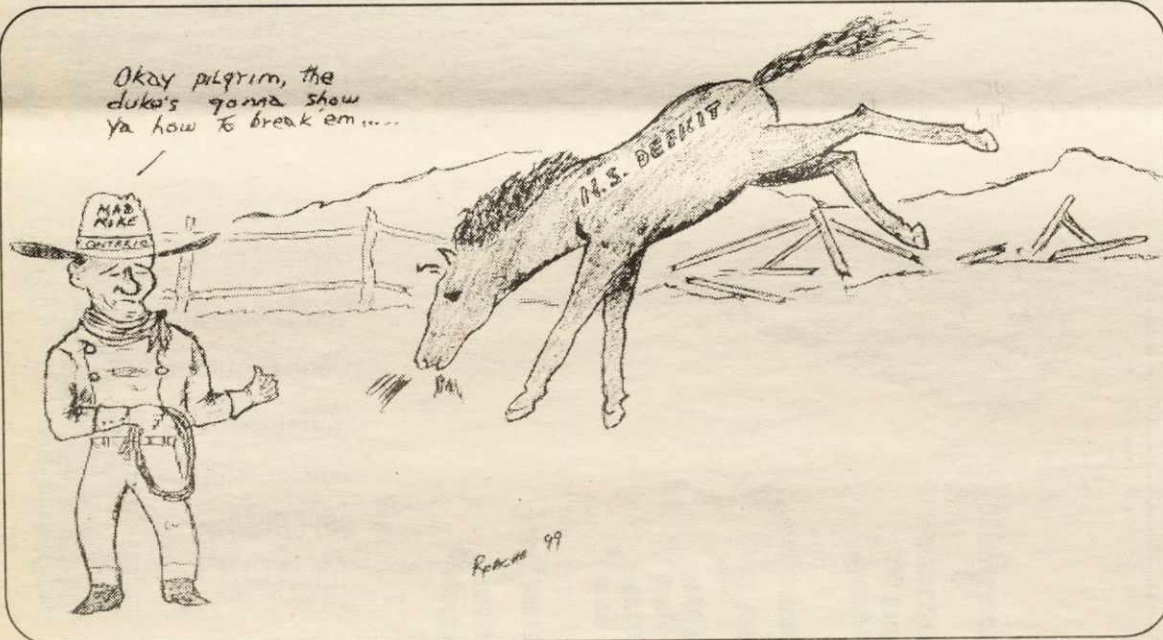
I never really understood this paradox: while religions talk mostly about love and forgiveness, they often trigger hate and intolerance.

Mr. Armstrong tries to reach isolated souls through *The Best News you could ever hear*, seeking personal fortune and hoping for Christianity's reign on Earth.

Well, the best news I could ever hear would be the stuff telling me that corruption and intolerance are definitely over, and that Love finally reigns on Earth.

PASCAL LANGUILLON

EDITORIAL



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The *Gazette* welcomes letters to the editor and commentary. All letters will be printed up to four per week. The printing of additional letters will be at the discretion of the Opinions Editor. Letters may be edited for length above 300 words and we reserve the right to edit commentary.

All submissions must be typed double-spaced on paper, e-mailed, or on a Mac or IBM 3 1/2 inch disk, in a WP version not greater than Word 6.0 or equivalent. The deadline is Mondays at 4:30 p.m.

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LETTERS

Radical Bunnies?

To the editor,

The controversy over *Playboy* on campus has certainly sparked a lively debate at Dal (as noted in last week's *Gazette*). The way I see it, a lot of the objection to *Playboy* has been based on the feminist concerns about the magazine's objectification of women parading as freedom of speech. But according to the two Bruces and their *Playboy* advisors, our objection to *Playboy* is based on how thoroughly *conservative* we are.

I guess if we, the feminists, are the right-wing components of this debate, that means that you, the *Playboys*, are the *radicals*. Here is the reality: white women with their legs spread is not radical.

Playboy supports conservative, sexist, classist and racist ideals.

I do not object to *Playboy* because I'm a conservative (I'm guessing the connection here is that I reject *Playboy* because I hate sex?) I object to *Playboy* on campus because it provides a niche at an academic institution for the use of women as objects of men's pleasure.

That is not what I came here to learn.

Kate Greenaway

Tobin for PM?

To the editor,

In the newspaper that covers Newfoundland premier Brian Tobin's constituency of the Straits and White Bay North, *The Western Star* out of Corner Brook, there was the following headline: "Reduced Majority - Liberals Win Election But Lose 4 seats". This 44-year-old leader has been given a second mandate to govern Newfoundland and Labrador.

During the 23-day election campaign that witnessed the Liberals winning 32 out of 48 seats, it was written premier Tobin is desirous of prime minister Jean Chretien's not-yet-vacant job. In the past Tobin has taken lessons to become competent in French, but during this campaign he avoided answering any questions on his federal intentions.

In 1983, John Crosbie, a graduate of the Dalhousie School of Law, made an unsuccessful stab at the leadership of the federal Progressive Conservative Party. In his recently published memoirs, *No Holes Barred: My Life In Politics*, he writes: "Toward the end of 1995, I had a chat with Brian Tobin, then the federal Minister of Fisheries. Mr. Tobin was contemplating returning to Newfoundland to run for the Liberal leadership to succeed Clyde Wells as leader and premier."

Another well known retired politician was recently asked about Mr. Tobin's possible bid to become the next federal Liberal leader. In Moncton, where he practices law,

former New Brunswick Liberal premier Frank McKenna said Mr. Tobin would have a huge uphill battle.

"It's a tough, tough, tough proposition to move from a provincial premiership directly to the national level and to become Prime Minister," he said.

Following this election, premier Tobin said he will serve out his present mandate. Chretien could retire from elected politics and Tobin could change his mind.

In winning another mandate now, this election victory for premier Tobin could prove to be a benefit to anyone but himself.

Kevin B. Bowering

Love... of beer

To the editor,

Year after year the majority of western civilization engages in the tireless celebration of Valentine's Day. As January comes to a close and the holiday buzz increases, couples can be seen walking hand in hand, undoubtedly planning their Valentine's celebration.

Meanwhile, those of us who are 'uninvolved' are forced to view little hearts and cupid's tacked to just about every bulletin board and telephone pole in the city. Valentine's Day has become a celebration exclusively for happy-smoochy couples, and it fails to consider the lovelessness of we single folk. It is for this reason that I wage my war on Valentine's Day, at least the way in which we have come to celebrate it, on behalf of single people everywhere.

By definition, I am a single guy. I have no steady girlfriend, heck I don't even have an occasional girlfriend, and given the fact that I can't afford an inflatable girlfriend, I suspect this trend will continue for some time.

I guess it's a luck thing, or maybe it's me always falling for the girl that ends up falling for my buddy. My point is this: I am single. It may suck, but it's something I've come to terms with. I spend three hundred and sixty four regular days of the year without a 'significant other' and this makes Valentine's Day pretty harsh for me. As if I need a single day that acts as a reminder that I'm single.

I know what you may be thinking at this point: "What in the hell is this guy raving about, why doesn't he stop his whining and go to the Palace?" I think places like the Palace work as far as picking-up goes, but you can't wake up the next morning with a relationship (and it will often scare you what you can wake up with).

So this is a call to all of the single people out there who are fed up with today's glamorized celebration of Valentine's day. Stand up and let your voices be heard. Let's take Feb. 14th and change it into 'National Beer-drinking Day'. That way, everybody could participate, and it would be a lot more fun.

Steve Bowers

The *Gazette* will not be published next week. Look for us to hit the stands on March 4th. In spite of this absence, we do love you all. Really, we care. Stay in touch. In fact, we'll call you! Honest!