

## Draw up your own 'fucking' contract, minister says . . .

by Gord Floyd

"Most of them have been living together, and if they haven't been, I hit them hard on that."

That's Jim Fisk, trained marriage counsellor and minister of Holy Trinity Anglican Church talking. His office is on the second floor at 10 Trinity Square, in Toronto, right above the Distress Centre manned 24 hours a day by his congregation.

**THE OFFICE IS, BLUNTLY, A DUMP.** The couch and chairs may have been in style 30 years ago, the small door in one corner appears impassable for the junk on the floor, and the bookshelves in the opposite corner are equally inaccessible.

Jim slouches in what is obviously his favourite of the overstuffed easy chairs, and he continues to talk about the revolutionary attitudes toward marriage that the unusual situation of his church has caused him to adopt.

"I guess I see my function as getting at the underlying assumptions that people make with regard to a life-long relationship." Any couple who comes to Jim with their planning as far along as the date of the wedding, will have to find someone else to officiate.

"Sure, six years ago I tried to give every couple about seven hours of pre-marital counselling . . . I asked them questions like 'why do you want to get married?' and 'what does it mean to you?' . . . but

being a downtown church, a lot of couples came here who had no religious affiliation. All this "in sickness and in health" 'til death do you part' business was pretty meaningless for them. It got so bad that I wouldn't marry anyone outside the congregation."

This hiatus probably allowed two things to happen: most important is that it seems to have crystalized Jim's early inclinations that couples should be more involved in their own weddings, and secondly, although he doesn't mention this, I imagine he needed the time to muster the guts to assume his present course.

I wouldn't think that it is very easy for a minister to tell his church that it's away off base on one of its sacraments. But that is Jim Fisk's message, not only to the Anglican Church, but to all organized religion. "THE PRIEST, MINISTER, RABBI OR whatever, is no longer the expert . . . couples have to take the responsibility of their concept of marriage . . . if a couple feels they need a contract to fuck, then their view of marriage needs to be especially examined from this angle."

He elaborates on this point: "Yes, I try to get people to approach as equals, but again, I insist that they establish their own ground rules. I don't think they can do this unless they try intercourse before marriage, but most people haven't changed on these things as

much as they think."

This leads to the central aspect of Jim's present form of 'counselling'. The couple do things for themselves. They work out their own problems, make their own rules, reach their own conclusions. "This brings the church back to its original intention — couples who say 'such and such a minister married us' are wrong. Couples marry each other, the minister or priest only officiates.

After this is done, the couple sets about what Jim feels is an equally important part of their pre-marital preparation — the design of the actual wedding ceremony, again the sole responsibility of the couple.

No ground rules, no pre-fabricated formula, only a service that means the most to the only two people who matter.

"THEY HAVE TO DISCOVER RIGHT NOW, before marriage, what it's all about. Let's face it, divorce is an accomplished fact when the couple separates, but the court ritual afterwards is rough on everyone. The ones hurt most are the kids, and perhaps the best way to protect them is being explored now in communal living experiments, where all the children relate to all the adults as parents. This way a divorce or separation doesn't leave any of the kids out in the cold.

(from the Toronto Varsity)

## AROUND HALIFAX

Sunday, Nov. 29

— **CHORAL CONCERT,** Cathedral Church of All Saints. Beethoven's 9th symphony. 8:30 p.m.

— **FOLK MASS,** Dal SUB.

Tuesday, Dec. 1

— **DAL ART GALLERY LUNCH HOUR FILM SERIES,** (a.) Rembrandt; (b.) The Black man and his Bride; (c.) Patterns of American Rural Art.

Thursday, Dec. 3

— **DAL FILM SOCIETY,** 7:30 McInnis Rm.

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## the power of Reveen

(continued from page 8)

The lights go down to a deep, deep blue. Reveen turns to his subjects, raises his arms. His jacket sends out sparks of light — "Relax, completely relax. Close your eyes and take a deep breath, drawing the air deep into your lungs. Let it out with a sigh. And once more. Breath deeply. Let it out with a sigh. Now open your eyes, tilt your head slightly back, pick out one point on the ceiling, concentrate on that one point and my voice."

And he puts them to sleep. And they go to sleep. As he speaks, the music begins, soft, beautiful music making them fall deeper and deeper asleep. Now he has

control —

Now they have control! So deep asleep, so beautiful, their minds are free from worry, free from doubt. They can do what they wish. I can only suggest, only suggest.

Reveen makes his first suggestion, "You are deeply, soundly asleep, listening to my voice and what my voice says is true, it is the truth. You are in a brass band and when my voice reaches the count of three you will play your favourite instrument. You will hear applause and you will acknowledge it because the applause is for you, the applause is for you. One, two,

three!"

The lights come up and all are playing. We in the audience applaud.

The subjects play on. Reveen speaks "The applause is for you. Stand up and bow for the applause is yours."

And they do and so it goes on, suggestions and actions. I laugh until my sides hurt, everyone does, everyone is happy. Reveen seems happiest of all.

I am happy here but not the most happy. Not yet. Not until the end.

Finally, the end comes. The subjects, who have performed brilliantly, are seated quietly in their chairs. Reveen talks to the audience, thanks them for their attendance, invites them to return. Then he turns back to the subjects —

This is what makes me happiest, to help them find themselves.

"Now I will impart to you mental gifts. From this day on, you will never again suffer from nervous headaches. You will never again fear the dentist and when you are in his chair you will feel little or no pain. From this day on, you will have absolute confidence in your ability to succeed in whatever you do but your confidence will never overrule your common sense. You will treat your fellow man with compassion and understanding."

My heart melts with these words because I believe them. Peace, confidence, compassion.

I leave the theatre with a warm happy feeling inside me.

The next day I read in the paper where someone called the show "immoral". I dismissed this as the opinion of someone ignorant and inexperienced. It's better to believe in the good in people. It's better to love.

## ANNOUNCEMENT!!

**Speaker: Dr. John Young**  
Chairman of Prices  
and Incomes Commission

**Topic: Prices and Incomes**  
despite Regional Economic  
disparity

**Place: Rm. 15 Weldon Bldg.**

**Time: Dec. 4th (Fri.) 2:00 p.m.**

**ALL WELCOME**