

SPECTRUM

Metanoia by John Walk

Hanukkah: Festival of Lights

Monday of this week began the eight-day Jewish celebration of Hanukkah, or "Festival of Lights". Demanding no cessation of work nor elaborate ceremony, it nonetheless has special significance. Hanukkah commemorates a unique event in the history of the Jewish people: the 2nd Century BCE revolt of a small group of Jews against a powerful Greek oppressor. Their subsequent victory was both political and religious.

The Jewish people of that time were being squeezed between two warring factions: the Seleucids of Syria and the Ptolemies of Egypt. Both had been part of the empire built earlier by Alexander the Great. In the 3rd Century BCE, the Jews had been under the rule of Egypt. The Greco-Ptolemies had granted considerable freedom — cultural, religious, even political — to the Jews, provided they remained peaceful and paid their obligatory taxes. This situation appealed more to the conservative Jews, who greatly valued their religious self-rule.

In 175 BCE Antiochus IV Epiphanes ascended the Syrian throne. De-

termined to unify his kingdom, he sought to Hellenize all his subjects, by having them adopt Greek ideals and customs. Enterprising and aristocratic Jews, among them younger and more sophisticated priests, saw in Antiochus, more so than in the Egyptians, better opportunities for economic, cultural and political advancements.

These Jews began to attach themselves to Greek ways. They Hellenized their Jewish names, engaged in lucrative trade and manufacturing, and even erected a sports gymnasium in the heart of Jerusalem. Ordinary Jews, on the other hand, regarded Greek culture with an intense hatred, mostly because it involved worship of Greek gods, eating of food considered "unclean", and participation in sporting events they considered indecent.

In 168 BCE Antiochus, stung by a forced withdrawal from an invasion into Egypt by the increasingly powerful Romans, issued a decree. All the peoples of his empire were to become fully Hellenized. The common Jewish people refused.

Angered by what he considered religious resistance by conservative Jews, Antiochus sent an army to stamp out Jewish religious observances. The army halted Temple activities, desecrated it, confiscated its treasures, burned its law books, and massacred thousands of men, women and children. Their most sacrilegious act was the sacrificing of a pig on the Temple altar. They furthermore compelled the people to erect shrines to Greek deities and sacrifice swine on the altars in all the villages.

In the village of Modin, 35 kilometres from Jerusalem, some of Antiochus' soldiers tried to force a priest by the name of Mattathias to engage in these sacrifices. He refused. When another leading citizen completed the sacrifice, he and his sons drew their swords, kill-

ing both the leading citizen and the soldiers. The revolt had begun.

Under the leadership of Judah Maccabee and his brothers of the Hasmonean family, loyal Jews were rallied to form an army. Slowly they routed the Syrians from the region. In 165 BCE they restored the Temple in Jerusalem, and rededicated the altar with great ceremony. The ensuing celebration lasted 8 days, accompanied by singing and feasting. The people declared that the day (the 25th day of the Jewish month of Kislev) should be observed as an annual festivity of dedication (Hanukkah). In the 1st Century CE it became more firmly a "Festival of Lights", with a candle lit on each of the eight days.

The independence of the Jews under the Hasmoneans lasted less than a century, before being swallowed up by the expanding Roman world empire. Yet this short period had great significance for the Jews. It revived them as a people. It also rekindled their spiritual life.

The independence of the Jews under the Hasmoneans lasted less than a century, . . . Yet this short period had great significance for the Jews. It revived them as a people. It also rekindled their spiritual life.

Today, according to one Jewish writer, Hanukkah represents two things. First, the achievement of religious freedom, and second, the continued development of Jewish nationhood.

In North America today when a festivity is designated religious, we allow it to impact our private lives. Increasingly, however, it fails to impact our public lives. Our public schools, for example, find it too controversial to celebrate well-established religious events. Hence Christmas and Easter in the Christian tradition have become symbolized by Santa Claus and Easter eggs and bunnies. We pretend a neutrality, and fashion these days into consumer extravaganzas. Rabbi Jordan Pearlson of Temple Sinai in Toronto has recognized such also for Hanukkah: "the period between American Thanksgiving and New Year's is one of the most intensely commercial of the year. Unfortunately, Hanukkah, which falls in this time, has become commercial also".

What kinds of parallels might we discover between the Hellenism of the Maccabean period, which was so odious to ordinary Jews, and the consumerism and relativism of 1990's North American culture? Might not the latter be seen as spiritually, even culturally, oppressive? What in them today might be odious to Jews, even Christians? Armed resistance to such spiritual oppression is, of course, neither desirable nor warranted. But neither is wilful and facile capitulation to it.

Hanukkah — and Christmas for Christians — become meaningless today if we fail to recognize that both were born out of spiritual (private and public) turmoil. They ought to teach us also that accommodation to current oppressive spirits exacts a tremendous toll. One's spiritual "light" can easily dim when we are overwhelmed with a "shop 'til you drop" and "anything goes" public mentality.

no one knows i'm gay by darren elliot

Last Friday, Constable Barry MacKnight was featured at GALA's weekly meeting as guest speaker. It was an open discussion, intended so that the issues most pressing to those present could be addressed. Constable MacKnight is a heterosexual gay positive person. He established that what he said was his opinion and that he was not in a position to respond to questions on behalf of the Fredericton Police Department.

The main issue addressed was that of gay bashing. How often/where/how many cases are reported. MacKnight indicated that few cases of bashing are actually reported. It is difficult to say whether this fact is indicative of a low level of gay bashing, or a low level of people reporting the incidents. One person expressed concern he felt about reporting such incidents. He wasn't sure how he'd be treated by the police department regarding such issues as same sex rape, gay spousal abuse, or gay bashing. MacKnight responded that these crimes would be treated the same as any other violent crimes, and one should not hesitate to report a crime because of possible associated sexual orientation. He added that everyone deserves the same protection from the police, "They're not doing you a favour, they're just doing their jobs."

If there is a problem with gay bashing, it would seem that it is up to the gay community to take charge of the problem. The police department cannot fight a problem it does not know exists. People need to report gay bashing when it happens for the situation to improve, so that police can mobilize. The same rings true on campus. It has been realized by officials that there is possibly a problematic level of homophobia in residence by a study they recently conducted by the DRRG (Diver-

sity in Residence Research Group). If they had the aid of people reporting cases of gay bashing to their proctors or dons, they would have a much better hand of the situation. Residence Life Coordinator Lynn Hruczkowski expressed interest and support for GALA setting up some type of residence outreach program with the proctors. GALA hopes to start the ball rolling to eventually achieve an environment in residence that would not make anyone feel threatened, lowly, or frightened of living with their peers.

Such a campaign is tentatively scheduled for early spring.

The discussion with Barry MacKnight was interesting and enlightening, but I had to leave after only an hour to meet my sister at the Main Gym. She was up for the weekend to visit and to watch our brother play basketball. The Reds were playing Dalhousie, a good team, but UNB could have been victorious if they had a good night. The talent was there, but the performance

wasn't. They made up for it on Sunday though, in a high energy game against St. Francis Xavier. It was a close game all the way, UNB usually kept an edge of just a few points. At the conclusion, I think all were ecstatic with everyone's participation. It was a really fun game to watch.

This tangent is not without purpose. As I watched Bryan play, I couldn't help but marvel as to how differently we have turned out as individuals. We had the same parents, lived in the same house, went to the same church, attended the same schools, received the same upbringing, had the same opportunities. When I came to UNB we were room-

mates for three years, and I'd say that we were best friends for two. (Until his wife came along!) We've both cycled across Canada, both rowed for a while, worked together many summers, shared many interests along the way. Together we've gone Bungee Jumping in B.C., white water rafting in WA, B.C., and MA, down hill skiing last winter, the list goes on.

Bryan and I are both in the Brunswickan a lot, for slightly different reasons mind you, but we are. (It's not too often that I'm featured as top scorer or athlete of the week!) We've both had an eventful year — I "came out", he got married.

One inevitable question parents ask themselves when their son/daughter discloses their gay/bisexual orientation is, "What did we do wrong for this to happen?" Firstly, there is nothing wrong with anyone's sexual orientation. It in itself is not something that is either good or bad. I can remember my parents trying to think back, trying to figure out what happened to make me this way. They were looking for answers where there are none to be found, I am gay and feel that I always have been. Nothing they did ever swayed me one way or the other in my sexual orientation. I mean, their other children are as straight as arrows. Not that this is either good or bad, it simply is. To me all of this would indicate that my being gay is not a result of life situation, but simply the way I was created. Who cares how I got this way anyway, I like who I am. The point for parents: Love your children for who they are, don't blame yourself for "making them gay". Being gay in itself is not a bad thing, a person's response to being gay may be.

Gotta Go! Merry Christmas Folks!

One should not hesitate to report a crime because of possible associated sexual orientation.



by Michèle MacNeil

In the past decade, the forestry profession has been the focus of many TV documentaries and newspaper articles. There is an increasing interest from the public and special interest groups to acquire information regarding the effect of forestry practices on the land. The environmental movement, with help from the media, has become very vocal in regards to their concerns and opinions of the forest industry.

One of the topics which has been at the forefront of these discussions is that of environmental ethics and their role in forest management. As scientists, foresters are willing to examine theories, concepts, and techniques with intellectual scrutiny, and with an objective, rational methodology. As ethicists, foresters must be willing to examine personal, professional, and societal moral values and judgements with the same vigour and intellectual scrutiny that their scientific value system holds.

Aldo Leopold (1966) believed that

all ethical systems to date rest on the premise that individuals are members of a community of interdependent parts. The first ethics dealt with the relation between individuals, while the later ethics dealt with the relation between the individual and society. There is however as yet no ethics dealing with human's relation to land and the flora and fauna which depend upon it.

Living with nature has always been on man's terms where all other living

There is . . . as yet no ethics dealing with human's relation to land and the flora and fauna which depend upon it.

value or demonstrate potential value as natural resources, are not easily protected in societies that have a strongly exploitive relationship with nature. Setting aside ecological reserves is not seen by some foresters as a doing action, but rather as an action to prevent the valued doing — cutting timber, building roads, and so on.

In order to develop land ethics, one must be motivated by a socially atypical attitude of respect for the components and structure of the natural world. As professional foresters it is our duty to continuously seek better methods of managing our forests in order to go beyond the "don'ts" and find new ways to "do". A forester by the name of James Coufal once said "as professionals we must profess not only what is, but what ought to be."

and structure of the natural world. As professional foresters it is our duty to continuously seek better methods of managing our forests in order to go beyond the "don'ts" and find new ways to "do". A forester by the name of James Coufal once said "as professionals we must profess not only what is, but what ought to be."

If we do not understand and appreciate the absolute and final dependence of humans on their organic environment, we can expect only uninformed and genocidal actions under a democratic system.