

SPECTRUM

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What is good sex?

Does the AIDS epidemic which we face today force us at all to examine our sexual conduct? The spread of the HIV virus is more specifically related to sexual behavior than to anything else. All AIDS literature makes that point in no uncertain terms.

One AIDS booklet, available on the UNB campus, states that "a healthy and mature attitude towards AIDS will only be developed through our knowledge of the disease and how the virus is transmitted and how it can be prevented." I concur fully. I think we do need a "healthy and mature attitude" towards AIDS, just as we need a "healthy and mature attitude" toward many things, eg. eating, smoking, drinking.

I feel we also need a "healthy and mature attitude" towards our sexual expression. But some of our attitudes, and behaviours, cause me to wonder. A UNB female student recently stated that it was better to be "bed-hopping" on weekends than to sit home alone. Is this a healthy sexual attitude? Is this a mature way of coping with loneliness?

I suggest that we have in general a very distorted view of human sexual expression. This distortion also serves to fuel the rising AIDS epidemic, as well as other sexually transmitted diseases, teenage pregnancies, date rape and sexual violence.

What is most helpful coming to terms with these crises? Is it to treat the symptoms, with condoms, abortion, drugs, etc.? Or is it to teach the view that human sexual expression has tremendous potential for intimacy and closeness in relationships? What would be the more thorough education: curative or preventive?

What is meaningful human sexual expression? What is "good sex"? I submit the following (with assistance from James M. Wingle. From AIDS: what every responsible Canadian should know, James D. Greig).

Sexual expression is an integral and profound dimension of the life of every human. Human sexual expression needs to be held in respectful esteem because there is meaning and purpose in it. Its expression ought to be loving, joyful, healthy, responsible and life-giving. It is such when well integrated into the totality of a person's life.

Genital sexual union, which is only one part of the whole sexual language of the body, is intended to be a profound expression of mutual love: full mutual giving and receiving. That mutuality is proper to the partners of a permanent and faithful union.

Sexual union says that "we two distinct and different people are one flesh. The joining of two bodies in sexual intercourse speaks of a union of the lives of the two partners in love and a radical openness to any new life which may flow from this action. Outside of such an exclusive covenant-type relationship, the expression of genital activity fails to achieve its true meaning."

What is meant by an exclusive covenant-type relationship? What is meant by commitment? Commitment is being faithful to

and responsible for each other. Partners in effect state that they will stay with each other through thick and thin, no matter what happens. They will not let each other down, walk out on each other, or put anyone else in their place. There will be no room for deceptions, distortions or half-truths, but only openness, trust and loyalty. A committed relationship is a lasting relationship.

Surrounded by an exclusive love commitment of the partners, protected by the promise of

Talking about It ...

Cast your mind back to the dog-days of early August; that time of year when all manner of banality is used to fill-up the daunting hectares of newsprint. This year two stories broke whose respective coverage says heaps about our society's attitudes and particularly its taboos. In a squalid apartment in Milwaukee, the city police stumbled upon the evidence that Jeffrey Dahmer had systematically tortured, mutilated, killed and even eaten the remains of over a dozen humans over a period exceeding a decade. Around the same time, Paul Reuben, a.k.a. Peewee Herman, was arrested in an adult cinema in Miami, for what is euphemistically termed "exposing and manipulating his private parts". While the press from Iqaluit to Iponema described Dahmer's alleged crimes in lurid and graphic detail, the "Miami Herald" actually misspelled Reuben's misdemeanour, then compounded its embarrassment by misspelling the word again in its correction printed the following day.

The offending word, for those who have not guessed, is masturbation (any spelling mistake here can be blamed on the typesetters. I checked Webster's and the OED!). As it remains one of our great taboo words, I shall henceforth avoid further offense by using the euphemism IT.

Mel Brooks claimed that humans discovered IT shortly after discovering how to walk on two legs. Like many who have pontificated on the subject, he got it fundamentally wrong - most mammals, bipedal or quadrupedal do IT. Modern social research suggests IT is a normal and even healthy part of sexual development and expression, and even mainstream churches would agree to the extent of noting that IT should

not be regarded as a source of shame and guilt. Yet IT remains, if I read the recent provincial election results correctly, rather akin to voting for COR, in that more people do IT in private than will admit publicly.

In the nineteenth century, society became obsessed with IT. Learned treatises multiplied like mushrooms after Fall rain describing IT's pathological manifestations. If IT was not actually a symptom of mental instability, IT could certainly cause insanity. A certain Mr. Kellogg developed a breakfast cereal whose principle selling point was its therapeutic value in preventing youngsters doing IT (precisely how was never elaborated, but this being polite Victorian society we can safely assume eating the stuff sufficed). If Corn Flakes failed, concerned parents could always resort to circumcision (male or female) - and in those cultures still given to the barbaric practises of infibulation or clitoridectomy, this is still offered as a rationale.

With the onset of this century, such enlightened authorities as Baden-Powell foresook the scalpel and straight jacket for the merits of cold baths and sleeping with an open window. New myths became current. IT could make you go blind, grow hairs on the palm of the hand, etc. In my school days, we were told that excessive touching of the offending part would make it drop off. For one 10 year old, urinating became a truly hit and miss affair until common sense prevailed.

Anyway, back to Paul Reuben - his career wrecked for doing something harmless in an inappropriate place. Common sense has not prevailed and this ridiculous taboo remains intact with new ramifications. A substantial sector of the popular music industry exists to exploit the fantasies of 14 year olds with

METANOIA

with John Valk

lasting faithfulness, sexual union can achieve the good ends for which it was intended. Genital expression in any other context is incapable of achieving these good ends. Pre- or extra-marital relationships may involve caring and sensitive partners experiencing closeness, yet are not fully appreciative of nor open to the greater potentials of a lasting commitment.

Experience tells us that

meaningful human sexual expression is most fully enjoyed and realized within a lasting committed relationship. Responsible control of self in response to the powerful urge for sexual intimacy is needed in order to achieve a relationship where the beauty and fulfillment intended for sexual engagement can be fully enjoyed. "Good Sex" is not just safer sex, it is much more.

Positively Pink

with Adrian Park.

hormone poisoning. Multimillion dollar publishing ventures provide material for those whose imaginations do not measure up to IT's demands, and such material is freely and legally available on this very campus. Yes, IT is big business - hallowed and sanctified by the mighty buck. Even the adult cinema in which Paul Reuben committed the act was a legal institution. What do the powers that be imagine customers go to

these places for? It is no more to deconstruct the scripts than the users of rest rooms need a rest. Its not as though Reuben was standing on the front balcony, yet it took three of Miami's finest to catch him. Is Miami a safer place as a result?

An account of murder, mayhem and unspeakable horror becomes a perfectly acceptable way of selling newspapers, and the harmless private activity of millions remains a "nameless vice". Funny old world, isn't it!

That great Woodsperson Competition...

We miss stuff around here sometimes. Yeah, I saw it in "the Bruns", but I guess I had no idea what was going on. It seems the Faculty of Forestry, or whatever, sponsored this "Woodsperson Contest", tournament or something like that. Well anyway, I was on my way through the Boyce Farmer's Market Saturday morning. You know, buffalo sausage sandwich, Harry's coffee, and perhaps a schnitzel sandwich; if I'm going for the "ms/r. Pig of the Weekend" title. So I run into some friends and one of them, Carol, says, "You know, D.J., the boys are up at the field competing in the UNB Woodsman's contest."

I recalled these same fellows, some of whom stayed at my home after doing so well at a similar event at Nackawic earlier this year. They, as most "grown boys" were all a buzz after having done quite well in their collective efforts doing this "woodsperson thing" in Nackawic. At the time, I had no idea what all of this meant. As of Saturday morning, I really still

"Well this is what I think..."
with D.J. Eckenrode

was fairly well out in the weeds on what was going on with all this wood chopping and sawing and climbing, etc., etc. So you got it, I trucked on up to the field below the Aitken Centre and saw for myself.

Bottom line I had fun. This is some sort of annual event which a number of people are having a bunch of fun, seriously taking part in a sporting event based upon their trade. Please don't hold my hand to the stove on this one, but here goes.

The day was an 11.73 on a scale of 10, weatherwise. Twenty year (plus) veterans of the event had never seen such a

continued on page 13