

MUGWUMP

Sharky:

A short, unauthorized biography of the Brunswickan's mascot.



by Aime Phillips

I am writing Sharky's life history, or at least as much as I can come up with on such short notice, to correct any misconceptions about the little shark with the big history that appears weekly on The Brunswickan's banner.

Earlier this week, someone from Fredericton High School's yearbook got in touch with me to discuss an ad in their yearbook. What, I asked, did last year's look like?

Well, she answered, The Brunswickan is written in black and beside that there's this little guy with a hat on...

At this point I started chuckling under my breath and opened my mouth to correct her.

"... Oh, wait now," she said and stopped. "Actually, it's not a little guy, is it?" No, I replied, it's a -"

"Oh! It's some kind of seal! It's a seal with a little hat on that has a press card in it..." Her voice trailed off as she noticed I couldn't stop laughing. "It's not a seal!" I managed to get out.

"Oh! Oh, I know! It's a dolphin!" she tried, and sent me into another fit of laughter.

"It's a SHARK!" I told her, "His name... is Sharky."

Sharky, according to a reliable Bruns source, found his way to the Brunswickan in 1976. According to another reliable Brunswickan staffer, *A Pictorial History of UNB* claims Sharky originated as a Red Herring, a symbol of The Brunswickan's journalistic integrity against the Student Union's.

We have been able to piece together his past from snippets of conversations he's had with various staff over the years.

"Never accept a job touring Siberia in a tuna boat."

From this, we can surmise that Sharky is quite used to being misunderstood. He's gone from tuna to seal to dolphin...from Siberia to Freddy Beach. Not only can he dodge malicious name calling, but he does it with the demeanor of a well-travelled and well-known shark.

"Never get hooked on worms."

Obviously, Sharky has a keen sense of objectivity.

Sharky lives by these words from his favourite song: "Don't tug on Superman's cape, don't spit into the wind, don't pull the mask off of the ol' Lone Ranger, and you don't mess around with Jim" This is another example of Sharky's good naturedness about life in general.

"Watch out for those light tables." This is one of the practical quotes that everyone in the office can relate to.

"Don't join the Bruns." was the best advice Sharky ever gave us according to another staffer: "... but I didn't listen."

According to Allan Carter: "Sharky is, without a doubt, an inspiration to us all." (Of course, this is the same man who had Sharky's portrait painted over on the office wall.)

OPINION

The opinions found in this column are not necessarily the views of the Brunswickan

Towards a sociopolitical agenda of Christianity - the advancement of human liberation on all fronts

by Aurelius Gordon

This article begins with an examination of the personality and humanity of Jesus Christ in the milieu in which he lived, died, rose from the grave, and ascended into Heaven. A close look is taken at the stand that Jesus adopted towards the economic, social, political, and ideological structures of his society. How exactly did Jesus Christ advance the struggle for human liberation? How does his life on Earth set the reference point for the social and political role of Christianity in our society?

To answer these questions, one has to read the Gospel with a particular set of political questions in mind, sensitive to injustice in contemporary society.

Jesus belonged to the lower strata of Jewish society and as such, he had a first-hand experience of the daily struggles of the oppressed. Not only was he aware of their spiritual needs but his life-long mission also demonstrates his constant occupation with the physical sufferings of the poor, orphans, beggars, the hungry, and the disadvantaged.

Jesus announces in one of his famous teachings (Ref: Luke 4:16-19) that: (1) his mission is to proclaim the jubilee year - the wiping out of debts and the return of possessions to their rightful owners, and ii) his work is to proclaim freedom for all oppressed; such being the design of God. Jesus' message is termed "The Good News of God to the Poor".

In essence, Jesus totally concerns himself with human liberation in the total sense of the word; that freedom did not only mean freedom from physical bondage but also freedom to be a fully human person, created in the image and likeness of God and fulfilled on the physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual realm of one's existence. To this end, Jesus fought against human suffering with all the means available to him.

In Jesus' day, the society of Palestine was highly stratified. Social differences were strictly observed along lines of wealth, priesthood, pure Jewish descent, and the knowledge and practice of the law. One's moral standing and profession, as legally defined, played an important role in this social stratification. Further, the vast majority of the population of Palestine, over seventy-five percent of the one million inhabitants, were 'people of the land.' The social, political, and religious elite of that day strictly regulated people's lives within society particularly through the "Letters of the Law," and other social and religious codes; quite as much as economic, social, and political forces regulate the lives of the people in today's society.

The fundamental project of Christ implied the creation of a just society. Jesus challenged the value system of his time and greatly revolutionized several of the most cherished Jewish ideals.

On one occasion (Ref: Matthew 12:1-18.), Jesus demonstrated that priority must be given to the human need for food instead of the observance of the Jewish Sabbath.

This was a significant challenge to the authority of the Jewish Religious Establishment, the major social force at the time. This act by Jesus and his apostles, spoke most loudly of Jesus' and Christianity's sociopolitical agenda - to free human beings from oppression, not of God's but of man's own making.

Jesus's life, death, resurrection, and ascension into Heaven amply demonstrate that a Christian vocation demands that one should not submit passively to the inhumanity in society but should strive tirelessly to create a more humane and just world. Jesus' 'Sermon on the Mount' (Luke 6:20-49) sets forth a 'new order' which Christianity's mission is to affirm: 1) that in principle and practice, God is not neutral; that His interest is in the defense of the rights of the oppressed and to ensure the triumph of the suffering over the social and political forces which seek to subjugate them, and ii) that far from legitimizing suffering and idealizing poverty, Jesus' life demonstrates the will of God to bring about radical changes to the existing social order. Jesus' life on Earth, involved a total commitment to the Will of God - an unconditional compassion and mercy towards the unfortunate. It was on the account of this that he, Jesus, was persecuted and eventually put to death. As such, the political, and social commitment of Christianity must be one to struggle for total human liberation on all fronts.

Do you have an opinion?

*If so, drop it off at the
Bruns in Room 35.
Word limit 1000.*

