

# Metanoia by John Valk

**Sunday Shopping: A Tumour of the Soul?**

Seventeen of us at the last Spaghetti Supper discussed three questions. The first was: "What was most meaningful for you during the Christmas break?" The second was its converse: "What was most meaningless?" The third question was: "In light of what you found most meaningless, what would you now change or do differently?"

A number of those present indicated that being with family was most meaningful, valuable and important. In regard to the converse question, a smaller number stated that the most meaningless activity was shopping and being in the malls. Some resolved to find more meaningful shopping, and less of it in the malls.

These responses contrast sharply with those we heard from a Liberal cabinet minister, in light of the recent move by the McKenna government to extend Sunday shopping from August 4 (the Sunday of the annual New Brunswick Family Weekend) to January 5, 1997. Ann Breault, Minister of Municipalities, Culture and Housing, maintained, according to the *Daily Gleaner*, that "families that shop together stick together" (a new variation of the older "families who pray together stay together?"). She added that "more Sunday shopping will strengthen the family ties that bind."

Strong arguments against Sunday shopping have already emerged from the business community itself. Peter O'Brien, Atlantic Executive Director of the Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses, states emphatically that it takes business away from small local retailers and "gives it to the box retailers" (large chain stores in larger centres) who may create "some part-time, low-paying jobs on Sunday." Who then really benefits?

Does Ms. Breault really have the best

interests of New Brunswick families, society and culture in mind? Or only that of big retail business? Do they (and the McKenna government) believe that material consumption will be our economic and cultural salvation, that our identity is linked to what we have rather than who we are, and that our happiness is defined by having rather than being? Are they embracing a consumer idol, in whose image we are slowly being twisted and distorted?

Our lives are consumed by "having". Our fixation on shopping and buying is reshaping us as humans, as people numbered or empty at the core. Lee Atwater, former presidential campaign advisor to George Bush, stated that he had "acquired more wealth, power and prestige than most. But you can acquire all you want and still feel empty." Materialism has neither given us happiness nor meaning. Instead it has created "a spiritual vacuum at the heart of American society." This spiritual vacuum he called the "tumour of the soul."

In their book *The Search for Meaning*, Naylor, Willimon and Naylor state that "conspicuous consumption is no longer a sign of our success, but rather of our spiritual vacuum." It involves the Big Lie: in order for our economy to function, we must believe that happiness is linked to what we own. It entails, as John Ralston Saul mentions in *The Unconscious Civilization*, the deification of the marketplace; the belief that ruthless "downsizing" is good for us all, and that education ought to be "aligned with the needs of the job market." These are the "lies of corporatism."

Does Ms. Breault have real families values at heart? Or, an advocate of corporatism, which is only too eager to sell our individual and collective souls to slick advertising which promises so much but delivers so little? Are they, in effect, helping to further increase the "tumour of our soul?" Evidence appears to be mounting in that direction.



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A slight variation on this machine is what is known as a "double grip" harvester. Similar in size and composition, the only major difference is that the head on the boom performs only the felling function, with the remainder of the functions being performed on the "bunk" or "bed" located behind the operators cab. The felling head fells the tree, and then the operator manoeuvres the tree to the bunk on the machine where it is pushed through a set of rotary wheels which force the tree through delimiting knives, removing all of the branches. It can be pushed back and forth through these knives as many times as needed to remove all branches. Then, a topping saw removes the top of the tree, and sections the tree into the predetermined lengths, as shown above. This method results in a little sloppier piling but still pretty good. The slash and debris tends to build up around the machine if left in one place for a long time, requiring the operator to move the machine. It does not allow for effective slash placement as does a single-grip harvester.


Both of these machines tend to offset the need for a large number of costly machines in a mechanised operation - i.e. a feller-buncher, delimeter (roadside or stump) and mobile slasher. They also rely on a machine called a "forwarder" or "porter" which is simply a large four wheeled machine with a grapple loader, capable of carrying out different sizes of wood harvested by a single grip or double grip harvester. It can minimise environmental impact by travelling over the mat of slash left by the harvesters. A forwarder comes in two sizes - five ton and eight ton, with the eight ton being the most common in the industrial operation. They travel from pile to pile, and load the wood using the attached

grapple. This means that the conventional skidder is not needed, which means disturbance incurred to the ground by skidding does not occur, making this method excellent for sensitive areas. Unfortunately, they are so costly and

limited in their application that they are only in use by large companies on Crown Land, but with a reduction in price and improved new technology hopefully someday more companies will be able to utilize these machines.




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THURSDAY EVENINGS

7:00	NBC News
8:00	Home Imp.
8:30	Seinfeld
9:00	Friends
9:30	Single Guy
10:00	Seinfeld
11:00	Police Academy

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**F.R.I.E.N.D.S**

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