



When we think of religion, we customarily, and most automatically, think of church and cathedral. Such an association is not surprising. It is what we see, experience and learn regarding matters religious. It is, however, rather truncated.

This struck me again when I saw the large "I AM Molson Canadian" banner strung high at one end of the Aitken University Centre at the University of New Brunswick. I wondered whether the message was economic, cultural, or religious? Advertising revenue received from the Molson Corporation may be a fiscal windfall for the AUC. Perhaps it is needed to keep the Centre afloat, and the Fredericton Canadiens in the city. Perhaps the close relationship between Molson and hockey is an association we assume as natural, and without question or concern. But the slogan kept coming back to me: "I AM Molson Canadian." I concluded that the Molson advertisers were foisting something religious on me. Let me explain.

The phrase "I AM" was not created by Molson advertisers. It has a much longer tradition, perhaps longer than beer itself. It actually stems from the period of the Exodus, when the Hebrews of ancient Israel were liberated from slavery in Egypt, around 1250 BCE. Moses, the well-known Biblical figure associated with this event, had earlier received commands from God which would lead to the freedom of the enslaved Hebrews.

As strong a leader as he became, Moses earlier had his moments of self-doubt. Approached by God in the "burning bush" affair (Exodus 3: 1-22), he was instructed to go to the enslaved people to inform them that they were about to be freed. Immediately comprehending the enormity, if not impossibility, of this task, Moses asked, not intending humour, "Whom shall I say sent me?" God, equally seriously, responded, "Tell them I AM has sent you: I AM who I AM." The "I AM," translated from the Hebrew, is YHWH (Yahweh — or the incorrect, Jehovah), a more familiar term.

The Pharaoh of Egypt, who also regarded himself as an "I am," refused Moses, the Hebrew people, and thereby also I AM, and put up considerable resistance. His Egyptian economic, cultural and military might, including his own "I am" power, was no match, however, for I AM. After some "persuasion," Pharaoh came to recognize that it was in his

better interest to let the enslaved Hebrews go. The people then left Egypt for the promised land of Israel.

What then became clear to the Hebrews was that their identity — their survival, freedom, prosperity, longevity — was intimately linked to I AM. As time passed, they were enticed and seduced frequently by lesser "i am's," even enjoying brief flings with them. But time and again they came to admit, when their lives began falling apart around them, that living in a covenantal relationship with I AM ultimately provided the only real and lasting significance and meaning for them.



In the 17th century the French philosopher Rene Descartes attempted to establish absolute certainty. He concluded that everything can be doubted, except for the *thinking* person. He declared: *cogito ergo sum* — "I think therefore I am."

Perhaps initially unintended by Descartes, rational thought came to be the new "i am," the new god. Any thing, idea or belief that could not pass rational muster was no longer considered worthy to be asserted, including much of what had been revealed in Scripture regarding I AM. In fact, because of this new "i am," some even came to doubt the existence of I AM.

As you can see, the Molson slogan stands in a formidable "I AM" tradition. It is merely the latest "i am," attempting to equal and out do the earlier and more original I AM. That is a noble, though misguided, endeavour; Scripture declares unequivocally that I AM has no equals: "I will have no other i am's before me." I AM the beginning (Alpha) and the end (Omega).

Molson has long sought to liberate us from enslavement, and not least to our weekly work and study. That is the clear message from its lifestyle advertisements. One means by which

it seeks to free us to enjoy the "good life" is through its promotion of "Hockey Night in Canada," in conjunction, of course, with the consumption of copious quantities of its product.

Molson may simply be securing an increasing "marketshare" by means of these endeavours. But the message of its advertising slogans suggests something more. My concern is this: is Molson promoting, perhaps unwittingly, that an adherence to an "I AM Molson Canadian" belief and lifestyle will give us the freedom we all seek, and that the "promised land" is that of beer and hockey?

Sociologist of religion Tom Sinclair-Faulkner argued, in a journal article entitled "Puckish Trends: Hockey Night in Canada," that Canadian hockey culture has very strong religious connotations. These have surprising parallels to what has traditionally been associated with church and cathedral. Among these parallels are: sacred books and places; priests or spokespersons; male dominance; weekly gatherings; dress codes; expected behaviour; and communal drink. Add to this the Molson slogan and what it may entail, and the parallels become even more striking: hockey arenas

as cathedrals, the chosen disciples as Molson advertisers and professional hockey promoters (and players?), the game as the weekly event, communion in the form of beer, the "cross" (as the central authoritative symbol) in the form of the "I AM Molson Canadian" banner, and the audience as sheep waiting to be led. Is this a stretch of the imagination, or a reality?

Following the dictates of false "i am's," runs the risk of being recreated in their image. When this occurs, our freedoms become our excesses, which in turn become our nightmares. When we distort what I AM intended, all hell can break loose, literally. We witness this continually with the abuse of alcohol, and with the remaking of sports into business and entertainment.

Is "I AM Molson Canadian" intimately linked to Canadian self-identity, something like "I drink, therefore, I AM?" This ought to be an affront to any sober-minded Canadian. It is also a not so subtle twist on Descartes' "I think, therefore I AM." But both suggest that through some activity (drinking or thinking) individuals become liberated — become their own "i am." What then of I AM?

Forest Breeze

Do we value our forests?

Everyone must have heard at some point the statement "it's not the quantity but the quality that counts." Why is this such an excellent piece of advice? In terms of economics, quality usually means high value and high bucks per unit item. Sounds good.

For anyone not familiar with Forest Management jargon, "sustained yield" and "annual allowable cut" are two of the most important and commonly used terms in these circles. So well used that they could even be regarded as the dominant credo of the Forest Management profession. The two terms are interrelated in that the yield of any forest area must be shown to be sustainable, and this in turn determines the amount of wood allowed for annual harvest. In and of themselves these terms are credible and have been developed from research through examining predictable patterns of tree growth over time and developing computer models that will make projections and calculations for a given forest area. Fine and dandy.

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industry of the province of New Brunswick and of other provinces. These principles and hence our forestry economy are based almost totally on quantities (ie. volume of wood) and very minimally on quality. It seems that our government doesn't like good advice. This is the situation: we have been cutting down more and more wood to increase and maintain the "sustained yield" and to allow the large pulp and paper companies and sawmills to earn a profit. Great! But unfortunately, employment in these industries has been decreasing dramatically. For example, 942 people lost their jobs in the pulp and paper sector between 1991 and 1993 because of mechanization and instability of the market! Not great. We have

maintained a sustainable harvest and it looks like we can for the next number of decades (if the spruce budworm do not want dinner). Great! However, we have removed large numbers of our high quality timber (like oak and high value maple) or mismanaged them,

and they have been substantially reduced or replaced with short-rotation plantations. In addition, more than half of what we do cut is exported in a raw or virtually raw state to be made into valuable products in Maine, Quebec or other areas. Not great.

I don't think anyone needs to be an economist to see a bad trend here! Where's the "value" in all of this? I am assuming the government is working from the premise that jobs, stability and money are priority. To obtain these I would presume that the economy would have to be diverse and that quality would be far more beneficial than quantity to maximize worth. So then, the question remains as to whether the New Brunswick government has really examined the current forest policy sufficiently, and have done the necessary analyses to make possible transitions in the forest economy in the future. They are currently trying to make some value-based modifications in the upcoming year, but it is being done within the current volume-based economic model. Possibly it is time to begin truly modifying and maybe even discarding current policies to make room for a more value-based industry where the work stays within this province and we get more value for each tree cut. Hey guys, maybe it's time to take some new advice. Maybe then we can talk about sustainability.

Brad Case is completing his Masters in Forestry.



Editorial Board Elections

October 25, 1996

Available Editorial Positions

Sports Editor The Sports Editor is responsible for co-ordinating the Sports section of *The Brunswickan* which covers sports on campus with a primary emphasis on the varsity teams. Responsibilities include assigning stories, covering stories, co-ordinating with the Photo department, copy editing and layout. The Sports Editor is a voting member of the Editorial Board. Honoraria available.

Distractions Editor The Distractions Editor is responsible for co-ordinating the Distractions section which publishes poetry, fiction and creative non-fiction written by students. Responsibilities include soliciting content, editing and layout. The Distractions Editor is a voting member of the Editorial Board. Honoraria available.

Features Editor The Features Editor is responsible for co-ordinating in-depth features for *The Brunswickan* and co-ordinating feature articles. Responsibilities include assigning stories, co-ordinating with all other departments, copy editing and layout. The Features Editor is a voting member of the Editorial Board. Honoraria available.

Campus Editor The Campus Editor is responsible for co-ordinating the Campus section. Responsibilities include co-ordinating content, copy editing and layout. The Campus Editor is a voting member of the Editorial Board. Honoraria available.

Online Editor The Online Editor is responsible for *The Brunswickan's* web site, *The Bruns Online*. Responsibilities include design and maintenance of the web site, co-ordinating web review columns and handling incoming email. The Online Editor is a voting member of the Editorial Board. Honoraria available.

Book Editor The Book Editor is responsible for producing a biweekly selection of book reviews. Responsibilities include distributing incoming books for review purposes, maintaining contact with book publishers, copy editing and layout. The Book Editor is a voting member of the Editorial Board. Honoraria available.

Science Editor The Science Editor is responsible for co-ordinating regular science-related content for the News, Features, and Campus sections. Responsibilities include assigning stories, copy editing and layout. The Science Editor is a voting member of the Editorial Board. Honoraria available.

Staff Representative (Board of Directors) Acts as a liaison between staff members of *The Brunswickan* and its Board of Directors. The staff rep should be an active member of staff team and will attend quarterly meetings of the Board of Directors. The staff representative is a non-voting member of the Editorial Board.

Staff Representative (Editorial Board) Acts as a liaison between staff members of *The Brunswickan* and its Editorial Board. The staff rep should be an active member of staff team and be prepared to attend weekly board meetings. The staff representative is a non-voting member of the Editorial Board.

Deadline for application for positions: 5:00 p.m., October 24, 1996

All Brunswickan staff members are eligible to run for editorial positions and vote in the elections. Any UNB student who has contributed to at least 3 issues between September 6 and October 25, 1996 qualifies as staff.

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