

Spectrum

METANOIA

BY JOHN VALK

What's in it for me?

The true light that enlightens every person was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world knew him not. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God.

For 2000 years these words have

had life transforming power for countless numbers of people. They are powerful words, not to be taken lightly. Their implication for one's life can be radical.

That is, of course, if one accepts them. These words of the past need to make some sense for the present, otherwise they are not worth considering. What, if anything, might

they have to say about today's intense job competition, economic difficulties, moral confusion and mind-numbing entertainment?

These words, and the new life they offered, liberated many people. Early adherents presented new hope to those around them, based on love, care, concern, sharing, honesty, moral integrity and spir-

itual fulfillment. That new hope spread like wildfire, to every centre in the Mediterranean region, large and small.

These words sparked the Christian movement. They made a lot of sense to an increasing number of people, enough sense for them to risk life and limb. Skeptics tried early to discredit this new movement, calling Christians everything from fanatics to power brokers. They also received blame for a myriad of troubles in the Roman Empire, the burning of Rome no less.

Some things have not changed much. Christians still gets fingered for all kinds of things: distorting Wiccan symbols, oppressing women, destroying indigenous cultures, repressing sexuality — the list goes on.

No doubt many oppressive measures have been taken and statements made, in the name of Christ. History has recorded some of these in great detail. Not infrequently the knowing of the message becomes severely disjointed from the doing. Yet, the words of the gospel come back to us. How will we respond? We live in a secular society. In some ways this is an advance from previous situations. It is not so when we are encouraged to make our religious beliefs solely a private matter.

We are taught that at school. Its the best way to be tolerant, we are informed. But the above passage of John does not allow such a life-transforming power to remain private, as if it cannot affect our lives during the week.

It is unfortunate that so much of education today is geared towards jobs. Not that jobs are unimportant. Its just that education is more than job training. Education has to do with enlightenment, with opening

our eyes, but not to dollar signs. Interestingly enough, a recent study indicated that one of the major regrets echoed by people later in life is that they didn't get more of education, or that they didn't take it more seriously when they had the chance.

The passage in the Gospel of John states that "the true light that enlightens every person was coming into the world." At university everyone is encouraged to "dare to be wise" (sapere aude) and to "seek all truth". It is disheartening, therefore, in this era of relativism and post-modernism, that we get bogged down not by "what is true", but by "what's in it for me."

The dominant attitude — "what's in it for me" — might yet be a saving grace. Christianity points to brokenness in two places: inside and outside of every person. Christ pointed to the fact that salvation — healing and reconciliation — must be of the heart first, before it can be of society. And, no one person, or group, is less affected by greed, self-centredness and arrogance.

When we're talking about being a "child of God" and changed for the better, there is indeed a lot "in it for me". But its not like winning the lottery, or netting a \$100,000 plus annual salary. We're talking about being in tune with something that can make our lives much richer, more so than what money can buy.

Unfortunately, we become distracted by money and things. Then the phrase "yet the world knew him not" is understandable, though there is an ironic twist to it during the Christmas shopping season.

Note: This will be my last Metanoia column for the term. From Nov. 22 to Dec. 8 I will be in the Ukraine and Belarus. I hope to say some things about that in the new year.

POSITIVELY PINK Things that go "ring" in the night

BY COLIN LONGMAN

A beating a week until I stop my column - or so said my anonymous caller last Sunday night at 11:30pm. My first harassing phone call - I feel privileged. The police have of course been notified and a report filed because not only is it illegal to make harassing calls, the threat of physical violence is considered assault.

The person who called obviously feels that they can scare me into not writing this column. They must not have read anything that I've said here otherwise they'd know that one of the reasons I write this column is because I have no intention of returning to the closet and I don't

think any gay/bi/lesbian person should have to live a closeted life if they don't want to. I would also be doing my gay/bi/lesbian family a disservice if I allowed myself to be silenced by the very prejudices against which I speak and write about.

Gay bashing is a major problem, not only in large cities but right here in Fredericton. Heterosexual 'men', and I use the term men VERY loosely, who bash suspected gays, think that they're proving their manhood - although how men with baseball bats beating on one man proves manhood is way beyond me.

Gay bashing remains a problem because gay men, the ones who usually get bashed, won't go to the police. They feel that the police won't do anything. Unfortunately, in many cities, this is often the case. They're also worried about how they'll be treated by the police if they report the crime and of course, of being outed. This fear keeps the victim from getting any help whatsoever and allows the gay bashers to think they can get away with physically assaulting innocent people.

Through confrontation we, as gays/bis/lesbians, will overcome these problems. I don't mean physical confrontation - there's no need to stoop to the same levels - I mean by filing reports, pressing charges and using the system as it was designed to be used.

Coming out of the closet is the most powerful statement that you can make. If you've been thinking of coming out of the closet please don't let people like my caller stop you. Don't let like my caller have power over you otherwise they've won. Show people like my caller that we are everywhere and that we will no longer put up with our brothers and sisters being attacked.



If you'd like a booklet about Jack Daniel's Whiskey, write us here in Lynchburg, Tennessee 37352, U.S.A.

NO ONE IN LYNCHBURG knew why Jack Daniel missed work that spring day in 1904.

No one except his nephew Lem Motlow, who was sworn to silence. You see, Mr. Jack was bound for St. Louis and the World's Fair, where his whiskey could be judged against the world's finest. As it happened, Jack Daniel returned to Lynchburg with a lot less secrecy — and a gold medal in his hand. A sip, we believe, will confirm the Fair's judges knew their whiskey.



JACK DANIEL'S TENNESSEE WHISKEY

WIMMIN'S ROOM Women's history and Western history

BY CHRISTINE

October was Women's History Month and like women's history it passed without much notice. Many argue that not much is known of women's past because it is largely unrecorded. These same people do not want to bother looking for it as all the important stuff has been accounted for. The point of women's history month is to make the past known. Women have been there all along working in the shadows. Women have made many contributions to history, philosophy, mathematics and many other fields. But their accomplishments have been ignored or attributed to men. This is obvious in the course content of classes offered at UNB.

For example, out of twenty five or so Arts lectures, there are only two addressing women in western civilization. The two volume Arts textbook contains only one article penned by a woman. The readings that are presented to all Arts students (over half of which are women) are touted as being the basis for western philosophical

thought. But only men are represented in this basis. Women are weak and passive (Aristotle). Women are neurotic and secretly desired to be men (Freud). Women are subject to men and are derived beings Augustine. What a lovely picture, too bad many still hold it to be true.

What kind of message is being sent to the young women and men of today? First year university is quite an awesome experience. Students take their professors words to be the only truth. They do not challenge what they are taught and they are not usually encouraged to do so. University is supposed to challenge people to think and react for themselves. But how can students when they are not aware of the other resources available to study? A few minor changes to courses such as Arts would do wonders in overcoming systematic academic discrimination. One option would be to instruct tutorial leaders to question misogynist statements such as those made

by Freud and Aquinas. Challenge their thinking on the themes of male vs. female in Antigone. If no one challenges the blatant disregard of women in these readings then people will continue to hold them as true. If people do not know where to look for books concerning women in society, go to the library and look up women's history or women's studies. Here are a few books that are excellent in filling in the blanks: A History of Ideas On Women by Rosemary Agonito, The Women's History of the World by Rosalind Miles or the Creation of Patriarchy by Gerda Lerner (also check the bibliographies). Read these books carefully and critically as you should read everything.

You are paying a lot of money to be here so make it worth your while. Demand to know the whole story. This knowledge is essential in developing a separate identity as a woman and a person. This knowledge gives a name, a past and a sense of worth. It gives us the power to refuse to be swept under the pages of history.