

# SPECTRUM

## From Whence Comes Our Hope?

Life is not as it used to be. That's an understatement. What was secure, dependable and trustworthy yesterday is almost foreign today. Furthermore, what we enjoy, tolerate or endure today may not be recognizable tomorrow.

We live in "changing times". The optimist in me rejoices. A journey towards tomorrow can generate excitement, enthusiasm, even intrigue. Tomorrow is the hope for better things to come. But the pessimist in me asks, "what kind of tomorrow?"

Are we advancing as people? And, what are we gaining? Surely today is not as it could or should be. Promises of yesterday have not come to fruition. Instead, the cost of living is increasing at the same time as real wages and job opportunities are decreasing. Government tax grabs are on the incline just as health and social services are on the decline. Or is this the case only for some of us?

Socially and culturally we seem to be in a state of confused flux.

Just as our multi-cultural horizons appeared to be broadening, we began to experience a serious national identity crisis. Racism reared its ugly head when the economy went into recession. Our tolerance has waned, even our past is returning to haunt us.

Our moral stands of yesterday are now reaping grim fruit today - almost on a daily basis - and not least among the young. Rampages through shopping malls, discipline problems in the schools, increased sexually transmitted diseases do not arise from nowhere. Personal preferences have replaced right and wrong.

Dare we ask whom the young have modelled? Political, business, educational, and even church leader, routinely say one thing and do the opposite. Scandals and recycled careers quite readily follow one another. Guardians violate rather than nurture the innocent and vulnerable in their care. High priced lawyers determine a fine line separating inno-

cence from guilt.

Our religion has become an individualized grab-bag. Youth long ago exited mainline churches, and now bow down to the nihilistic whims of their rock music idols. Today it is socially disadvantageous, and certainly politically incorrect, to advocate adherence to Christian beliefs. Though Christianity is out, spirituality is in. But attention has been focused almost exclusively on the self: inner personal healing, though it is not always clear from what.

Have we come a long way in our "advanced society"? Are we really embarking on a "new world order"? What have we gained: inner peace while Rome burns?

According to one author, students in general are optimistic about their own futures. This is heart-warming. But what is their optimism born out of? What kind of dream do they have? Is it an economic dream for a better life?

On the other hand, students are

## Metanoia by John Valk

pessimistic about the world outside of themselves. They distrust the political process, their education has become a struggle for jobs and power, and control is perceived to be in the hands of the wealthy. They clearly sense the bankruptcy of the nation's morals and values. They recognize all too perceptively that people in positions of authority pursue their own agendas. Altruism is only faintly visible.

We are once more heading into the Christmas season. Does any hope emerge from it? Is it in the shopping we will do - the cross-border or Sunday variety? Will our lives be abundantly richer and more meaningful for it? I am doubtful.

Even in our secularized approach to Christmas we all intu-

itively sense that this time of year brings with it a certain warmth, and a willingness to reach out to others. Joy, peace and contentment, even a hope of better things to come, nudges slightly ahead of the pessimism ever so close at hand. Joy, inner peace and commitment to others is the 2000 year old message of Christmas.

That message will permeate us only, however, if we journey with it beyond Christmas, to Easter. Will such a journey put all our economic, moral, social, cultural, and spiritual yearnings into their proper perspective? Maybe. We won't know either without struggles along the way. But from whence else comes our hope? Blessed Advent and a Happy New Year.

## It All Sounds Better Loud

How did I ever get along without a stereo? I gotta have my sounds. I hooked my new system this last Saturday. You know, "THE WORKS"; 800 baazillion watts per channel, CD, tuner, cassette, and even an old turntable. That's where you have this black flat thing with a hole in the middle. It sort of looks like a "personal pan-sized" licorice pizza. We used to call them 33 1/3 RPM long playing records. Later, we called them record albums. There's these tiny grooves and you use a needle (with a diamond point) to make the music come out of them. Even though I now have a CD player, I have no CD's. But I do have a bunch of old record albums. They'd been packed away. They emerged ready to go. This turntable thing is one of those straight track arms (not as opposed to gay tracking arms, but different than the old curved arms) jobs. These were more expensive and somewhat prone to problems as they required more mechanics. The good news is, they tend to forgive most of the pops and scratches of the oft played albums. In all the years I've loved to listen to my music at home, I've never "cracked the code" on the one key component of a stereo. It's SPACE That is, NO neighbours! You go it! In an apartment building, on this monster, a volume of 1.5 in an will result in automatic expulsion. In a neighbourhood with houses on small lots, a 2.5

## Well, This is What I Think by D. J. Eckenrode

will have your next door neighbour holding your dog for ransom 'till you stop. In a big couple of acres type neighbourhood, you're good up to about 4.0. At this level, your friends will either bring their own chips and beer over to PARRTAY or call the RCMP.

Out on the farm, where your nearest neighbour is a quarter of a mile away and s/he's a woodchuck, I cranked it up to 5.5 and set off harmonics in the structure of the old farm house. I was terrified! I wondered "Is this safe?" "What happens to my DNA molecules?" One after the other they came, the good stuff, the "oldies" The "classics" (Not the garbage they play on CHSR). I had wondered, "Who gets to go first?" "Who has the honour of THE POWER?!" "THE WHO!" "Who Live at Leeds" then Robert Plant and LED's "Stairway to Heaven" BONZO was back! More alive than ever. Of course the Beatles, "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds". Iron Butterfly, "Inna Godda Da Vida"! Moody Blues "Seventh Sojourn". Sibelius's "Finlandia", A "Fifth" of Beethoven. Wagner, Mick and the Stones, Tina Turner, doing "Proud Mary". They never sounded so great! In my raucous mood my favourite for the day were the fifth and sixth sides of the "Woodstock" album. Sly and

the Family Stone, moving from "Music Lover" to "I Want to Take You Higher". The trumpets and the organ just screamed out at me. Then the sixth side finishes with the incomparable Jimmy Hendrix, first, his version of "The Star Spangled Banner" and then the album finished with "Purple Haze". I was exhausted. I needed to put all the albums on the built-in shelves. Five hours of goose bumps had me tired out. I turned to Gordon Lightfoot and later my old Ian & Sylvia records. Mellow sounded pretty good at this juncture.

I'd completed the task of sorting them out. Previously, I'd never had the shelf space to line up all these records. But there they were, in alphabetical order, with no regard to type of music. The Allman Brothers are now next to Avison. Bartok and Beethoven flank the Beatles. Boston is beside Boyce, Chicago is next to Chopin, then Davis (as in Miles) nestles next to Debussy, Harrison and Hayden, on and on to Moody Blues and Mozart and Stewart (Rod) sides with Stravinsky. Lot's of music, rock, rock 'n roll, classical, jazz, big band, folk, blues, R&B, soul, and wait 'til I pump E. Power Biggs on some of the big European cathedral organ through some this system! It all sounds better LOUD!! - with no one to interrupt..



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