

# Falwell: traces of sanity visible

opinion by Jens Andersen

Speaking as an incurable infidel who long ago purchased a one-way ticket to the warmer after-life, I would like to put forth the thesis that Jerry Falwell, and the "Christ or Chaos" crusaders who followed him to Edmonton last Thursday are not the completely bug-eyed imbeciles some people portray them as being.

In fact, not only are they shrewder than a lot of their opponents, but mixed in among their numerous zany views are a few more or less sane ones.

Take, for instance, the excitable fellow who got up and yelled "You're a fascist" at Falwell from the first balcony of the Jubilee Auditorium. Not only was it a silly thing to do (he who loses his head loses the argument), but it gave Falwell a perfect opportunity to play the forbearing Christian, lamenting sorrowfully over a prodigal lamb.

This, in fact, is exactly what Falwell did (contrary to the *Sun* report which distinctly implied that Falwell "thundered" back). Mooing and cooing "We love you," and that rebels "are precious and must not be held in contempt," he instantly created an impression of sweet reasonableness to contrast with the loudmouth in the balcony.

Other examples of Falwell's professionalism abounded in his well-orchestrated performance. At one point he stated, "I believe every woman should have control over her body," paused for dramatic effect, and slammed home the punch-line: "including unborn women."

Falwell's enemies could learn a few tricks from Falwell, but instead they stick to their trite and unimaginative assertions that he is a dangerous right-winger, militarist, etc. Why not get together a chorus line, infiltrate a Falwell rally, and when he begins talking about abortion as murder, retaliate with a chorus of "Douching is murder!" - which is both funny and the *reductio ad absurdum* of all the arguments that aborting a fertilized egg is killing.

When the ushers inevitably come to escort you out, you can leave singing:

*We'll drink a drink a drink  
To Lily the Pink the Pink  
The Saviour of the human ra-a-ace  
For she invented  
Medicinal compound  
Most efficacious in every case  
In short, treat Falwell as the joke that he is.*

*Pres wangles another trip (this time B.C.)*

SU President Robert Greenhill is enjoying the life of a jet-setting government leader.

Two weeks ago Greenhill enjoyed a sojourn in Ottawa at his own expense to attend the Council of Ministers of Education Conference.

Now Greenhill has winged his way to the gentle clime of Victoria, BC to attend a Canadian Federation of Students conference. His decision to treat himself to this latest jaunt came as a last minute decision.

Last week's election during the Federation of Alberta Students' conference in Edmonton of SU VP External Teresa Gonzales to the Canadian Federation of Students' executive, has created some confusion.

Gonzales had been nominated by Council to represent the U of A at the national CFS conference this week in Victoria. She will now be representing the province of Alberta and her expenses will be paid by CFS.

The trip is costing the SU just over \$500 per delegate. Because two people had already been approved by Council, the executive decided last week to send President Robert Greenhill as the U of A's second representative.

According to Acting President Roger Merkosky, "Robert did suggest himself, but nobody else had any objections. I suppose we could have called up every Councillor but the logistics of that are fairly difficult.



photo by Bill Ingles

Jerry Falwell, the leader of the Moral Majority, shakes his fist at the devil or something in the Jubilee Auditorium last Thursday.

"But hold on," I hear the anti-Falwellists wailing, "The man is a dangerous threat to our very civilization."

Nonsense. All that such statements prove is that the people who utter them are as paranoid as Falwell himself.

After all, the Edmonton audience of 1,800 which greeted Falwell (a larger one than greeted him in Toronto, by his own admission) didn't even fill the Jubilee Auditorium. The main floor was almost full, but the first balcony where I sat was half empty. If he does so poorly in the heart of the Bible Belt he isn't much of a threat.

The sheep will eventually tire of him and go chasing after new gurus.

But what are the good points made by the evangelists? Well, Falwell and his Canadian ally, Ken Campbell, leader of the "Moderate Majority," point to all the leftist clerics like William Sloane Coffin and the Berrigans, who have been sticking their fingers in political pies for years, to the great satisfaction of those who are now screaming blue murder at Falwell for doing the same.

Falwell and Campbell, of course, avoid the logical conclusion that all clerics should be sent back to their original job of Bible exegetics (is heaven really paved with sapphire?)

showing the "state religion" of "secular humanism" (Campbell's words) down the throats of all Canadians.

To a certain extent I have to side with Christians on their proposals for education. As long as one is unwilling to accept science as the only arbiter of truth - and I suspect the Christian's have a good many non-Christian allies in rejecting this sensible notion - then the only alternative is the one

stated in Article 26 of the United Nations Charter, namely that parents shall choose the education to be given their children.

Campbell uses this article to justify Christian education for Christian children - a modest enough proposal - and anyone trying to argue against it will have a tough time of it. Unless one accepts the scientific attitude that all assertions must be measured by the metre-stick of objective reality as apprehended by the five senses, one must admit that a flat earth is as reasonable as a spherical one, and that the Biblical belief in epilepsy as a symptom of demonic possession is as valid as modern medical theories.

Also that parents have as much right to indoctrinate their children with one doctrine as any other.

This, in fact, is what is happening in education right now. There is no uniform "secular humanism" taught in schools; but rather a sorry melange of propaganda foisted on the system by interest groups ranging from the Catholic Church and the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, to the NDP, the Aquarian Conspiracy, feminists, Christian Scientists, Rotary and Pugwash.

Falwell said, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord," and repeated it like a musical motif throughout his sermon (in effect it means, "Blessed is the nation that listens to God's salesmen").

But I say, "Blessed is the nation whose God is reason, and not one of the 25,854 self-appointed Messiahs like Jerry Falwell."

## The sheep will eventually tire of Falwell and go chasing after new gurus.

Reverend Cannon in the 1920's and 1930's had a much greater following than Falwell, and the convulsive social conditions of that time were much more conducive to rabble-rousing. Yet Cannon, for all the influence he exerted over the yokels, and all the money he wrung from them, is now as safely forgotten as William Jennings Bryan.

The same fate awaits Falwell.

which is a suitable occupation for those with visions of *Civitas Dei* dancing through their heads. Leave reality for those who can handle it.

But Falwell and Campbell insist on equal rights to meddle in the political process. Not in a *political* way, you understand, but for religious reasons: Trudeau's middle finger is obviously possessed by demons, for instance, and his government is



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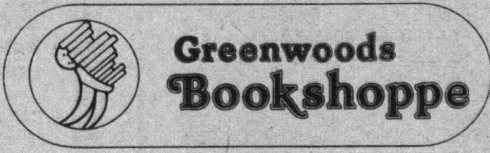
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