

# Unlocking the Truth: a word of a lie

by Jennifer Beck

The week of January 18 to 22 was declared "Unlocking the Truth" week by the Dalhousie Christian Fellowship. In an article submitted to the Gazette by the group (Number 14, January 14, 1993), its mandate was revealed as being "to ensure that everyone has a chance to hear about the Christian option and to consider what it is saying." To this end, a banner reading "Jesus" was hung to span the upper reaches of the SUB lobby, and three lectures a day were organized by the fellowship in conjunction with John Bowen, a member of the Inter Varsity Christian Fellowship.

On Monday, January 18, the DCF peopled a table in the SUB lobby and distributed promotional literature amongst the students. One curious onlooker noticed a few copies of a certain book entitled *Eros Defiled*. The back cover of the book reads in part as follows:

"Today the results of the Fall are

evident in premarital sex, extramarital sex, masturbation, homosexuality and various forms of twisted sex. John White speaks with understanding and compassion about each of these sexual sins" [John White is an associate professor of psychiatry at the University of Manitoba].

The book is published by Inter Varsity Press, a division of the Inter Varsity Christian Fellowship. This Fellowship has chapters on most universities across Canada and the United States. Kevin VanAuken, a former member of the Inter Varsity Fellowship from the University of Maryland said in reference to the group: "They were hideous. They were the most homophobic people I have ever run across. I knew that there were cases of using Christianity to justify bigotry, but I have never seen such a clear case of it."

"They would say they met some sinners... gay people... and were attempting to save them and bring them on the clearer path."

The homophobic content of *Eros*

*Defiled* was brought to the attention of Dennis MacNeil, Vice President of the Dalhousie Student's Union. One member of BGLAD (Bisexuals, Gays and Lesbians at Dalhousie) said, "Could you imagine if the book said Judaism was a disease to be cured? This book is simply hate literature. It advocates shock treatments and aversion therapy to cure the 'unnatural sin of homosexuality'. Why would you need to torture someone into a more 'natural' state?"

Pending a decision on the part of the VP concerning whether the public promotion of the book by a Dalhousie Society runs counter to the DSU Constitution, the Dalhousie Christian Fellowship agreed to remove the book from their booth.

Georgina Chambers is a practicing psychotherapist with an MA in Psychiatric Counseling. She specializes in helping lesbians and gay men "recover their place in society, and deal with the societal oppression they face every day." She took the book under consideration:

"It is shocking for me as a professional to consider John White as a colleague. I had trouble, initially, taking the book in all seriousness because the world in which I exist no longer has such people in it. The frightening reality of the matter, of course, is that these people do exist, and they prey on the vulnerabilities of others in order to spread their doctrines," said Chambers.

*Eros Defiled* proposes that 'homosexuality is a 'disease' to be 'cured.' "This could do incredible damage to some Christian trying to reconcile their sexuality with their spirituality," said Chambers. "What would the person be cured from? Themselves? The repercussions of early religious conditioning simply can't be intellectualized away in later life.

This induced shame and emphasis on the deplorability of homosexuality is frighteningly oppressive."

"White says gays are, for the most part, a desperately unhappy lot. He explains this by reasoning they are unhappy simply because they are gay, in a state against God. He completely depoliticizes the systematic oppression of gays in society," said Chambers. "The idea that lesbians and gay men could be unhappy because of discrimination such as his is completely disregarded."

"Unlocking the Truth" week is over now. The article that heralded its impending arrival read: "We, as Christians, believe that we know something exciting about the real, absolute Truth, and we want to share it." Perhaps ignorance is bliss.

# Sex trade workers speak

by Wilfrid Dinnick

'The Collective of Ignored Voices in Metro' is a group of prostitutes who want to inform tax payers and concerned citizens about the Safehouse being built in Halifax. The Collective believes it is a waste of \$500,000 to create a Safehouse to protect youth prostitutes (under 16 yrs old) who testify in court against violent pimps.

The Collective insists youth prostitution doesn't exist as the police see it. The prostitutes maintain they are a strong family and they never let a young girl stay on the street. "We do our own policing" said one member. When there is a youth (about three times a year), the older prostitutes help the young girl get home or to a shelter.

The recent arrests of pimps "is a racial thing... there are white women who own escort services who have young women" another Collective member pointed out. A pimp is someone who lives off the avails of prostitution. As a result, the pimps they know are their children, girlfriends' husbands, boyfriends or the system itself. The Collective believes the arrests that have been splashed on the front pages of the papers have been selective and racial. The victims are usually black men from Preston. The women maintain the police have a total misconception of the situation.

"Violence with pimps is on a level no different than any domestic situation" said the collective. It is the men using the prostitutes who are violent. "There are girls getting abused, getting thrown in harbors, getting their limbs broken, being left out in the dark," and the police do not follow up the crimes because prostitutes are dirty or they are sluts

and they deserved it. "We're human like everybody else," the Collective demanded.

The working women of the street would rather have the money be spent on preventative community based organizations such as groups which assist broken homes or counseling for youths, anything which might help women from turning to the streets in the first place. They would like to see job-retraining

programs created and the welfare system changed so prostitution does not have to be an economic necessity. Women without work experience would not be stuck in a poverty-prostitution cycle.

The collective believe a Safehouse run by bureaucrats who have little idea about what's really happening on the street is creating more harm than good.

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