

# All that is gold does not glitter . . . . .

by Jim Wiskin

We live in an age that worships flamboyance. There is a peculiar fixation for the glamorous. Craftsmanship is no longer respected.

Although this attitude has reached maturity in our western society, it is certainly not isolated here.

It is seen in the fast turnover of governments in the developing world and in the process by which political candidates are sold to the public in the west.

R.K. Price was a speech writer for Richard Nixon in the 1968 election. In a memo, he said:

"We have to be very clear that the response is to the image not to the man. . . It's not what's there that counts, it's what's projected. . . It's not the man we have to change, but rather the received impression. And this impression often depends more on the medium and its use than it does on the candidate himself" Joe McGinnis's "The Selling of the President".

Another example is the response to John M. Allegro's "The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross" published in May 1970. This book undermined the historical validity of the New Testament Documents. This book was very popular. On 26 May *The Times* published a letter indicating that "the undersigned, specialists in a number of relevant disciplines and men of several faiths and none, feel it their duty to let it be known that the book is not based on any philological or other evidence which they can regard as scholarly.

In their view this work is an essay in fantasy rather than philosophy. It was signed by fifteen (15) leading scholars.

Indeed Mr. Allegro's head of Dept. at Manchester Univ. (until Allegro left in '70) has written a book **The New Testament Documents: Are they Reliable?** which comes out in favour of biblical trustworthiness. This book—though more respected among specialists—is not so publicly acclaimed.

The question arises how far does our society have to slide into moral laxness before there is some recognition that

fulfillment depends more upon giving, than upon how we hoard. There are spiritual hoarders as well as materialistic ones. I include mystics in the former class. Biblical Christianity is adamant that no one can stand before GOD in his own righteousness—but also, that "faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action is dead." (James 2:17)

That is, Biblical Christianity is concerned with social justice. This is reflected in history. Men, such as Stanley Livingstone, who had a high view of the Bible were instrumental in breaking up the slave trade, and instituting reform in child labour laws in England, in the 19th Century. A modern example of men

who live as well as argue their theology is WORLD VISION. For 30 years, these conservative Christians have sent material aid overseas. This year World Vision is committing \$5 million for relief and rehabilitation in Cambodia alone.

Meanwhile, in Canada the situation is somewhat different. Recently, CBS-TV showed a prime time movie which featured incest as one of its subplots. "Flesh and Blood" was termed "family entertainment" by one CBS executive. Something is wrong. And something is wrong when, in Canada, the intellectual hope for our future partake in the caricature of

recreation perpetrated at Cameron House in Howe Hall at our Dalhousie University.

It is interesting that religious ambiguity seems to accompany this moral decay. It seems to me for example that there is an unalterable chasm between the teaching of Gautama, Muhammad, Socrates, Seneca, Horace or Zoroaster and that of Jeshua (or in the Greek: Jesus) of Nazareth. The former men all taught that there was one God (or that it didn't matter whether God existed) in a polytheistic society. The Nazarene claimed divine worship in a fiercely monotheistic society.

Whether one accepts these claims or rejects them, it is not

truthful to hide these differences. At the very least let's return to the humility that says, "I will listen and learn" and turn from the brash attitude that says "give me. . . now."

In short, what has to happen before a nation turns to God? Not in a loud flamboyant manner—but with a quiet, reverent search for truth.

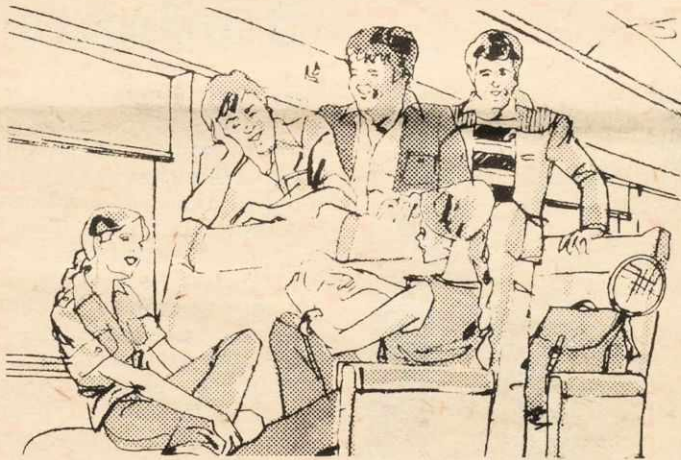
Few would label TIME magazine as puritanical. In the Feb. 4, 1980 editorial "Back to Reticence!", however, they admit "Social habit in the U.S. has taken a decisive turn towards the awful." "The social environment has grown polluted along with the natural; a headlong greed and

self-absorption have sponsored both contaminations. . . Americans have also misplaced the moral confidence with which to condemn sleaziness. . . as if something in the American judgement snapped, and has remained so long unrepaired that no one notices any more."

In response to the article authored by the Dalhousie Christian Fellowship two letters appeared in the *Gazette*. In one of these, the writer mentioned that "ordinary people are turning away from the established churches and becoming adherents of "religionless Chris-

continued on p. 12

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