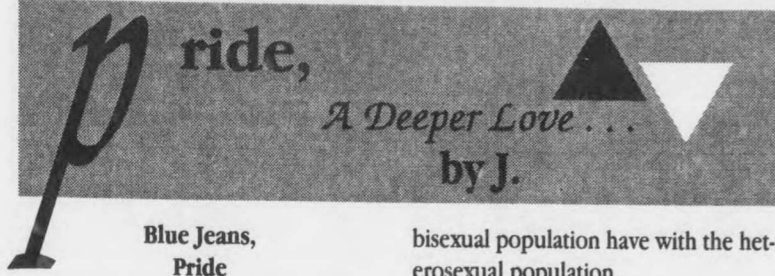


SPECTRUM



**Blue Jeans,
Pride
and Outings.**

Last Tuesday, October 11, marked National Coming Out Day on campus, and as another bonus, Blue Jeans Day. This event commemorates a day when homosexuals and bisexuals come out of the closet and celebrate the revelation of their sexual orientation to family and friends. The Blue Jeans Day sub-event, is a visible acknowledgement of those who are nondiscriminative towards, and/or support homosexual and bisexual issues and people. Two questions always arise from this particular event; namely why have a holiday commemorating coming out, and why blue jeans for heaven's sake.

To answer the first question, this event is an expression of our pride in ourselves. We have Mother's Day, Canada day, Groundhog Day, why not a day that deals with coming out? As a result, people sometimes say, "Well okay, but do we (the heterosexual population) have to have it shoved in our faces all the time?" The answer is no, it is not shoved into "your" faces; we are merely expressing our sexuality in our own way. Occasionally this is expressed as campy,

often flamboyant behaviour, but this is just the tip of the iceberg. Coming out helps us accept ourselves and to an extent lets others better understand, and at least, tolerate who we are. As a society, we are constantly bombarded with expressions of heterosexuality in our films, advertisements and so on. What is wrong with expressions of homosexuality (besides the obvious retort from anti-homosexuality groups)? We will not live our lives in silence! As each day dawns with more and more positive gay, lesbian and bisexual role models coming out and showing the world that we are capable of functioning in the greater society, we are slowly beginning to achieve some of our goals.

As for the second question, Blue Jeans day was picked for its humorous twist. In a sense, it is a play on the "mythperceptions" that society has of homosexuals and bisexuals. We, and those who support us, are, and can be, the same as everyone else in the greater social order, in terms of functioning in society, participating in various social institutions, the list can go on indefinitely. It is a humorous irony that most people wear blue jeans; businesspeople, men, women, young, old, etc. Blue Jeans Day is part of a more serious event, but it includes a sarcastic witicism that emphasizes the many similarities that the homosexual and

bisexual population have with the heterosexual population.

Coming to the heart of National Coming Out Day, coming out is an important decision that a person has to make at some point in their life. The decision to acknowledge and express one's sexual orientation or not, is entirely up to the individual. No one can make that decision for you, it must be made freely, and once decided upon and performed, there is very little that can be done to turn it back. A person does not come out to others once. It is a continuous process that involves "outing" yourself to people that you meet and know. Granted, you don't need to out yourself to everybody in every situation (after all, it is a choice, not a rule),

but since you meet new people throughout your life, there is bound to be an outing moment.

Before coming out, it is important that you really think things through. This decision affects all aspects of your life, and as such, all the ups and downs of coming out will affect you. As a start, talk to

someone who you know is supportive of homosexuals and bisexuals. It can be a local counsellor, your family priest, a close friend, a homosexual/bisexual friend, a local gay/lesbian/bisexual group, anyone. Afterwards, find out all you can about homosexuality and bisexuality. The more informed you are, the better you will be able to decide. Finally, after all has been said and done, come out at your own pace to people whom you trust (whether it be a best friend, a family member, etc.).

Coming out has its depressing moments and hilarious scenarios, guaranteed to at least keep life interesting. My own experiences with it have been mostly positive, especially coming out to my two sisters. When I explained to them my decision, one remarked "Cool!" to express her support and understanding. To her, I was her brother above all else; being gay was a part of that equation, in fact it opened up new conversation avenues for us to talk about. But perhaps one of the best statements I have received, came from my other sister. Upon telling her, she perceptively knew my relief and joy, and her remark says it all for almost every homosexual and bisexual who has come out. "You've finally found yourself, you sound so happy and content!" And that, is perhaps one of the highest compliments one can get when coming out.

Metanoia by John Walk

**A Theology of Gender
Redemption**

The case against patriarchy—male authority and dominance—in Scriptures, some argue, is strong. Not to see it leap at least from some of its pages is a major failure to comprehend the claims of many feminists. But is it perhaps a little premature to dismiss the Scriptures as a result? Is it possible that God occasionally upstages patriarchal culture, thereby indicating that Scriptures does not sanction it?

As mentioned in previous columns, the first few chapters of Genesis indicate that God has great things in store for both men and women. However, in situations where sin affects our lives, distortion results, including patriarchy. But patriarchy may not at all be what God intends. It may just be that men, as opposed to women, have been a little slower to catch on.

Phyllis Trible, professor of Sacred Literature at Union Theological Seminary, is not one to dismiss Scriptures. She makes the point that "a women's tradition can be teased out of the patriarchal moorings" or Scripture. To illustrate, using but one example, she focuses on the pre-eminent event in the history of the Jews: the Exodus from Egypt.

The tradition of the Exodus recounts that the Hebrews, Jewish forebearers, after many benevolent years in Egypt,

came to be treated very harshly. Rather than diminishing in slavery, they grew in number and strength, serving as a potential threat to the political and military might of Egypt. As a final measure to curtail them, Pharaoh decreed that Hebrew sons were to be killed at birth.

Moses occupies centre stage in the drama of the liberation of the Hebrews. However, in its unfolding certain women played such significant roles that without their steadfastness in the face of oppression the Exodus would not have happened as it did. Scriptures specifically names them—Shiprah, Puah, Miriam, Zipporah—while obliterating the memory of Pharaoh. These women thwarted the will of their oppressor; without advice, assistance or instruction from males.

The drama begins with the story of two Hebrew midwives—Shiprah and Puah. Pharaoh had ordered them to kill Hebrew sons as they were delivering them. The midwives, however, remained loyal to God, duped Pharaoh, and the boys lived. Foiled the first time, Pharaoh then ordered all boys to be cast into the Nile at birth.

The passage continues with the birth of Moses. A woman "bore a son and when she saw how good he was, she hid him three months" (Exodus 1:8-2:10), an act in clear defiance of Pharaoh's decree. When it was no longer possible to hide him, she made a little basket and placed the child in it along the reeds at the river's edge. Moses' sister Miriam "stood at a distance, to see what would happen." The "daughter of Pharaoh", accompanied by her maidens, comes at

some point to the water's edge.

The story depicts the tension. The "daughter of Pharaoh" is also a woman, but she belongs to the oppressor: "how will she respond to the illegal acts of female slaves on behalf of life?" She instructs her maidens to retrieve the basket from the water. Opening it she sees the baby boy and recognises it as Hebrew. Rather than ordering its death—in line with Pharaoh's decree—she keeps the baby and raises it as her own in Pharaoh's court. She in effect becomes the first deliverer of the Hebrew people, and aligns herself with the daughters of Israel. As Trible states, "she breaks filial allegiance, crosses class lines, and obliterates racial and political differences."

Here the story switches to Moses, and the message he is to carry from God to Pharaoh to let the Hebrew people go. He is to inform him that if he does not do so, God will slay Pharaoh's first born son.

Before Moses can reach Pharaoh with this message, the passage is strangely interrupted. It records the deeds of another woman: Zipporah, Moses' wife. It appears that Moses is in mortal danger, a result of having been raised by Pharaoh's daughter. He is almost killed, but is again rescued. This time, Zipporah saves him from death, and becomes his second deliverer. The story then again switches to Moses and Pharaoh, as the struggle for liberation heats up.

What can be concluded from these passages? Trible points out that while patriarchy appears to dominate, there does exist a women's tradition in Scriptures. In these stories women respond to God in life-affirming and liberating ways. In each case it is to bring the healing of females and males. According to Trible, a feminist journey through the Scriptures returns us to creation in the image of God.



The Pigeon's Right Wing

by Peter W. C. Seely

The Monarchy

Have you ever devoted much thought to the presence of the monarchy or of the purpose that this institution serves today? It is the opinion of this writer that considerable thought be given to this age old institution and the role it serves today. People of contemporary society do not realise the huge effect that it has on our lives, and have forgotten our duty to our sovereign - our heritage.

Our monarchy has been in existence for over a millennium and though many do not realise it, the resulting effects of policies made hundreds of years ago are still felt today. The colonization of North America is one of the most obvious of these. However, there are others such as the Protestant religion, which came out of the reign of King Henry VIII, and our system of government, which is modelled after the British parliament democracy. Our form of government, a constitutional monarchy, has historically proven to be the most stable form of government. Substantial credit can be given to the monarchy for this.

The monarchy provides a unifying force over its realms once under its direct rule. This unity manifests itself in the form of the Royal Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth, a distinct group of nations formerly under British control, is a valuable institution. It serves as a buffer for many think tanks dealing with such topics as free trade between members, etc. Because it comprises such a diverse group of nations, the Commonwealth wields much influence with member countries. This was demonstrated during the anti-apartheid campaign in South Africa. And as the monarchy is responsible for the Commonwealth, a reasonable amount of credit can be given to this institution in bringing about the recent reforms there.

Few people realise the true powers the Queen wields with respect to our government, or even the fact that she is the Queen of Canada. All powers of the offices of our government receive their authority from Her Majesty the Queen. She has the power to disband parliament and call elections, reject prime ministers and appoint the Governor and Lieutenant-Governors in our country. Of course she doesn't practise these powers by custom, yet she still has the legal right to do such. One might think it is useless to have a monarch who, in law if not in practise, has such power over our country. However, today, the key to the monarchs power is the fact that the Queen is our final line of defense in protection of our individual rights and freedoms. She is our safe

guard against tyranny, such as if a government were elected and tried to declare private property illegal. Under these circumstances, she could disband parliament and force new elections.

It disappoints me to see people bad-mouthing the monarchy. The monarchy has made many valuable contributions to democracy around the world. The Queen has even decided voluntarily to pay income taxes, a ridiculous notion, as theoretically you are taxing the embodiment of the state.

Premier McKenna recently made an insulting gesture to the Queen. He declined the Queen's dinner invitation on her visit to Canada, and instead decided to attend the entire Acadian World Congress. Due to the length of the Congress, it would have been more than possible to attend both. However, McKenna decided to play politics. A shame, because one of the best things about the Monarchy is that it doesn't get embroiled in the mire of politics. He chose to disregard all this to curry the favour of a handful of more votes. The Queen is the sovereign of this country and should be shown the respect she is entitled to.

Canada has long been a sovereign nation, but it still remains that we are a constitutional monarchy. She is still our Queen, and deserves the respect that is warranted by one of her station from all her loyal subjects (McKenna being one of them, being sworn in Her Majesty's government of New Brunswick). LONG LIVE THE QUEEN!