



## In defense of Free Trade

by Craig MacKinnon

As Canadians go to the polls on November 21, they will not only have to decide who they want the Prime Minister to be, but also if they want to accept the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with their southern neighbour.

Throughout the campaign, Free Trade has been the main issue. To most Canadians, the last months have only brought confusion and fear. While the Liberals and New Democrats have been saying the Agreement will hurt Canadian culture, sovereignty, and social programs, the Conservatives have repeated that the FTA does not even touch these crucial areas. For local Conservatives, the charges that Free Trade is a sellout are "big lies" used by their opponents to run

the present government out of power.

In Canada during the last half of this century, trade barriers with the United States have been lifted and Conservatives point out that the nation's culture has been strengthened during this period and that Canada has become one of the world's most respected nations in such institutions as La Francophonie and the United Nations.

Conservatives also reject claims that Free Trade will destroy Canadian social programs. Part of the reason lies in the undefined term of subsidy in the final draft of the Agreement. However, international law has said that social programs, like medicare, in a country cannot be called subsidies. Also, according to the Free Trade Synopsis, neither Canada

nor the United States is "required ... to change any existing laws and practices" and "... not to make such regulations any more discriminatory than they are already." Moreover, the FTA does not affect programs that are under provincial jurisdiction. This applies to health care. Because of this, it does not make any sense for American firms, operating in this profession, to locate in Canada hoping to make a profit.

The Free Trade Agreement is not an agreement designed to make Canada the 51st state; it is an agreement designed to open a new market. Tories see the Free Trade deal as a way to expand job creation and promote prosperity to all regions of Canada because it regains north-south trading patterns that were lost during Confederation. By putting up tariffs both east and west have been discriminated against by Ontario and Quebec. An American market would give easy access for all Canadians, no matter what area of the country they come from.

### Hey, Mike! Hey, Bruce!

*Author's note: This is a response to the pastoral charge of Lawrencetown-Lake Echo, United Church of Canada, and its ministers the Rev. Bruce Roberts*

and the Rev. Michael Kaye, regarding the recent decision of the charge to leave the Church body.

Hey, Mike, Bruce. . . what's going on? Why all the fuss? It's not the end of the world. Leaving the church because of the gay ordination issue isn't a good idea. As a matter of fact, it stinks. You guys aren't even going to stay in and give it the old college try. As I see it, leaving isn't a brave, bold step forward, it's an act of cowardice. If you really want to fight General Council's decision, be brave and stay within the body of the church. It takes more guts to stay and fight than it does to leave. The only way the grass-roots will be heard is if you don't leave. That IS one of your beefs, isn't it?

What was that? . . . The church is moving away from a scriptural basis? No, Bruce. No Mike. I really don't think so. What are we doing is moving away from a narrow view of the Bible and of the world. Granted, I don't have the theological background that you have, but I feel I know what I'm talking about. You see, it's like this: Christ preached unconditional love, did He not? He practised what He preached by hanging around with "undesirables" — prostitutes, political radicals, and tax collectors. He didn't even say a word about homosexuality. A Christian is supposed to

practice the word of Christ, and that's accepting and following the doctrine of unconditional love. At least, that's how I see it as an amateur theologian.

You see, you guys, I'm gay, and I want to be a minister. I have wanted to preach the word of Christ ever since I can remember. I can't do that because our church won't let me. Bruce, Mike, I'm not such a bad person. I've got my faults like everyone else, but I still try to follow the doctrine of Christ. I'm happy, healthy, intelligent, and I usually like life. I don't see myself as doing anything immoral or abominable. I don't have a different bed partner every night. I believe in love before sex. From what I can see, most gay people are like that.

If you met me on the street, you'd never know that I was gay. Of course, I could hide and B.S. my way through the Candidacy process, but I don't want to do that. I'm sick of hiding. I'm proud to be gay. I've gone through a lot, both good and bad, because of my gayness. My trials and triumphs have made me a better person in all aspects. I feel that I could make a good minister — if you'll let me. What about it, Bruce? What do you say, Mike? Just give it some thought. That's all I ask. And don't leave, 'cause I really don't want to see you go.

—Stonewall  
name withheld by request

## Letters

### Students booze it up

Recently I moved to the side of the street to let a group of STUDENTS pass — seven of them, each carrying a case of beer, and two also carried bags — hard liquor maybe?

It is a common sight on the streets, yet astounding that students, male and female, are lugging cases of beer, and yet it is common knowledge that drinking is rampant among university young people. Is this what HIGHER EDUCATION is all about today? It is even reported that one of the downtown BARS provides free (?) transportation on return trips to the campuses.

It is difficult to work up sympathy for the financial status of today's POOR student. They have money for a flow of alcoholic beverages, the campus parking lot overflows with cars, summer employment doesn't mean tuition payments, instead it is more often a Florida vacation, March Break at a ski resort, or trip to Europe.

Since there are always exceptions, perhaps a few are struggling and serious about their educational privileges, but today's student body is a pretty pampered self-indulgent one. The amount of money they waste on liquor would boost Dalhousie finances. How about a campaign for A YEAR OFF THE BOOZE.

Some day in the future you will

be the burdened taxpayer.

*This letter was received by Lara Morris, VP External of the Dalhousie Student Union. It was unsigned but we think it is interesting enough to reprint.*

### Hey, Johnny!

Premier Buchanan,

I am shocked and angry at your dismissal of the importance of the Dalhousie Faculty Association strike. Dalhousie students are being held hostage by this standstill in negotiation. It is obvious, even to the untrained eye, that outside intervention is necessary. Institutes of higher education are the producers of an intelligent population and should be a priority when it comes to funding. It is clear by your past and present avoidance of action that you do not agree with my point of view. The funding your government provides is so inadequate that the present strike was inevitable. If you truly believe that Dalhousie University is adequately funded, why are students having to cope with fewer library hours, larger class size and reduced course selection?

I demand that you come to the aid of Dalhousie students, if not to help us, then to prevent the image of a tightwad John Buchanan becoming too firmly set in the minds of ten thousand young voters. Dalhousie needs more money in order to provide the quality education its reputation promises. Don't turn your back on an angry crowd of voters, Premier.

Heather Witherden  
B.A./B.Ed. 3rd yr.



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