

SPECTRUM

And Blood and Thunder, and Opinion....(real high reader participation this week!)

OPINION

BY JASON TREMERE

THE MISDIRECTION OF FEMINISM

I am writing in response to the latest series of inane discussions that have been recently published in the *Wimmins Room* section of *The Brunswickan*. While the federal election is really stale news now - it seems as though the *Wimmins Room* was really desperate to construct yet another contrived gender observation. It is for this reason that I feel compelled to challenge the article entitled, "Kim or Him?" submitted by Angie (January 21st).

The author begins by detailing the several, obvious and inexcusable reasons why Kim Campbell was not elected. You, yourself have pointed out the fact that she had a lack of political experience, poor campaign management and poor timing. Why is it then, that you feel the need to imply that her defeat may have been due to gen-

der discrimination? Sounds like an unwarranted gender non-issue to me. You know as well as I do that any one of the first three factors can spell defeat for any political candidate, regardless of gender.

Furthermore, imagine for a moment that a similar male political candidate had the same lack of experience, management and timing. Do you really think that the people of Canada would simply ignore such apparent inadequacies and still elect this person simply because he is a man? I think not.

You say that, "lingering in our consciousness is a trace of the notion that females do not make effective politicians". I truly do not know how you justify such a connection. Just because the first woman to come this close was defeated, it does not

logically follow that "females do not make effective politicians". I'm surprised that you would even suggest such a large and irresponsible generalization. I, for one, do not subscribe to such kindergarten psychology. Certainly this notion does not linger in my consciousness nor would I ever attempt to suggest such an insipid notion.

If anything, the fact that Kim Campbell is a woman probably helped her political career (at least in the beginning anyway). Way back in the beginning, I actually wanted her to win. I think it would have been refreshing to have a woman in charge of the country. And I'm sure many Canadians, men and women alike, initially thought of her in this way.

However, Campbell consistently illustrated throughout her 'campaign' that she

was not well suited to be the leader of our country. Translation: It was not because she was a woman that she failed. The article further states that 52% of Canada's population is comprised of women. Well, then it might seem that Kim had more than a fair shot at becoming Prime Minister. It is clear to me that Kim Campbell's overwhelming defeat was not the result of some sort of twisted gender conspiracy as you seem to infer.

I even found the title "Kim or Him?" mildly offensive since it seems to imply an imaginary gender battle. It seems to elude (sic) to the stereotypical us versus them mentality. Society is not a 'battle' between women and men, even a feminist should realize that. I thought that true feminism was about breaking down such boundaries, not perpetuating them.

At one time I considered the feminist spelling of "wimmin" instead of "women" and "herstory" as opposed to "history" somewhat laughable. However, since the January 14th article written by Liz Lautard about reclaiming and redefining the

slang and swear words of our language, this 'issue' has descended to the level of being a childish waste of time and effort. I mean what's going to be next, "The New Webster's Dictionary of Reclaimed and Deliberately Misspelled Words for Feminists"? This whole thing is becoming a ridiculous non-issue. It seems to me that there are more important gender concerns worthy of our attention.

Ironically, the term "feminism" itself seems to insinuate the same sort of one-sided, sexist terminology that certain feminists spend so much of their time and effort trying to eliminate. Quite a glaring double standard for a movement that supposedly attempts to promote equality for both sexes.

As a final note, I would like to commend the author of last week's, "Let's live in harmony" letter by an unnamed female for equality (January 21st). I share your views precisely. It's tremendously comforting to know that there are females who are just as irritated with the current focus of feminism as we are.

METANOIA

BY JOHN VALK

DIVINE WISDOM IN BUSINESS

Look, business is business". I shudder when I hear that expression. Then I brace myself, someone is about to take advantage of me. And the phrase seems to justify the impending (un)ethical act.

According to Adam Smith, 18th C. classical economist and author of *Wealth of Nations*, as long as everyone looked out for themselves in the pursuit of wealth, everyone would be guaranteed success. Natural forces of economic activity - the "invisible hand" of the marketplace - unimpeded by government interference would ensure that an equilibrium was obtained.

A few years ago Ivan Boesky, an infamous Wall Street Broker, declared "greed is good". Greed, he believed, fueled the prosperous 80's, allowing everyone to gain. Boesky, and a few fellow cronies, are now taking some time out (in jail) to reconsider their views. In their enthusiasm they forgot the so-called "pig-rule": "hogs get slaughtered, pigs get fat."

Are Adam Smith's "looking out for ourselves", Boesky's "greed is good", and the "pig rule" delivering on their promises? Is "business just business"?

Indeed, some are "getting fat". CEO's and bank presidents appear to lead the pack. For numerous others, however, massive layoffs, cutbacks, structural unemployment, family breakdown and increased poverty are daily fare. Why has our relentless pursuit of wealth produced it for so few?

In our global economy we continue to pursue the unquestioned goal of increased production of material goods and services. Continued growth in these areas is assumed to be the key to everyone's prosperity. But that prosperity is becoming more elusive for more and more people. The gap between the "have's" and "have not's" of this world is increasing, not decreasing. And, irony of ironies, in Canada health care and education, vital to producing wealth at home, are being cut drastically.

Economic activity and business endeavours are not value-free. The way we do business reveals a view of the world and of ourselves. In fact, the "bottom line" and "business is business" appear to emphasize one particular view rather than another.

Most do not feel religion, particularly Judeo-Christianity, has anything to say about business dealings. Secular thinking has foisted that on us. But interestingly enough, Judeo-Christianity has long ago laid down basic principles vital for the long term success of any business undertaking. When we need those we acquire a measure of divine wisdom.

There are those in every village, town and city who have obtained some of that wisdom. They have not gotten rich, yet they have succeeded. Their success is not measured narrowly in terms of "bottom lines" and profit margins. It is measured more broadly.

As I see it, that divine wisdom in business and economics includes at least the following. One, make quality products that people need. Planned obsolescence and inferior quality is wasteful and frustrating. Further, let us not be afraid to ask whether the myriad things produced are really needed.

Two, treat workers fairly, justly. Workers are people, not expendable extensions of a machine. They must be paid a wage which allows them to care adequately for themselves and their dependents. Why is paying a just wage not more valuable than increasing profits?

Three, be environmentally friendly. Preserving the environment must be included in the cost of doing business. Short-term neglect will only produce long-term crises. We are beginning to learn this the hard way.

Four, give something back to the community out of which one operates. Business depends on the community for labour and market. As a business enhances, should it also not enhance the community of which it is part?

Five, make a profit. A business needs to make a profit, otherwise it will not survive. The size of its profit, however, will be determined largely by the degree to which it takes the above into consideration.

Buying and selling, designing and making are important human activities. But they require balance. Over-emphasis invites distortion. We are experiencing this today.

Divine wisdom understands that life is sacred and multifaceted. The failure to recognize or acknowledge divine principles also for business is a failure to recognize and acknowledge spiritual motives. Business is not just business.

No doubt one can produce a great balance sheet, with high profits. But is a trail of neglect, turmoil and destruction - human, environmental - is left in its wake the business has really failed. To understand that failure we need to get beyond Adam Smith, Boesky and the "pig rule".

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

DEVELOPMENT WEEK

To the Editor:

February 6-12 is International Development Week across Canada. It provides Canadians the opportunity to increase their awareness of life in developing countries. The term "development" was coined in 1949 by U.S. president Harry Truman during his inaugural address. Prior to this, the term "developing country" did not exist. There is much controversy today over what "development" means exactly. For 40 years "development" meant that two-thirds of the people on earth were somehow lacking if they were not integrated into the consumption, profit-oriented society of the West.

Time has passed, however, and development workers around the globe are searching for a new definition. People are beginning to recognize that many cultures which once subsisted quite capably prior to

our "helping" them are now worse off. According to Ivan Illich, a philosopher and resident in Mexico, the 1960s development strategy was one which declared war on subsistence, and he predicted that the effort to implant Western institutions would polarize society. This is largely what has occurred.

As industrialized societies now reevaluate the costs of quick-paced living and uncontrolled consumerism, in what concerns both the value of human life and the environmental costs, we must recognize that perhaps our path on the road to development was not such a good example to be forced on our neighbors in the South. Certainly, we cannot sustain this limitless consumption of resources. Suddenly, subsistence living seems to make more sense and without a doubt is a much healthier lifestyle.

Those of us working in development are quite aware of past mistakes and unfortunately can be expected to continue to make a few. However, with the global village so much a reality, we must concern ourselves with understanding and listening to other cultures and societies without judging them from our own narrow perspectives. I encourage everyone to attend multicultural events on campus, such as "India Night" and "Africa Night" in February. I also welcome those who are interested in celebrating International Development Week to come to a Soiree on February 11th in the Ballroom at 8:00 p.m. Admission is \$2.00 with proceeds going to the Belize Outreach Program. It will be an opportunity to meet local non-government organizations working in Fredericton, and enjoy good food, music and drink. For further information contact Wendy at 454-9243.

Wendy Hazeltine

The Attic On King



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Date: Wednesday, February 2, 1994
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Place: Saint John Hilton
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