

SPECTRUM

METANOIA

BY JOHN VALK

Truth Will Set You Free

In the Gospel of John (8:31-32), Jesus is quoted as saying: "If you continue in my way, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

Today we are intent on "searching for truth." Courts of law seek it. The media is obsessed with it. The university is, at least historically, founded on it.

With such intense searching, one ought to be surprised at the lack of concern for Jesus' words. But, such concern we have labelled theology, and theology today is translated as indoctrination. And, any truth derived from theology, even Religion Studies you see, is considered controversial, if not suspect. Best leave it to Sunday, and for those still interested.

Every Friday Campus Ministry hosts a Spaghetti Supper. Each week during our meal we have a discussion. Last week the topic of discus-

sion revolved around the following question asked by a student: "Of what value is a university education?" For the next hour those present (approx. 15) voiced their concerns.

I use the word "concerns" because that is what they were. Students are questioning the value of what they are doing at university. Their concerns, as I understood them, fell into two general categories.

First, many students understand "value" to mean "economic value." They felt the high cost of education may not be retrievable, in light of current job markets. They see only a "McJob" upon graduation.

Such a response might alarm educators, but not for the usual reasons. Students are genuinely anxious about the lack of skilled employment opportunities. But, that anxiety is especially heightened when university is primarily job training.

University is treated almost solely as a means to that end. Broadening one's horizons, learning to communicate clearly and properly, learning to read and listen critically, and acquiring knowledge, is not only a lesser concern, it is also regarded as a luxury that, considering today's economic climate, can scarcely be "afforded."

The second set of responses came from those who did not regard university as job training. They saw it indeed as education, in the best liberal arts tradition. They were in the minority. No doubt the value of education for them went far beyond economic value. Their goal was not primarily economic or material wealth, but cultural, historical, philosophical, even religious awareness. They were in "search of truth"; knowledge and wisdom about who they are, the purpose and meaning of life, of work.

These responses, considerably different from the first, are also anxiety ridden, but again for unusual reasons. Students are concerned about shrinking humanities budgets, hence decreasing opportunities for liberal arts. But what is causing more anxiety in their "search for truth" is not so much the "search" as it is that which is currently

offered as accepted "truth".

A cacophony of voices may teach students about communicating clearly and properly, may assist them to read and listen critically, and may even help them acquire knowledge of various points of view. But is it successful in helping them develop a foundation or firm footing by which to assess all the "knowledge", much of which is conflicting, that comes their way. The supermarket approach may indeed fit into a current consumer mentality, but it is generally unhelpful to students. No doubt, we all wish to make free choices, but what is the best choice? The latest trend?

UNB, along with most universities in Canada, the US and Europe, were begun by religious communities. Learning was less a continuous search than it was a discovery of the implications of what was generally affirmed: what it entailed, how it impacted our lives, and how we should exercise our freedom in relation to it.

Today, UNB, and most universities in Canada, the US and Europe are secular and public. There is no longer a general affirmation, except that a university education is necessary for a job. Further, some believe "truth" is no longer discern-

ible, only knowledge of the language of personal affirmations.

Discussions regarding universal affirmations or principles generate little interest, or are given little value. Not only are these discussions confusing, but how much of them are marketable? So we concern ourselves with the little things, and then only those that directly impact us.

"He who pays the piper, picks the tune." The piper today, as well as the tune, is quite discernible in public education: our economic and consumer mentality. Should it surprise us then what students define as "marketable"?

Most universities felt "liberated" when they divorced themselves from religious communities. No doubt many were. But in divorces of any kind, there is pain and there is loss.

Yet, there is always a piper to contend with. Some pipers enslave the mind, some set it free. But we haven't become educated if we cannot really discern between enslavement and freedom.

THE WIMMIN'S ROOM

BY LIZ LAUTARD

A Response to Julie B.

Thank-you for your response to my column "What is Your Struggle?" (Wimmin's Room; 4 March 94) which appeared in last week's issue of the Brunswickan. It is nice to know someone out there is reading my column. I would like to return the favour and respond to some of the things you said.

First of all, "What is Your Struggle?" was not intended as "feminism's agenda," nor "to light a fire under women." It was simply a list of struggles I, and other women I know, had compiled for the column. Furthermore, it was by no means a complete list of all women's struggles (that would take much more time and space). I fear you have drawn a lot of big assumptions from what was intended as a commentary on some women's struggles for International Women's Day.

First of all, as for your response to my plea for Society to stop blaming the mother and to stop blaming the victim, I do not know what else I can say except that I (and some other women) believe that there exists (among other things) an unequal relationship between the sexes, whereby men

occupy positions of power and women occupy positions of powerlessness (in society). Too often Society asks the victim of a sexual assault what she was doing in the guy's apartment or what she was doing drinking so much. It is not called blaming the victim for nothing.

As for your response to 'No Means No' (which I and many others in Society are asking for), "Getting your sorry drunken butt out of there means No," this is perhaps further confirmation that perhaps we do not see things the same way. But, that is okay. I do not expect everyone to think like me (or anyone else for that matter) in order to be a feminist, so as to (as you so eloquently put it) "toe the party line." I celebrate differences within the Movement. Anyone who has spoken with me or read my columns would (hopefully) know this. Although last week you alleged I did not (celebrate the differences within the Movement), you must have at one point because following my column entitled "Women's Different Choices" (24 Sept. 93), you wrote a letter to the editor in the next issue applauding this article in which I stated: "Dif-

fering points of view, if anything else, prevents boredom within the feminist movement."

Finally, I could respond to many of the points in your letter but, I think I will just say this: I happen to think high heels are today's answer to whale bone corsets. But, if you like them, go ahead and wear them. Furthermore, I certainly did not wish to make you feel you had to do what I (or anyone else) said in order to be a feminist. You should find out what your own vision of feminism is and celebrate it. And, if you think it was with a "detached manner" that I stated that women want Society and men to do certain things, it was not meant to sound that way. I understand it is sometimes difficult to understand how the written word is meant to be taken when you are merely reading (the written word) and not seeing the person who is saying it, as well. I was also by no means implying that women have no control and that is why Society and men have to do certain things for them. Finally (as I have already stated earlier in this column), the list of struggles which appeared in "What is Your Struggle?" was not meant to be representative of all women nor an agenda of any kind. They were merely statements some women had made in honor of International Women's Day.

THE PIGEON'S RIGHT WING

BY A. B. SKALING & J. R. KIERSTEAD

Rusty and the Thieves

We would first like to thank all those who have given us encouraging feedback on the contents of this column (some of it from the most unexpected sources). It is good to see that the wave of apathy is starting to fester out at UNB.

Now onto the story of the week. The following is meant to point out some serious fallacies in the thinking of redistributionists.

This is a story of Rusty, a farm rooster who loved fresh bread. But, being a rooster, he didn't get to eat it very often; he decided to make some himself. As you can well imagine this is not an easy task for a rooster, but he decided that it would be more than worth the effort.

Rusty was a wise rooster, but he decided that wheat was the most important ingredient in bread. Each day he would save a tiny portion of his daily food share, putting it in a safe hiding spot where no other chickens would find it (under the chopping block). He also scavenged for stray kernels of wheat that lay on the ground, but this proved to be very tedious; he went to the other chickens: "Would you help me gather and save wheat?" he asked. "I am making the most delicious bread, and you can have some if you help."

"No, no" said the chickens. "It's much too hot to do that. Besides, why make bread when we have all the wheat fresh and fresh water we want, and if we don't eat our food right away, we might lose it to thieving mice."

Rusty snorted and went back to his task of gathering wheat. He would pick up a few kernels, trek back to his hiding spot, trek back to the feeding ground, and so on. His stash grew steadily.

When Rusty had enough wheat for a loaf, he started cracking the seeds in his beak. This proved difficult and slow. He went to Beauty, the horse. "Beauty, I have a pile of wheat and will make the most exquisite bread you have ever tasted. You can crush the grain into flour with your hooves, and I will let you have some of the bread."

"No, no" said the horse. "It is nice and sunny out, not a day for work. Who needs bread when there is fresh clover and grass that is green. Besides, it's a long, long way from here to the chopping block."

Rusty shook his head and went back to his work. He eventually chewed it into a fine powder.

He was about to mix it up and bake it when he thought, "Bread made with water is good, but wouldn't milk bread be divine?"

He trudged over to where Butsy the milk-cow lay chewing her cud. "Butsy, may I have some of your milk for the bread I am making. I will let you have some in return."

"No, no" she said. "What guarantee do I have that the bread will not flop; my milk would be wasted. Besides as you can see, I am sunning myself. I would have to get up in order to give some milk."

Rusty cocked his head and tossed

his comb, then went back to his pile of flour.

The bread turned out to be very good: the loaf was plump and had a nice golden sheen to it. It's smell was especially remarkable, though. It wafted throughout the farm-yard, carried on the gentle spring winds.

Rusty was about to take a bite out of the loaf when he noticed the chickens abandon their wheat and move towards him; Butsy the cow stood up; and Beauty the horse trotted the long, long distance from her pasture to the chopping block. Soon all the farm animals were gathered around like vultures eyeing his loaf of bread.

"That bread looks good," they said. "It is only fair and proper that you share it with us."

"No, no," said Rusty. "Why should I give you the bread I worked so hard to make, when none of you would do the littlest thing to help me. Go make your own bread, you marxists!"

The animals grumbled. They went to Farmer Lenin and pleaded their case: "Rusty has fresh bread and he won't share it with the rest of us!" they said.

Farmer Lenin went to Rusty and said "Rusty, you must share your bread with those who have none. I will divide it myself, so that none will complain about fairness." Farmer Lenin took the bread and divided it differing portions, based on the size of the animal. Rusty being a very small rooster received his 'fair share' barely the size of a crumb.

All the animals agreed that the bread Rusty made had been very good. Time would pass, but they still remembered how good the bread had tasted, and they would go up to Rusty and say, "When are you going to make some more of your delicious bread, Rusty?"

FOREST BREEZE

BY MICHELE MACNEIL

Managing With Care

With the university year coming to an end, I, like many other students, find myself making sure that my apartment is in the same state that it was when I began renting it. The reason behind this is that I wish to get my damage deposit back. Now you're probably wondering what the heck does this have to do with forestry? Well the analogy is closer than you might think.

One of the major questions that is often being asked is whether we as humans are part of the ecosystem or a separate part outside the ecosystem. There is no doubt in my mind that we are part of the ecosystem; however some people still fail to understand that although we are part of it, we do not own it. Like an apartment, we rent the ecosystems of the earth. The only condition being that we must take care of our ecosystem in terms of managing the resources wisely. Following this apartment analogy we could say that in Canada we are living in luxury condominiums. Our ecosystems are very rich in resources; be it in terms of timber, wildlife or aesthetics to name a few. If only we could take care of our ecosystem as we do of our apartments or houses. It is because we haven't taken care of our ecosystems properly that we are now faced with great costs for the repairs. The repairs on our ecosystems are our hopes of sustaining it for the future tenants which will be our children and their

children. We are dependent on our ecosystems; it is our habitat as well as the habitat for many other organisms. If the ecosystems cannot support them, then it will eventually not support us.

It is true that as humans we are different than other organisms in the sense that we have a conscience. We have been given this conscience and our intelligence in order to be stewards of the earth and manage it properly. We have been lent these ecosystems to manage the resources with respect. Although we need timber and pulp; we also need wildlife and ecological reserves. I know it's not an easy task and as a forester sometimes I feel it's impossible to satisfy the whole. We realize that everything we do has an impact on the environment and our ecosystem, therefore we should start here to try to understand the different processes within the ecosystems. If we can understand the various components involved, then we will be able to manage the forest in a manner that will attempt to mimic the natural processes. It is a great challenge and we are sure to make more mistakes along the way; However we must remember that the earth doesn't depend on us, it would do just fine without us, we depend on it. If we take care of our ecosystems in the same manner as we would our apartment, then we shall be able to enjoy its various resources and so will the future tenants.

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