

The Brunswickan

Canada's oldest official student publication

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EDITORIAL

LAST TEMPTATION OF CHRIST

I went to see it. It took great courage. I had broken a pact made with a colleague of mine by doing it, but I did it nonetheless. I saw "The Last Temptation of Christ"! Not on video, in the privacy and secrecy of my apartment; but in public, with dozens of other people some of whom were more than mere acquaintances. I sat through the full two and three-quarter hours of a film that caused so much anger among Fundamentalist Christians throughout North America and that was apparently banned from the Commercial Theaters in Fredericton. (Capitol films were showing it when I saw it). Was it that bad? Was it Anti-Christian or counte scriptural? There were some liberties taken with the account: Judas as Christ's closest right-hand man; Mary Magdalene as an old sweetheart before Christ's pilgrimage; Christ as a maker of crosses for crucifixion during his carpenter days; a distinct sense that Christ was never sure what he was going to do next; and a mythic, dreamlike account of Christ being rescued from the cross at the ultimate hour and lured into human domesticity and insignificance by the devil disguised as a child. Apart from these, the piece upheld the Christian conviction that Christ's death and resurrection was absolutely necessary for humanity.

There is, however, some cynicism that permeates this film especially with regard the portrayal of Paul as a professional evangelist whose occupation involves peddling myths that prey on the vulnerability of humanity without much regard for the efficacy of history. Paul claims to have "created" the risen Christ. Cynicism also emerges in the portrayal of Christ as someone who just opens his mouth and shocks himself by the things that come out; oblivious of the holistic vision of his "Messiahship". Despite this the film's interpretations, on the most part, make many of the spurious biblical interpretations of biblical text by preachers I have heard on pulpits, seem utterly sacrilegious in their outrageous misuse of the basics of Biblical textual analysis. Now, the film did bore me, but I can't deny that I was moved by the sheer impact that the life of one God-sent individual can have on generations. And after the film I was wondering, what the whole to do was about. By boycotting the film; many Christian Churches demonstrated an insecurity in the strength of their own teachings and were acknowledging their realization of the power of the film and video on the thinking of society. However, since the Christian faith is as much a religion rooted in the concept of personalizing one's relationship with God as it is a communal religion; the film, as a statement about the nature of temptation and the conflicts that a spiritual walk, complete with the dynamism of the supernatural on an individual soul, serves as other effective allegory on the Christian pilgrimage. Therein lies its strength; a strength that has been denied to many who would have seen their faith strengthened by the challenge to moral and spiritual fortitude that the film prompts in the viewer. It was remarkable to note how the story of Christ constantly evokes some kind of position by those who are confronted with it.

Campus entertainment, I gather is on the upsurge again. The Kim Mitchell concert was a qualified success and the movie series is going well. Good for those who are responsible. Let's hope the momentum continues and that the Campus Entertainment team will keep checking to see what students are interested in before leaping ahead with wonderful plans.

A note on the quality of the paper. We have noted with great concern the typographical and spelling blunders in our last few issues. We have also noted the layout problems which have not been settled as yet. We intend to improve on the quality but it will take time and experience. Our editors are finding their footing while our general staff is new and learning. We want our readers to know that we do see the problems and we wince with greater pain than you may imagine when they are noted, thus we would like to assure readers that we have a commitment to make things better. Keep sending in your useful criticism and we welcome people who are interested in doing some proof-reading for us....

Kwame Dawes
 Editor in chief