

BLOOD & THUNDER

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METANOIA

BY JOHN VALK

Easter: A Time for Remembering

That the university still adheres to the Christian calendar is reflected in its ceasing of operations for four days this weekend. Nothing special marked Jewish Passover or Muslim Ramadan. Perhaps its simply a case of majority rules. Or is it merely tradition?

If the Easter break is merely traditional ours is the loss. This Christian celebrative event would belittle more than a four day weekend — a secular holiday for shopping, recreation, relaxation, time with friends.

These will no doubt engage some or all of us this weekend. I think of them as surface activities. Surface activities are OK, in fact we can hardly do without them. But life is unfulfilling if that's all we have, if a deeper spiritual realm remains untapped. Our activity is just so much running around — sometimes banging our heads against the wall — if we don't ask or wrestle with the spiritual questions.

What is the meaning of what we do? Where is the real satisfaction? Why the constant striving, and for what — a higher salary, bigger house, impressive friends, money in the bank? These too will pass, says the Preacher in the He-

brew book of Ecclesiastes. They are vanity, a chasing after wind.

At the end of our lives we too may think that. A recent study has pointed out that those approaching the end of their days rarely, if ever, felt that they should have worked longer hours, demanded higher salaries, or done more shopping. They, at the end, that these were indeed a chasing after wind. Important as these things may have seemed, they were not the essence of life. They were not what gave real meaning, value and joy. The essence of life lay elsewhere.

On Easter Sunday, Christian churches will be full as they are never full during the rest of the year, except for Christmas. Some of that attendance, and activity, is traditional; Easter bonnets, a little pomp and regalia.

But that too is surface activity. Unless we dig a little deeper. Unless we remember. And what is worth remembering?

The Jewish Passover is about remembering. It is a remembering of what God had done in the lives of the ancient Hebrew people, rescuing them from slavery and brutality in Egypt and leading him into a land they could call

JULIE BROCKOWSKI RESPONDS TO "RESPONSE TO JULIE B."

Dear Editor:

I would like to address my response to last week's "The Wimmie's Room" to Ms. Lautard personally. Dear Liz:

I fear it is you who have drawn the big assumption. I think it is a bit of a stretch for your readers to assume that every time you referred to "Women", you really meant "My friends and I". Nowhere in the article is it mentioned that these were personal options of a small group of people. That fact

their own.

Canadians also do some remembering, on November 11: "lest we forget." Steven Spielberg pleaded, upon receiving Hollywood's coveted Oscars, that we not forget the horrors humans can inflict on each other, on a grand scale.

Easter too is for remembering: of the victory of life over death. For Christians it is the little manger baby suffering excruciating pain and death at the hands of those who would not, or could not, understand what he was all about. Then, by nothing less than an act of God, this unique individual overcame life's final insult, and gave us renewed life through faith. We have the strange custom, in our modern secular culture of insisting that

changes the entire perspective of the article.

To clear up a few assertions in your "Response to Julie B.":

I was "applauding" your statement about housewives (not the entire article) in September in approximately the same tone as I "thanked" you two weeks ago. I also said I hoped the trend would continue. It hasn't. I understand it is sometimes difficult to understand how the written word is meant to be taken...

I have found my own "vision of feminism" and am celebrating it by writing this and other articles. I am not worried about trying to be like you (or anyone else) in order to be a femi-

nist. I am worried about young girls being brought up to be victims, and being taught that they have no power or no responsibility for their own actions. Anyone who has read my letter to the editor in September (as you apparently have) would know my opinion on "blaming the victim."

Lastly, I don't know who it was who chose the title for "The Wimmie's Room" last week, but I think there was enough room to print my whole name. I haven't been Julie B. since about Grade 4, and I probably won't be Julie B. again until I start going to AA meetings.

Julie Brockowski

THE PIGEON'S RIGHT WING

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

Welfare Reform

No topic is more hotly debated in the public policy field than welfare reform. Governments have slowly come to the conclusion that welfare, as we know it today, has created a number of serious problems. It contains many disincentives - which in the long term create a cycle of dependency. As well, governments are under serious pressure to get their budget deficits under control.

Welfare was originally intended as a program to temporarily relieve those who, for one reason or another were

unable to work, due to some misfortune or form of handicap. It was never intended to become a way of life for those who could work when and if work was available.

Over time, these intentions became distorted to the point where some able-bodied people are on welfare from year to year as their sole source of income, with no desire or ability to accept a low, medium or high paying job if one was available. They simply were excluded from or dropped out of the labour market.

While this passive income support

program provides financial assistance, it only treats the symptoms of unemployment (i.e. lack of income for you Socialists). For this reason, it is our opinion that welfare should be re-oriented into a active program, where every opportunity is made available for welfare recipients to upgrade their education and skills. There are short term costs to this policy, but they are not comparable to the insidious social costs of our current programs. The lost potential of contributors to society, who may fall onto me welfare rolls and never regain their dignity and self-esteem, far outweighs the short-term costs incurred by reform.

For those who already have adequate education, incentives must be built into the welfare system to encourage employment. An example of this would be a guaranteed income supplement graduated to a person's taxable income (so no one is ever in the situation where they can have a higher income on welfare rather than from a low-paying

job). For those on assistance who are single mothers, daycare for their children (subsidized either in whole or in part) should be made available, so that they can better use opportunities to become contributors to society.

Even if jobs are still unavailable, it is preferable to orient the current system into some kind of work-fare program where clients are required to reform some kind of community service (i.e. work at food bank, etc.).

Whatever the means used, it is imperative that the cycle of dependence be destroyed. The low levels of self-esteem and self-worth, and feelings of helplessness due to lack of independence cannot continue.

Some leaders have already taken the initiative to reform welfare programs. For instance Premier Ralph Klein has begun a process of reforming the welfare system in Alberta. One of the key reforms to the province's welfare system is that if an individual goes on welfare the prov-

ince will pay for them to travel to another province—usually B.C.—in order for the m to take advantage of higher rates (or take advantage of a potentially better job market). This allows Alberta to reduce the amount it spends on welfare. This may sound like an underhanded way to dump welfare recipients on another province, but in reality it is a way of bringing down the high welfare costs to taxpayers. British Columbia's NDP government has increased its assistance rate so that it is one of the highest in the country. If the Government of British Columbia is interested in creating a haven for welfare recipients, that is exactly what it will get. Fiscally responsible provinces are no longer willing or able to meet with rising welfare costs. British Columbia is just creating debt for itself while it ignores the reality that welfare reform is desperately needed if we are to truly try and help those how genuinely require state assistance.

Recently, the Department of Income Assistance produced a discussion paper entitled "Creating New Options." Acting on some of the recommendations of the paper, the provincial government has announced a pilot work-fare project. One thousand jobs will be created and given to a selected group of welfare recipients over the age of fifty. The government has suggested that they will be primarily community service jobs. Although we don't necessarily agree with all the suggestions outlined in the paper, the Department is to be commended for recognizing that there is a serious problem that goes beyond budgetary concerns.

In the end, the only way for reform to work is to gear programs so that they encourage and inculcate individual responsibility. The state can best help by providing the recipients with the tools — primarily in the form of education — in order to achieve a society in which there is less dependence on government to provide citizens with an income, a society where everyone can be a full participant.

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MATHEMATICS DROP-IN HELP CENTRE

January - April 1994

The Department of Mathematics & Statistics will operate a drop-in help centre at various locations on campus. The centre will provide free tutoring for mathematics courses (including upper level courses) and will be staffed by graduate students, Yongyi Bi and Xiubin Xu.

MONDAY:	1:00 - 5:00pm	C307A
TUESDAY:	1:00 - 5:00pm	H303
WEDNESDAY:	1:00 - 5:00pm	C307A
THURSDAY:	1:00 - 5:00pm	N12

The MATH HELP CENTRE operated through the Dept. of Extension at the Wu Centre continues to offer free tutoring for first-year courses on a by-appointment basis.