

APRIL'S COLUMN



ON DECEMBER 31, 1989, I WROTE THIS COLUMN FOR
THE EDMONTON SUN. FROM 1984 TO 1990, I WROTE
300 COLUMNS FOR THAT NEWSPAPER - Pastor Max

Mr. Perry's column doesn't depress me

I guess I should be depressed after reading Fraser Perry's recent column, but I'm not, thank God.

As a clergyman I've always desired to be successful and, after 21 years, I must admit that even for an optimist I've had to take my lumps and there were times I've failed to please people — and even made mistakes.

Mr. Perry can't figure out where I'm coming from or where I'm going.

Possibly a little clarification would help him.

First of all, I am a born-again Christian of the John Wesley, D.L. Moody and Martin Luther variety.

And I read the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, the discredited prophet who went about doing good and healing the people.

Some of the advice I give and statements I make in my column may seem too simplistic and old fashioned for Mr. Perry but, in all due respect to him, the gospel does work and makes a dividing line between faith and unbelief, sin and righteousness and right and wrong.

St. Paul, one of the greatest logicians of all time, remarked: "The natural man does not understand the things of the Spirit of God for they are spiritually discerned."

Now, don't get me wrong, I'm not trying to put down Mr. Perry. I'm only quoting the great Jewish philosopher and theologian who wrote over half the New Testament.

Of course he was misunderstood too, thrown into prison and even beheaded.

Strange man, though. He said: "I count all things as refuse, in order that I might gain Christ."

Recently on a talk show a man called me a lot of names and loudly declared his atheistic position. I immediately thought of Rev. John Wesley and an encounter he had with a big burly fellow who positioned himself on a pathway directly in front of the preacher.

The founder of the Methodist church asked the man to move aside since he had an appointment.

The big man glowered down at the reverend and

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shouted, "I don't move aside for fools."

The preacher tipped his hat to the man and said, "Well, sir, I always do."

He then stepped aside and went on his way.

Just a couple of corrections I wish to share regarding Mr. Fraser Perry's column.

He objected to my advice "your clergyman will give you tips on courting."

"Yeah? What if I belong to a church with a celibate priesthood?" he asked.

I wonder if Mr. Perry has ever considered that in order to even enter the ministry a person must take courses in premarital counselling?

Also, Mr. Perry makes a gross error in stating Dr. Oral Roberts has stolen a phrase from the literature of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Oral Robert's statement was: "You must turn your life over to God and believe that tomorrow will be a better day than today, next month a better month and next year a better year."

I'm the fellow who gave the admonition, "Remember, today is the tomorrow you worried about yesterday. And tomorrow is the first day of the rest of your life."

I did not know those words were contained in AA literature — thank you for enlightening me, Mr. Perry.

One final word: I personally don't believe the veteran columnist did his homework properly before writing his June 17 column.

(Max Solbrekken is pastor of Faith Cathedral.)

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Boy George corrupting our youth

Who and what is Boy George?

Talented singer? Clever entertainer? Transvestite or drag queen?

He certainly has taken North America by storm. Thousands are packing in to see his act and hear his pleasant sounding voice croon out the old favorites.

There is no doubt about his talent. He can sing and you can actually understand the words.

Certainly he's put his act together.

Like the Newfoundlander would say: "Bye Garge — he's some good!"

The only problem is, I don't think a real Newfie would listen to him . . . after seeing a picture of his outrageous outfit and makeup.

Because most Newfoundlanders are either men or women and look like it, dress like it and act like it.

As a matter of fact, I don't know a red-blooded man who would go to see effeminate Boy George.

The thing that stirs me is that a lot of older women, not realizing how damaging his image is, love him as their little girlie boy.

And some young fellows, not realizing what this is doing to the manly image of the male gender, go along with it as a joke or fad.

Girls are most upset

The people who are the most upset are the girls.

They can't stand a faggy guy. They are sick and tired of homosexuals, bisexuals and transvestites. The young ladies of this generation are turned off by guys who look like dolls.

And they are even more turned off by men who actually dress like women. The competition is too keen among women; now they've got to compete with girlish men.

Boy George, in my opinion, will appeal to lesbians and feminists but not to normal gals who like a man to be a man.

Like Johnny Cash, Pat Boone, or Marty Robbins.

When I was a young fellow, men were men and the

women were glad of it.

But today — it's sick, sick, sick!

Weird, we weird!

Recently Ron Collister of CICA's *Talkback* asked me the question so many are asking: "Why do thousands of people of all ages flock to the concerts of this effeminate little cutie?"

Certainly it must be a reflection of our society.

We have become accustomed to the outrageous, and conditioned to accept the unacceptable.

TV coverage of strange lifestyles tend to make weird habits seem less abnormal.

At first we are shocked, then we seem to insulate ourselves against the impact by ignoring the obvious.

At a later date we find ourselves so conditioned to the unreal and abnormal that we fail to speak out against them.

Finally, we give in to pressure and even accept normal that which we know is off balance.

Nursery stories losing ground

For as long back as grandma can remember, little children were rocked to sleep and entertained with nursery tales like *Little Red Riding Hood* and *Snow White* and the *Seven Dwarfs*.

Not any more.

Kindergarten teachers from Vancouver to Montreal tell me that five-year-olds are not so keen on nursery rhymes, but have taken up Boy George and know his songs by heart.

And the little girls are wearing Michael Jackson's glove.

St. Paul classes the effeminate in the category homosexuals, drunkards and rapists.

When asked to comment on his wide acceptance in the U.S., Boy George said, "Americans know a good drag queen when they see one."

Boy George, how sweet! The only thing sweet about Boy George is the large amount of money he takes from a gullible public.

Question for the Pope

Wendy's fast food stores across the U.S. have made millions of dollars because of a highly successful ad campaign featuring Clara Peller asking bluntly, "Where's the beef?"

TV talk shows, news magazines and the media in general have featured the story.

And people piled into Wendy's restaurants in ever increasing numbers to buy a product that supposedly has more beef.

Clara Peller has done the general public a great service. Many people have gotten the message; that they may be getting ripped off, taken for a ride and generally short-changed, in many instances!

Someone had to do it!

Great choice for a model

And Wendy's with Mrs. Peller did it in such a beautiful way. The American way — An older lady, not a model with a Hollywood smile, all dolled up — But a regular grandmother-next-door to whom everyone could relate.

Walter Mondale even brought the saying into the race for the Democratic nomination.

"Where's the beef?"

Mondale was asking the question, "How much real substance is there to Gary Hart and his policies?"

In Canada, Tory MP Tom Siddon applied the saying, "Where's the beef?" to the Macdonald royal commission on the economy. "If McDonald's ran their restaurants the way Don Macdonald wrote his interim report, it would be all bun and no beef," he told the Commons.

We can fault the medical profession, businessmen, politicians and even the school system by asking the questions; "Are we being double-billed? Do we get our money's worth? Are they telling us the truth, and is the quality of education we receive the best we can have?"

Is the government getting too nosy and big brotherly? Taking away individual freedoms and running our lives for us?

Are we as clergymen giving our parishioners the care, support, love and compassion they need?

Or have we sold people a bill of goods?

"Certainly," we say, "We are God's church and the servants of the Lord — and we represent God."

The Pope goes a step further and calls himself the Vicar of Jesus Christ; or the Vice-Christ, the representative of God upon the earth.

I'm sorry, John Paul II, but I didn't know the Blessed Holy Spirit had taken early retirement.

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Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to lead the church in His absence.

With such exalted titles and positions would it be fair for me to ask, "Where's the Beef?"

Would I be wrong in asking the simple, yet penetrat-

ing question Clara Peller asked on the TV commercials?

A simple question

If you can't ask a preacher a question and expect a straight answer, who can you ask?

Do we teach the simple gospel to our people? Do we pray for the sick and suffering? Are we available to counsel partners in a troubled marriage or do we send them off to expensive marriage counsellors?

Are we hard-hearted and selfish or do we weep over the needs of the people? Are we lazy and self-satisfied, or do we give of ourselves?

God and His people have a right to know. Thank you, Clara Peller, for speaking to us all!

The Galilee rabbi died for us all

The Roman governor stepped out on the balcony. The atmosphere was tense and the air was charged with hostility toward the lowly Galilean rabbi with a crown of thorns on his head.

The blood had matted his hair and his beard had been yanked out. His back was raw and bleeding from the cruel cat-of-nine-tails the occupying Roman soldiers had masterfully laid upon his back.

The prisoner was a despicable sight. All night long without sleep in one kangaroo court after another. First before Caiaphas the High priest and Annas, his corrupt predecessor and father-in-law, who still wielded power behind the scenes. Then before King Herod, who was more interested in pleasing Caesar than seeing justice enacted.

The Bible says, "He was taken from prison and from judgment: And who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: For the transgression of my people was he stricken." (Isa. 53:8.)

Pontius Pilate didn't want to get involved in a Jewish religious argument. But he didn't want to see a miscarriage of justice, either.

He had ordered Jesus of Nazareth to be scourged and he fully intended to release Him. He didn't want to execute an innocent man.

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Every Passover the Roman government freed one prisoner as a token of good will.

He gave the crowd now the choice of Jesus the prophet from Galilee or Barabbas the murderer.

"Give us Barabbas," they chanted. "We want Barabbas."

"What shall we then do with Jesus that is called the Christ?" asked the governor.

"Let him be crucified," roared the mob.

Then Pilate called for water to wash his hands.

"I am free from the blood of this innocent man," stated the governor.

They laid the rugged tree upon his bleeding back and Jesus staggered down the cobblestone streets of Jerusalem towards Golgotha, the place of a skull.

As he stumbled and fell, Simon of Cyrene was com-

pelled to carry the cross of Jesus to Calvary's hill.

There they crucified Jesus of Nazareth between two thieves.

They nailed a sign over His head calling Him, "the King of the Jews!"

He looked down upon His accusers in love and prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!"

Meanwhile, back at the prison, the grim jailor opened the heavy doors with an oath. He had no love for Barabbas the killer.

Barabbas snarled at the guard.

"Get up," snapped the Roman. He turned the key to unlock the shackles.

"OK, get out of here! You're free to leave!"

"What do you mean?" gasped the prisoner. I thought you were taking me out like the other two."

"Have you heard of the prophet Jesus?"

"Yeah."

"Well, He took your place. He's dying for you on the cross right now. So you can go free!"

As the door swung open and Barabbas walked out of the dungeon a free man, Jesus turned to another thief on the cross next to his and said, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

(Max Solbrekken is pastor of Faith Cathedral.)

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Bible verse can cure ills

Having any problems with falling hair? What do you do to cover up that bald spot and receding hairline?

Probably the only solution is to massage your head, comb your hair forward, get a toupee or just simply let it fall.

If you had lived about 3,500 years ago you would have gotten very different advice — not from a pastor but from your physician.

He would have quoted from the famous medical authority of that day, Papyrus Ebers.

"When it falls out, one remedy is to apply a mixture of six fats, namely those of the horse, the hippopotamus, the crocodile, the cat, the snake and the ibex. To strengthen it, anoint with the tooth of a donkey crushed in honey."

The Papyrus Ebers was published about 1552 B.C. and occupied a dominant position in the ancient medical world and was one of the leading guides for practicing physicians for a very long time.

There are literally hundreds of remedies for diseases in this book, such as lizard's blood, swine's teeth, putrid meat, stinking fat, moisture from pig's ears, milk goose grease, asses' hooves, animal fats from various sources, excreta from animals, including human beings, donkeys, antelopes, dogs, cats, and even flies.

About the time the Papyrus Ebers was written in Egypt, Moses was born, educated in their best schools and raised as the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

God's call to Moses was to lead his persecuted people out of bondage. Here was God's promise to them: "I am the Lord that healeth thee" (Exodus 15:26.)

Advice found in Bible

God did not borrow medical advice from the Papyrus Ebers. His advice to Moses was contrary to the most highly respected medical thought of that day.

Millions of Europeans died of leprosy for hundreds of years. Some physicians thought the cause was eating hot food or the meat of diseased hogs. Others blamed malign conjunction of the planets.

Approximately 60 million people died from the Black Death in the 14th century. Dr. George Rosen of Columbia University writes: "Leadership was taken by the Church, as the physicians had nothing to offer. The Church took as its guiding principle the concept of contagion as embodied in the Old Testament..."

Once the condition of leprosy has been established, the patient was to be segregated and excluded from the community... it accomplished the first great feat... in methodical eradication of disease."

For centuries in Europe, multitudes perished because of improper hygiene, sanitation and sloppy hospitals. In many villages, human excrement and waste was dumped into the streets, bringing deadly epidemics of typhoid, cholera and dysentery.

The solution to the problem, the burying of wastes, had been given by God 3,500 years before (in Deuteronomy 23:12-13.)

Vienna in the 1840s was famous as a medical centre. One of the most famous teaching hospitals of that day was Allgemeines Krankenhaus. In its maternity ward, one out of six women died.

Hygiene cut mortality rate

Dr. Ignaz Semmelweis discovered that if doctors washed their hands well, after doing autopsies and before examining expectant mothers, the mortality rate dropped drastically.

Dr. Semmelweis was not applauded by the medical profession, however. He was ridiculed by his peers, discredited, lost his position and eventually succumbed to the pressure, dying in a mental hospital.

Moses had given the same advice many centuries before (in Numbers 19.) It wasn't until 1878 that the method of cleaning hands and instruments was introduced by men like John Tyndall, Louis Pasteur, and Sir Joseph Lister that the mortality rate began to drop.

The New York State Department of Health, in 1960, issued a book describing a method of washing the hands very similar to that found in Numbers Chapter 19.

Medical science has come a long way since Papyrus Ebers was published in 1552 B.C. and even since the 1840s in Vienna, but I still think that when your family physician advises you to get a second or third opinion about an operation, it's a good idea.

Now if anyone wants to try the remedy for falling hair, don't let me discourage you. But then where would you find a hippopotamus these days?

(Max Solbrekken is pastor of Faith Cathedral.)