

# Religion

## Ordinary time disrupted becomes extraordinary

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time  
Mark 1:21-28

Sunday, Feb. 3, 1991

Ordinary Time

When it's disrupted, it becomes extraordinary.

This is as true for us in Canada, as it is for those living in Iraq, Kuwait, Israel, Latvia, El Salvador, etc.

Ordinary time is important. Without it, the anthropologists say, we would have no culture. An appreciation of time, leads to the development of culture, culture meaning the proper way to live.

Let's consider ordinary time more carefully.

We'll break it up into three separate, but overlapping, spheres of ordinary time.

Picture a Venn diagram. There are three interconnecting circles. Label the one on the left, work time. This is regarded as public time in our culture. Label the one on the right, family time. This is private time, unless you hire a cook who later write a book about your family life. Label the circle on top, prayer time. This is both public and private.

Depending on the particular social and personal value at-



Religion and Reality  
by Jim Ryan

tributed to each of the three spheres, the overall picture of ordinary time will vary.

For example:  
1. A workaholic or graduate student may have their prayer and family time eclipsed by work time.

2. A person with children may have their family and work time integrated. For them, their family is their work.

3. A contemplative in a monastery may have integrated prayer and work time. Their prayer is their work.

In nineteenth century, rural Ontario, where the whole family worked the land, family time and work time overlap.

In more primitive cultures, work and family time are wrapped in prayer time.

If we consider the week as a unit of time, we can see how our culture breaks up time: we call it a work week, and then make time within that week for family and prayer. Family times is called quality time.

### ORDINARY TIME AND SEX ROLES

In the 1950's in North America, work time was male time, and family time was female time.

This has changed in the 1990's. Work time is now both male and female time. Family time however, remains largely female time.

In some cultures, prayer time is almost exclusively female time, except for the leaders of prayer time, who are almost exclusively male. In other cultures, prayer time is exclusively male, and occurs in a private area that is off-limits to women.

In our culture, public prayer time has almost disappeared. When it occurs, it occurs during extraordinary times: Birth, death, sickness, marriage, exams, graduations, Christmas, Easter and wartime.

### THREE DISRUPTIONS OF ORDINARY TIME

1. Unemployment. Pin prick that work balloon. It will affect family and prayer time.

2. Divorce. Pin prick that family balloon. It will affect work and prayer time.

3. War. Pin prick work and family balloons. (Unless you're a professional soldier, in which case your work is war). Political leaders will use the language of prayer, while using war to cement the foundation for their next election win. (Margaret Thatcher did this with the war in Argentina). American Armed Forces chaplains will see the world. The rest of us will pray for our lives and for the lives of our sons and daughters.

The disruption of ordinary time makes us realize how good ordinary time can be. Which is not to say that some times unemployment and divorce aren't better than some jobs and some families. I don't think we can say war is better than any ordinary time, no matter how unjust that ordinary time might be.

### THE GOSPEL AND ORDINARY TIME

Mark 1:14-39 is being read over three weeks of Ordinary Time,



Rev. Kenneth Gallinger

## Colorful guest visits church

By COLIN GIBSON  
The Herald

St. Andrews United Church, on the corner of Mountainview and Sinclair Avenue, played host to a special and equally colorful guest last Wednesday.

The Rev. Kenneth Gallinger was on hand to stage an animated, open and frank, question and answer forum much to the delight of those in attendance.

The Rev. Gallinger writes a feature column 'The Question Box' in the United Church magazine Observer. He answers questions from writers relating to policies and practices of the United Church and he does not shy away from controversial issues.

In fact, in speaking to the effervescent ordained minister, one gets the impression he relishes controversial issues as a way of making people more aware of the inner workings and teachings of the church.

He describes his 'Question Box' column as "entertaining as well as informative" and admits that at times he can get a bit "playful."

It is clear, however, he is convinced the church has an important and meaningful role to play in our oft-times turbulent society.

He is fully behind the Canadian Council of Churches stand against the Persian Gulf War and admits to playing a part in the peace and anti-war movement that blossomed in the United States protesting the Vietnam War.

To the Rev. Gallinger, the "Powers that be in the church are the people in the pews." He estimates, however, that approximately only one-third of the church community actually attends services.

In order to rectify this situation, Rev. Gallinger feels, "The church must be more creative and learn to communicate better with its members."

Rev. Gallinger's style might best be termed, 'the height of creativity,' at least in relation to his activities within the United Church.

Rev. Gallinger is also host of the television program, The United Church of Canada, which is broadcast on Vision TV and can be seen at 7:30 p.m. Monday evenings. The program is re-broadcast Tuesday mornings at 10:30 a.m.

According to Rev. Gallinger, this program deals with "in-house and Christian living issues."

last Sunday, this Sunday and next Sunday. At the beginning of these readings we see Jesus leave John the Baptist near the Jordan River and return to Capernaum near the Sea of Galilee.

He is entering upon his public work life.

Last week we saw him in a work setting; this week in a prayer setting; next week in a family setting.

In each setting he speaks and acts in such a way as to teach about the Kingdom of God. As good as work, prayer and family time can be, Kingdom time is even better, and will transform work, prayer and family.

### A HISTORICAL NOTE

The early Church refused to baptize professional soldiers. Hippolytus of Rome wrote this in his book, Traditions of the Apostles, around 215 A.D. Tertullian noted the same thing, but allowed for exceptions if the soldier promised not to execute men, or take the oath to the emperor.

The thinking at that time was that the soldier, like the pimp, the prostitute, and the gladiator, practiced a profession that was incompatible with a Christian life.

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