Religion

Interpreting events of our lives

By JIM RYAN 19th Sunday in Ordinary Times John 6:41-51

Aug. 11, 1991 If you're like me, child and job have kept you from seeing the recent films. I've even given up reading the movie reviews in the Toronto papers.

But my wife has talked about Jesus of Montreal so often (she saw it with a friend a few years ago) that I jumped at the chance to see it when it came out in video form.

We had seen The Last Temptation of Christ when it first came out in theatres (no baby then), but it was unsatisfying, and not as good as the book by Nikos Kazanzakis.

Jesus of Montreal proved to be much more satisfying.

If you're keeping up with your current reading list, and that list includes The Beauty Myth by Naomi Wolf, then seeing Jesus of Montreal for the first or second time will be an epiphany for you.

The good thing about the film. Jesus of Montreal, is that it's a good example of what I think of as a good homily.

The film takes scripture and molds it, faithfully, I think, to the present reality of people in North America. This is what we all should be doing.

The steps are:



Religion and Reality Jim Ryan

1. "What is my context?" or, "What are the issues or problems that my community faces?"

2. Reread scripture in the light of my context and our situation.

3. Rethink scripture and my context. "What does Jesus mean by this statement in the light of my experience and the experience of my community?"

4. Speak, Act, Write on what you've learned. Maybe even make a movie.

Okay, what does Denys Arcand do? (He's the director of the film.)

See if this makes sense:

1. When Jesus cleanses the Temple, the Temple in Arcand's film is a film studio, specifically a film studio that makes commercials where women are portrayed as sex objects. (If you're

reading Naomi Wolf, jump up and down. Her chapter on the media, including the print media is fascinating.)

2. When Jesus is tempted, he is tempted in a highrise in the midst of the business district in Montreal, by a Satan who is a publicist-career-planner. (Now doesn't that make sense!) Satan wants Jesus to publish a book about his life. He wants to market

The resurrection is a materialist resurrection. Jesus' disciples sign the waiver concer-

ning his body parts, and his heart lives on in a heart transplant recipient. (This seems a bit jokey to

me.)

him.

4. But the movie is a comedy, not a tragedy. (The disciple who also plays Pilate, and wants to play Hamlet, is worried about the play being a tragedy.) The death scene is a classic cops and robbers farce. Jesus is killed by accident when a thickheaded and brawny bystander knocks down a member of the security police, who knocks down the cross, which kills Christ. But as we know, Christ is resurrected. He lives on in the lives of those who partake of his body.

Well, that's what Denys Arcand did with his film.

What about us? How are we in-

terpreting the events of our lives?

United Church leaders honored

Three Canadian church leaders of The United Church of Canada have been named the recipients of the 1991-1992 McGeachy Memorial Senior Scholarships. The awards go to Gerry Margaret Haverluck and the Reverend Robert Haverluck of Winnipeg, and the Reverend Dr. Robin Smith of Toronto.

As a joint project, Gerry and Bob Haverluck will produce an illustrated handbook to be used by congregations wanting to encourage and animate small groups of people working on issues of peace and justice.

"A unique aspect of the Haverlucks' work will be to examine how the popular arts, such as storytelling, drama, quilting. and cartooning, can provide a rich and promising means of animating a congregation or community," says the Reverend Dr. Nathan Mair, the chair of the committee that awarded the scholarships.

He adds, "The handbook when completed will illustrate how the

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practices of aboriginal spiritual tradition, the women's movement and base communities in the Third World, have integrated the use of the popular arts as a way of creating social change."

Bob Haverluck, a United Church minister, is an educator and author on social issues, as well as being an accomplished illustrator.

Gerry Haverluck is employed by the North End Community Ministry in Winnipeg as an animator of congregational and community groups.

The Haverlucks' project will take two years to complete and will include testing of the resources before final publication of the handbook.

Robin Smith's project will be to research and examine the effect of recent social changes on the self-image and role and participation of men in the life and work of The United Church of Canada.

"Beyond the experience of individuals, it seems that men have. not begun to seek a new consciousness of what it means to be male in this changing world," writes Dr. Smith in his proposal for the project. "Ways of helping men reflect on themselves and their future in such a world are urgently needed."

Dr. Smith is a United Church minister who served as associate secretary of the church's Board of Christian Education and the Division of Mission in Canada. He is also the author of numerous articles and books on public educa-

tion and family life. The McGeachy Memorial Senior Scholarships were established by The United Church of Canada in 1981 as the consequence of a substantial trust bequeathed to the church by Mr. and Mrs. W.A. McGeachy. The hope of the McGeachys was that the fund would make possible a significant contribution to church and society in Canada.

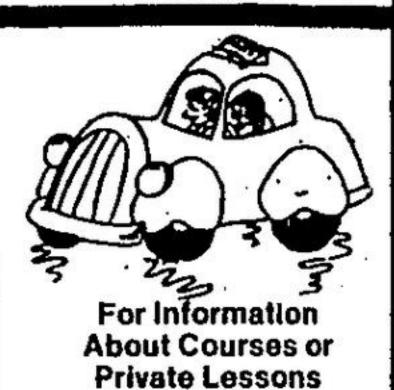
The 1991-1992 McGeachy Scholarship Trust Fund totalled \$72,000.00. This amount will be shared by the three recipients of the award.



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