

Easter and hope are still alive

By Harold Martin, minister
 St. Matthew's United Church

The Easter hope is an embarrassment to the man of today. He has thought for so long science has buttoned up the world, thinking in such a way that hope becomes a futile dream.

He would not like to be caught thinking such a thing.

There are two reasons for this modern attitude. One, is that there is no point in hoping for something we can do ourselves.

Once horizons have been shrunk to the size of this earth we think we can cope with the future.

It will not be our future of course, but we feel self-righteously unselfish in arguing we are not thinking of ourselves but of those yet unborn.

There is some theological justification for this mood. But when it is allowed to run riot we are quite prepared to sacrifice anyone standing in the way — in the interests of an imagined future.

Hitler and Stalin were the experts in this kind of enterprise.

So we continue to believe our energies and noble thoughts must not be wasted.

Instead of dreaming of heaven, we are able to take our part in transforming the earth and fashioning human society.

Political and social activity will achieve this.

We have it on good authority that the visions of Judaism have found fulfilment in the political realities of Marx — "Ubi Lenin, ibi Jerusalem!" (where Lenin, is there is Jerusalem).

The panacea is prepared. Hold out your plate.

The second reason is that we need not hope for something which is setting man on a fixed course. People sensitive about being identified with Marx are provided with a yet broader way.

Here, too, there is a dream of love and friendship embracing all humanity. The achievement of this desirable end does not depend on any action of man.

It will be achieved by genetic changes in his constitution, changes which will come about in the progress of further evolution.

Now a man would be foolish indeed if he ignored biological and genetic realities. Yet the relationship in which he stands with his fellow is a personal one.

In these relationships the individual person counts supremely. It is in this sense that he is of more value than all the kingdoms of the world.

Later Judaism realised this and by the time of Jesus and Paul there was already a sense of resurrection in which the "individual", so it was believed, would not be denied the fulfilment of his own life.

In the triumph of the resurrection story Paul found songs by which he could celebrate a joyous hope. He soared beyond any known form of organic life when he spoke of the transformation of life in a new creation.

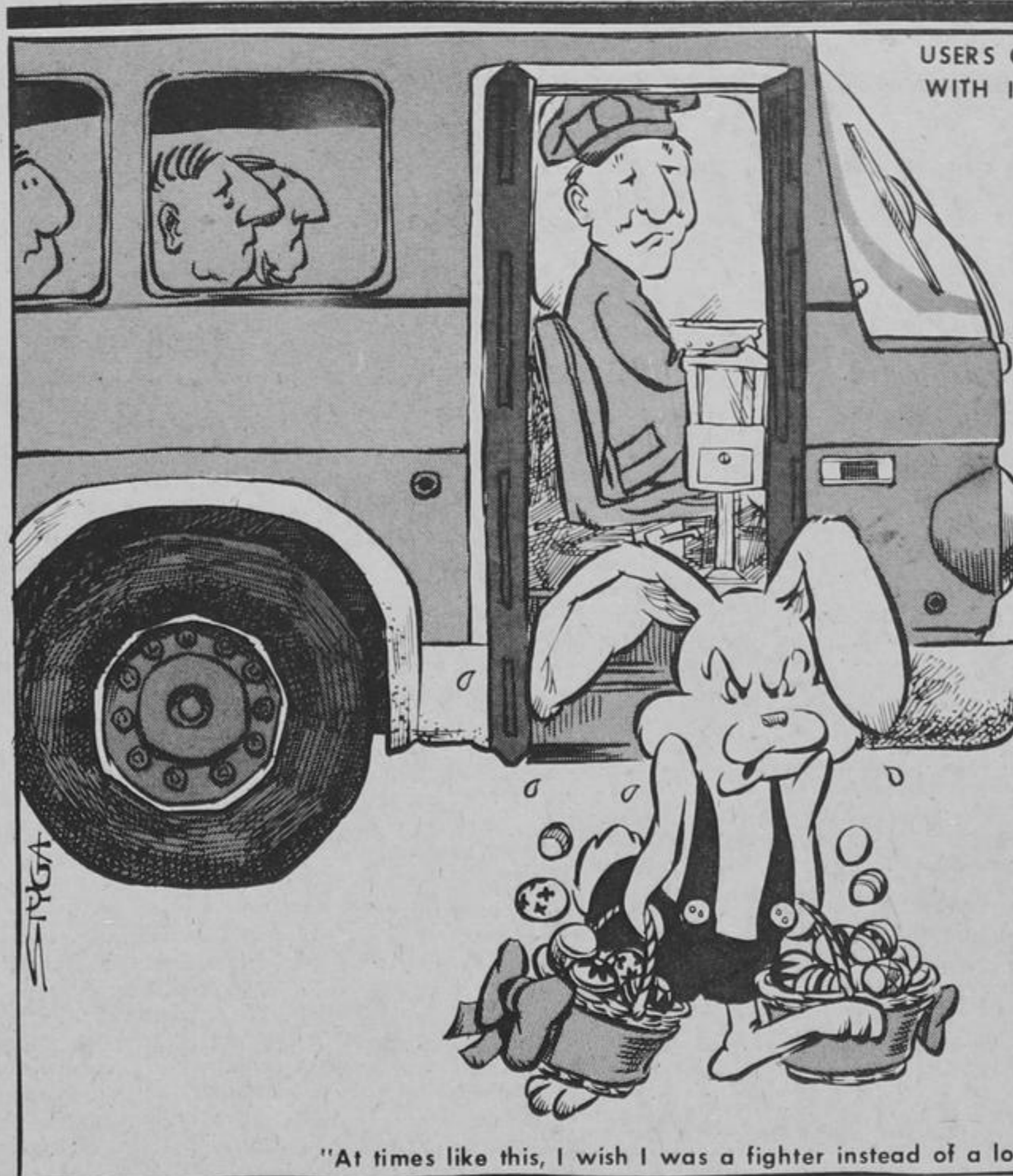
Moreover, this life was not dangled on some impossible distant horizon. It became real to men just where they were and wherever they were — give us now the life, now let the kingdom come

The two secular "hopes" I have mentioned have the defect of avoiding the reality of death. They give a diet of ashes to the man who lives in hope, because for the vast majority there is no hope.

The Christian descending into the baptismal grave rises with Christ to a life which nothing on earth can destroy.

That is what we shall celebrate on Easter day. It is, of course, a matter of dispute.

But it is not as silly as it seems at first.



USERS OF TRANSIT ARE HIT WITH INCREASE IN FARES...

Wants gun bill public meeting

Dear editor:

Over the past few years I have written to my member of Parliament a number of times to let him know my views on various pieces of legislation.

Its me again, but this time on Bill C-83. I'll give it to you in point form:

- 1) I'm against Bill C-83.
- 2) The federal government is constantly waffling on the administration of justice. If you administered the laws that are on the books right now, we'd have fewer dangerous people let out of prison to kill and rob.
- 3) The forced registration of all firearms will not lessen the use of guns in the execution of criminal acts. Do they think that criminals are going to walk into a registrar's office and register their weapons and perhaps have their photos and fingerprints taken? No, but hunters and sportsmen and gun collectors will, simply because they're law abiding citizens like the majority of people.
- 4) If Parliament increased the punishment for criminal acts committed while in possession of a firearm by an arbitrary 10 years, it would reduce the use of guns by criminals and save some innocent lives. It's very simple. No criminal likes the odds of getting caught (10-1) during the execution of a crime if he knows, upon conviction, that there's an automatic addition of 10 years to the sentence.
- 5) I have read parts of the bill and it appears it is not complete and precise. There are too many points, "to be decided later", "from time to time", and such similar constructions.

6) Under terms of Bill C-83, local registrars are given absolute power to make any conditions they choose. This could mean fingerprints, mug shots, a financial bond, storage of firearms in a two-ton safe, storage of firearms in a police department armory, or anything he deems desirable. Does that seem reasonable?

What it also means to me is that Warren Allmand is soon to be evaluated on the administration of his department. This hurry-up, stick it all in the bag bill, must be designed to bail him out.

Because it is 73 pages of justification for a job not at all done well.

In other words, if you want part you have to take it all. And that's what's wrong with an Omnibus bill.

If Parliament would like to know how the voters think, let's consider a public meeting in Thornhill, which I will be glad to organize.

Or failing this, let's MP Barney Danson and I discuss with the editor of THE LIBERAL and see if we can obtain some public discussion and involvement through the press.

Guns and firearms aren't necessarily criminal, but people are. And that's another reason I believe the emphasis in Bill C-83 is in the wrong direction.

BARRY NICHOLLS,
 172 Royal Orchard Blvd.,
 Thornhill, Ont.

Letters

Region's family life centres face closure

Dear editor:
 The Family Life Centres of York Region are greatly concerned about the significant reduction in the spending estimates for the health and social service grants to local agencies and societies.

The 1976 estimate of \$100,000 for all grants represents a 45 per cent cutback on the previous year and likely means that many agencies and societies now contributing to the quality of life in this region will disappear or be drastically reduced in services.

We hope that the members of regional council will carefully reconsider and then increase this estimate.

The Family Life Centres have provided valuable services to the citizens of this region with the helpful financial support of the municipality.

Family, marriage, individual and credit counselling touches the lives of many citizens.

The educational groups on marriage, parenting, child abuse, etc. assist in the

nurturing of the quality of home life in our area.

Our work is supported by dozens of volunteers, some of whom are in training as counsellors. For years we have made no provision for physical or staff expansion and we are vigorously seeking increased funding from other sources.

The centres raise some 30 per cent of their budget through fees and donations.

It is especially urgent in 1976 that the centres continue for we hope that the new United Way will form an important financial base for our work in 1977.

As it stands now, the demise of the centres will begin by May 15th and all centres may be closed by June 30 if no

funds are provided by the region of York in 1976.

For now, we must seek the continued support of the region of York. We cannot be self-supporting and the province of Ontario will not help.

We are very aware of the pressures on the tax dollar and of the difficult decisions which elected officials must make in these changing times.

However, we feel that our contribution to the stability and quality of life in the region of York deserves continued financial support.

WILLIAM SPARLING,
 Chairman, Family Life Centre
 Co-ordination Committee,
 225 Cedar St.,
 Newmarket, Ont.

Thanks paper and merchants

Dear editor:
 York Highlands Chapter of the Sweet Adelines wish to thank The Liberal for the coverage given us during our recent

production "Vaudeville Revue". Also we would like to thank the many local merchants who contributed to our program and the community for their support.

Your support enables us to indulge in our favorite hobby, four part Barbershop Harmony and also to spread the joy of singing throughout the area.

MARG TOOLE,
 CAROLE ALLEN,
 Show Chairmen,
 34 Boulding Dr.,
 Aurora, Ont.

'He was only aged 33'

By Rev. Mark Innes

The Good Friday — Easter event was incredible!

Imagine the newspaper headlines in the Jerusalem Daily Times on the very first Easter Monday: "Grave of Nazarene Reported Empty".

It would be enough to shake anyone.

CBC Production

Some years ago CBC television released a production which cast Good Friday in contemporary style. A man, falsely accused of a serious crime was sentenced by an illegal night court to be immediately executed.

The sentence was carried out near the Don Jail, and the body was buried in Mount Pleasant Cemetery.

A guard was mounted at the grave because of some mysterious claims the Victim had made of himself.

True to form, three days later the guard had fled and the grave was found empty! Only a small piece of clothing lay by the graveside.

The entire production was fascinating — unbelievable. It

helped one to understand just how awesome the events of Good Friday and Easter were.

Main Question

More important than the events, however, is the question: "What does it all mean?"

Violet Almeyn Storey has written a short poem that tries to give some insight into the meaning of the Risen Christ. She writes:

And He was only thirty-three
 The year had come to spring —
 And He hung dead upon a tree,
 Robbed of its blossoming,
 Sorrow of sorrows that Youth should die
 On a dead tree 'neath an April sky.

And He was only thirty-three
 Anthems of joy be sung —
 For, always, the Risen Christ will be
 A God divinely young,
 Glory of glories, a Tree, stripped bare,
 Shed now Faith's blossoms everywhere.

"He was only thirty-three" — and



millions are convinced that that Life has changed the whole complexion of the world!

He is so important nothing has been the same since that first Easter.

History Changed

There are those who claim His Name; there is His day set aside to especially remember and worship Him; there are those who have adopted a whole life style to conform to His pattern!

That dead tree 'neath the April sky

could not hold a Risen Christ. "Faith's blossoms" are shed now everywhere.

Curious things will happen over the coming weekend.

There will be kid's hockey tournaments the same as usual; there will be optimistic first trips to the cottage; special sales in stores; new clothes to be fitted and worn; "business as usual"; a long weekend to enjoy to the full.

What of You?

Elsewhere there will be countless numbers who will again hear the incredible news of Good Friday and Easter. There will be prayer, singing, a Holy Meal, an unspokeable joy over the One 'who was only thirty-three'.

Some will find hope, some will find love, be inspired, be filled with joy. Others will only buy and sell, vacation, "enjoy" the weekend.

Where will you be this Good Friday and Easter?

(Rev. Innes is pastor of Christ the King Lutheran Church in Thornhill.—Editor)

Viewpoint from the regional desk



BY JIM IRVING

It will probably be snowing, or we'll be in the midst of an election, or some such horrendous state by the time this comes out.

But at the moment I'm doing my best to wall in and savor every last ray of the sun, which is shining in the window and providing suitable accompaniment to the duo warbling in one of the more tranquil moments of La Gioconda.

And I say "doing my best" — qualifying it, as it were — because it seems everywhere you stop, look and listen anymore, there's a hand up, or a voice shouting, or a solemn statement before you telling you how wrong it is to enjoy yourself in any way; how badly you're abusing other people's rights, and isn't it about time you started to consider someone besides yourself.

Fear and guilt

So that you're almost afraid to get off

a good sneeze, unless you're off in an isolated unit somewhere, or smile at someone's wife, unless you're in a crowded room.

Everybody feeds on our built-in guilt mechanism, knowing there's really apparently no legitimate (or moral) rebuttal to various pious declarations about rights.

Last week, for example, there was a letter in our paper all about the hazards of smoking in elevators — both up and down, I gather — and asking us to write our provincial members (with the express wish, I presume) that they pass a law making it illegal to smoke while riding in elevators.

No platitudes

The letter was from the York-Toronto Lung Association and was very straightforward, devoid of the usual righteous platitudes and attitudes in such things.

However, it insisted that "second-hand" smoke was a growing health hazard, "particularly acute in elevators and among people who have asthma, emphysema and chronic bronchitis."

Well, then, if that's true, I hope these same people who are so concerned about their rights, are just as concerned about mine.

So that those so afflicted get off the elevator when I get on, or at least wear a towel around their heads, because I don't want to step into their asthmatic, bronchial or emphysemateous worlds.

As I don't smoke, nor do I have any of the aforementioned ills, that I know of, I see no reason why I should be exposed to the bearers of these afflictions, which could be mine for the basking.

Too many rules

The point I'm trying to make, if any,

is that I think we're making far too many rules for everything, especially if we feel we have a little moral backing on our side.

Everything from stopping smoking to fastening our seat belts.

In the meantime, the virtuous souls behind such legislation, not solemnly and sagely as they sign a paper putting these things into law with the very same pens that only moments before they used to double their salaries.

Everyone is very righteous in these matters, but I think they concentrate on the wrong things.

They don't give the smokers, for example, any credit for common sense.

I used to smoke, but I don't recall going around blowing smoke in people's faces, any more than I find people doing that to me now.

On the other hand I'm not defending

smoking as a virtue.

But I know many people who are trying to drop the habit and who also know that's something that has to come from within themselves.

In the meantime, they don't spend all their time blaming their "affliction" on others, any more than the non-smokers should go around blaming the smokers for their problems and putting all their energy into trying to rule them out of existence.

I quit smoking

I quit smoking more than 16 years ago. And I think I was able to do it, simply because the time had come when my system no longer required it.

For I had "quit" a couple of times before, but was back again in a few weeks.

When I finally stopped, I didn't even

have to fight a craving. It was almost as if I had never smoked in the first place.

And I never really gave it any thought again, other than when the papers announced the annual increase in tobacco prices and my Scottish blood bubbled in appreciation.

So let's worry less about what other people should do for us and concentrate more on how we can best look after ourselves, and perhaps contribute something along the way to others in the process.

Don't lecture

And next time someone comes near you with a cigarette, don't start fanning the air, screwing up your nose, or planning a lecture, it could be worse.

They could be seeking their outlets elsewhere — such as in writing a newspaper column, for instance . . .

Fearless I quit smoking