

As editor and publisher of Everyman, a Journal for Men, David wrote the following article in the 68th issue. Regrettably the 69th issue, posted elsewhere on this website, was the last. David has contributed so much to the men's movement that we miss his voice. As webmaster for Everyman-on-line, my focus has been on presenting the content of past issues. I plan to continue this effort. However it is time to add new material for men. John Spiesman Ed.D., LSW contributed the first new article. There is more to come. I would be heartened by voluntary contributions both from the original authors for Everyman, the journal, and from those out there who would like to join. Please contact me, Jackie Unitt at webmaster@everyman.org or unittj@cyberus.ca.

Needed: A New Vision for Everyman

by David Shackleton

Should it become a magazine for male/female dialogue?

I have noticed as I put together the last few issues that I don't have the enthusiasm for working on *Everyman* that I used to have. I procrastinate and avoid getting down to it, which is the main reason why it is reaching readers late these days - fully a month late for the issue you hold in your hands. I'm not enjoying it much any more. The reason for my loss of energy and enthusiasm is that I no longer have a vision for the magazine that inspires me. To understand this, bear with me while I recount a bit of *Everyman* history.

In issue #20, back in July 1996, I wrote in an editorial entitled. "What do Canadian fathers want?"

"... And so we have reached the situation of today, where women have most of the legal rights associated with parenting and men most of the responsibilities, while the popular perception is that the opposite is true.

"I believe that men are being called to confront this inequality. However, the journey for each man involves freeing himself from the moral power of the mother, internalized in childhood and now projected onto all women. The mythopoetic men's movement is one approach to this work, where the focus is on healing men's internal wounds in community with other men. Until that work is well advanced, these men know in their gut that they lack the soul-strength to address societal injustices, where that would involve standing up and refuting the shaming of women. Mythopoetic men's work is an important aspect of men's journey to wholeness. And *Everyman* is dedicated to supporting and encouraging it.

"The men's rights movement is taking the complementary route to wholeness. These men focus on the external injustices and prejudices that men (and women) face. The pain that these men feel is often externalized as anger or fear: their internal woundedness remains. These men know in their gut that they will not have the strength to go inside and feel their pain until they have worked through some of the external political inequities. This is also important work. It is, of course, the other side of the coin to the mythopoetic movement. *Everyman* is dedicated to supporting this work as well. And, most importantly, to building bridges between the two, finding ways to help them recognize each other as brothers, as two halves of a single movement.

“We will know that work is succeeding, the two halves joining and approaching wholeness, when men begin to articulate powerful, positive visions of masculinity. Such visions will build on a strong and unashamed foundation of internal wholeness, and will look out into society to articulate inspiring vision of real social justice and political process.”

Over the last ten years, this was the overarching vision of *Everyman*, to speak to and to serve both of these movements, and to encourage them to see each other as allies. More than that, I hoped to help them to come together. I hoped that some in each group would transcend the negative judgements that kept them in separate camps and join to form the nucleus of a truly healed and inspired gender equality movement.

This vision has failed. Over the last five years, virtually all of the men’s rights advocates have dropped their *Everyman* subscriptions, leaving only the mythopoetic men remaining as subscribers. Those focussed on healing their internal wounds. The dialogue that *Everyman* tried to host between these two groups is over.

I must accept some of the responsibility for this. If there was a defining moment for *Everyman*, it was probably in issues #51 and 52, which had large features focussed on the events of 9/11. In the editorial to issue #51, October/November 2001, I wrote,

“As usual, there are two major directions to choose between. One is to try to restore a sense of security through greater control: threats of war, stepped up intelligence, more security screening, etc. That’s the most of what we seem to be doing so far. But as Wendell Berry observed, as long as people and wealth and power are concentrated, we will remain vulnerable.

“The other direction is more interesting. It is to embrace our vulnerability and begin to live by faith within it. It is to begin to let go of our reliance on external wealth and power and importance, and begin to cultivate spiritual wealth, personal empowerment, psychological maturity. Some commentators have begun pointing in this direction. Indeed, all of the articles sent unsolicited to *Everyman* in the days after the attack, and which form the special feature “Our Response to Terrorism” in this issue, urge us to proceed in this direction - *a significant indication and affirmation of the strength and maturity of the Everyman community.*” [emphasis added]

My own bias toward inner work, my implied judgement of the external approach to dealing with threats, is apparent in the editorial, and that bias has undoubtedly played a part in making *Everyman* a less welcoming place for right wing ideas and for men’s rights political advocates.

I also want to acknowledge that it hasn’t been all my doing. While it is clear that my roots are in the mythopoetic, the personal work camp, I am more supportive of the men’s political rights advocates than *any* other mythopoet I know. As a liberal, I am more supportive of the conservative viewpoint than any other liberal I know.

But it was not enough. Following my debate about 9/11 with John Murtari in issue #52, he called my ideas about how we might proceed against terrorists “ridiculous.” That charge

symbolizes for me the gulf that exists between the right and left wing camps in the men's movement - both the transcendent difficulty of bridging it, and the fact that I and *Everyman* have failed to do so. Political conservatives, men's rights advocates have voted with their feet and rejected *Everyman* seeing it as too touchy-feely, too feminine. Trying to appeal to both groups, *Everyman* has ended up being supported by only a tiny minority within either.

But without that visionary goal of uniting the two sides of the men's movement, what is *Everyman* for? What else is worth the expenditure of so much time and energy? For the magazine pays me nothing (it barely covers its costs), and takes fully half of my available time. And it seems to me that I am a bridge builder: just serving the personal growth side of the movement with a vehicle for news and dialogue doesn't inspire me to invest much dedication and commitment. And so my energy and enthusiasm is waning fast, and unless a new vision is found that inspires me, I expect I will cease publishing *Everyman* soon, perhaps by year end.

One possibility is that the magazine could broaden itself to address men *and* women, that it could become a vehicle for *gender* dialogue. That would mean a name change, I imagine, and probably bringing in a female co-editor, or some such structural change to address the issue of gender balance in its production process. (If you are a woman who would like to get involved in co-producing such a magazine, please contact me.)

But is there a market for such a magazine? How would new female subscribers be found? Do enough men and women really want a magazine that attempts to host dialogue for gender understanding and reconciliation? Are there enough women ready to engage in a real dialogue with men - a dialogue in which they, as the gender currently on the moral pedestal, generally perceived as innocent victims, would seem to have more to lose? Are there enough men who really want an authentic dialogue with women? What do you think? If *Everyman* went down this path of real gender dialogue, would it end up once again with a tiny group of supporters on the margins of the men's and women's movements? Please contact me and share your thoughts about these important questions What should *Everyman* become?

Or, if there is anyone male or female, who wants to take the magazine over, either because they like the way it is now or because they have a vision for the magazine that inspires them. Please contact me. I am very open to the idea of passing the torch.

I want to end this piece with acknowledgement and gratitude for the wonderful support that *Everyman* subscribers, contributors and columnists have offered over the years. The magazine has been unique in the movement for the breadth of its vision and the versatility of its arguments. It was honoured in 1999 by the National Coalition of Free Men, the largest men's movement organization in North America, with their "award of excellence in the advancement of mens' issues". They described it as "the pioneer publication ... ? *Everyman* has also outlasted all other independent men's movement publications in North America and (as far as I know) the world - not a small achievement considering how strongly counter-cultural its message is. If the end is approaching, we have held a worthy vision with courage and with honour. Thank you all.

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