

What's wrong with being an apostle?

Letter Published: Thursday, May 29, 2008

Re: "Solution of l'Anse-à-l'Orme woods in the works: mayor" (Letter, West Island Gazette, May 22).

I am a green enthusiast and proud of it.

Ste. Anne de Bellevue Mayor Bill Tierney's letter is full of generalizations and sweeping statements. He paints with a broad brush when he refers to greenies as apostles with religious zeal.

Zealots we are not. They do not know when to stop and are too extreme for their own good. However, what is wrong with being an apostle as long as it is used towards a positive end? Enthusiasts like Abraham, Moses, Ruth, Esther, Jesus, Peter, Lincoln and Martin Luther King are generally viewed as positive role models by millions of people. An interplay of emotion and logic defines us as human beings and separates us from the machine and the robot.

The environmental movement is far from irrational.

U.S. President Teddy Roosevelt and award-winning scientist Dr. David Suzuki are among its pantheon of heroes. Environmentalism bases its reasoned ideas on peer-reviewed studies founded on assessable and empirical evidence.

In my world, not all development is evil. Sustainable development depends on such factors as location, transit oriented development, an integrated work and living space, use of green technologies, etc.

Brownfields should be favoured for redevelopment and rare urban greenfields, like l'Anse-à-l'Orme or Meadowbrook, must be conserved.

According to Greg Searle of One Planet Living, environmentally-friendly development "... that shrinks the average North American's ecological footprint down from five planets to the necessary one..." is the only logical way to go.

Anything less is suicidal.

Technology has made it possible to rise above and dominate our fellow creatures like the bear, deer, bird or cat. But what gives us the right to totally destroy their habitat, their home, our home?

Many consider their home to be empty and void of value.

But, is a vacant wooded area truly forsaken?

Increasing the municipal tax base very often becomes the end all and be all even though once municipal services and other externalized costs are added to the bill, very little profit is left over. We place a value on material goods like fuel, food, property and shelter. But what of the intangibles, like open space, clean air, sunlight and quality of life? We need space to feel free, air to breathe, sunlight to nurture ourselves and give us Vitamin D. You cannot buy these at your local Wal-Mart.

We cannot separate ourselves from our natural surroundings, however, we doth protest. We are them. We are part of the circle of life, just as the tree, blade of grass or streak of lightning.

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