

# Paths of Life

## No Room For God?

There is a most disconcerting statement in the story of the Nativity. St. Luke says bluntly there was "no room" for God in the village inn at Bethlehem. It does seem a paradox that when He who set the stars in their courses chose to make a visit to his planet, He should be greeted by a sign, "no vacancy."

What is the situation in the twentieth century? Dietrich Bonhoeffer has said that the world has come of age; it has arrived; it no longer needs God. He sights these historical developments. In theology it has been asserted by some that "reason is the sufficient instrument of religious knowledge." In ethics "moral principles" are substitutes for the "ten commandments." Politics has been liberated "from the tutelage of morality" and in philosophy "there is a growing tendency to assert the autonomy of man and the world . . . There is no longer any need of God as a working hypothesis, whether in morals, politics, or science."

And yet God's coming to man today is not unlike the "event" which Christians commemorate at Christmas time. Into the world, which thought it could do business without Him, God came in the Incarnation — The Word became a human being, and did dwell among men. But how unlike a God, born of a human being and residing in a manger! What ignominy, and too profane for one so great! Except for a few He slipped into history unnoticed.

But it didn't take long before His coming was felt, for His method of operation was an irritant. He began acting like GOD, (included in the attributes of God are goodness, truth, justice, and love.) He began healing the sick, looking out for the poor, and defending the defenseless. He shared in the stuff of which life is made — experiencing pain, taking on suffering, forgiving, loving. And He announced the "good news" of the Kingdom.

And although the common folk responded and "heard Him gladly," He was finally "edged out of the door and on to a cross." There really wasn't room for God in the world!

Today we have progressed (?) Man has finally gotten up the courage to declare his autonomy. As Bonhoeffer has said, the world has come of age and does not need God. There seems to be no more room for Him today than on the eve of the Nativity. True, the world, at least Western culture, gives lip-service to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and a token recognition of His precepts. But

and large mankind has declared its autonomy.

This does not mean that God does not exist; nor does it mean that humanity does not need Him; nor does it mean that we must necessarily attack this autonomy. But it does mean that we must understand that God can and does accomplish His will by quite a different means and approach than we consider workable and effective. "God is weak and powerless in the world, and that is exactly the way, the only way, in which He can be with us and help us. Matt. 8:17 makes it crystal clear that it is not by His omnipotence that Christ helps us but His weakness and suffering." — Bonhoeffer.

This season of the year, known in the Christian world as Advent and Christmas, not only declares that God did make His entrance once but that He does so again and again to as many as do receive Him. Matt. 18:3 suggests that the way to receive Christ is to become like little children; the way is that of repentance, which is ultimate honesty. In such hearts God is pleased to dwell.

The content of Christmas further suggests that there is actually an alternative force. Wordly powers have over the centuries resorted to arms to settle their differences. And today it is believed that we can achieve peace by flexing our nuclear muscles. The megaton is made the symbol of peace. Christians assert that the "manger" is the symbol of peace. God comes to dwell with us in heart and society. "No one may hear His coming, but in this world of sin, where meek souls will receive Him still, the dear Christ enters in." It is a unique way (and strange to most), but it works; for peace is impossible without reconciliation.

Even as God identified Himself in Christ with humanity, so we, as Christians, are invited to align ourselves with God in His sufferings. We are challenged "to participate in the sufferings of God at the hands of a Godless world." (Bonhoeffer)

Christ says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in . . ." It is finally up to us whether or not we want God (Christ) to dwell among us. Is there room in your life for God?

(Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a Lutheran pastor in Germany who because of his opposition to the Nazi regime was imprisoned, and hanged just five days before the allied forces liberated the area.)

Alvin M. Petersen  
Campus Pastor, NLC  
Lutheran Student Foundation



### The University

## Season's Greetings

BY TOM EASON



Setting:  
Santaland  
North Pole 1  
Earth  
Time:  
1961 years  
after Christ

Compressed by the bustling commercial complex to the south, the Santaland & Far Northern Railroad and the sprawling Santaland Interstate, the Christmas IDEAS department was stuffed into a variety of sedate buildings which had been designed by efficient Santaland architects of the Santielus Victorious period. The purpose of the IDEAS department was to originate and develop new ideas designed to spread happiness and enlightenment throughout the world of mortals. In order to facilitate these developments, the department had been divided into sub-departments such as the Engineering S.D., the Business S.D., and Law S.D.

However, all was not well in Santaland and as Santa (or Big Red as he was affectionately known in the IDEAS department) sat pondering, several problems entered his kindly reflections. The girl elves who volunteered to work in the IDEAS department often thought too much about the boy elves. The boy elves often thought too much about the girl elves and promotions to higher pay. Union elves spent a great deal of time trying to recruit new members and non-union elves spent a great deal of time trying to antagonize the unions. All of these problems were overshadowed by a production problem: The IDEAS department was not producing ideas to solve the problems of men. True, the elves were sometimes lazy and the supervisors often did not stimulate their minds, but Santa knew that the production problem stemmed

in part from the use of the idea-evaluation system which had been designed by an efficient Santaland psychologist of the post-Santielus-Thorn-dikeus period. The psychologist had proposed a system in which the supervisor was to assign an evaluation number from one to nine to each idea submitted by the elves, with the highest numbers going to the best ideas. In this way, the elves could determine their relative

progress in contributing to the efforts of the department. On paper, it was an efficient system. The problem was, of course, that for many of the elves, the evaluation (Continued on Page 4)

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### Letterip

The Daily Nebraskan will publish only those letters which are signed. They may be submitted with a pen name or initials. However, letters will be printed under a pen name or initials only at the editor's discretion. Letters should not exceed 200 words. When letters exceed this limit, the Nebraskan reserves the right to condense them, retaining the original view.

#### House Officer Objects to BAIN

To the Editor:

In regard to the letter submitted by BAIN's-ites: I was quite surprised to read the opinion stated in the letter which was signed with the name of my house for two reasons.

First, the opinion that was stated in the letter is not an official policy of Benton house as was implied; and the person who submitted the letter had no power to state that it was.

Secondly, I was not aware that it is the practice of the Daily Nebraskan to publish letters

to publish letters which appeared to be statements of house policy but which were not signed by an officer of the house. Sincerely, Rod Marshall  
President of Benton House

#### Thanks to Staff

Dear Mr. Beatty:  
Many thanks to you and to your staff for letting the students and faculty know about the "Latin American Prize" and the Spanish Fellowship program.

We hope to continue increasing our work and with your help, I am sure it will be successful. Sincerely yours, Roberto Esquenazi-Mayo

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