

The Gateway

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For Sincere And Shallow

Campus Christian groups are to be commended for organizing and bringing to the University of Alberta a lecture-discussion series dealing with certain concepts of the Christian faith.

"Reality—what is it?"—This will be the theme of the talks, to be held at 4:30 p.m. every day next week in Convocation Hall. A University of Washington Presbyterian minister—Earl Palmer—will present the lectures.

In part, Mr. Palmer will attempt to explain general Christian thought and approaches to contemporary world problems. He will also deal with the understanding of Jesus Christ in history.

But why do the sponsors for the talks deserve praise?

The main reason is that religion is generally not held in high enough regard at this university, and the sponsoring organizations this year have made an excellent effort to revive *serious* student thinking about specific religions and religion in general.

Associated here is the fact that many students and faculty members have a tendency to ridicule practically all religious beliefs on grounds that "we come to university to question."

True, we come to university to

question, but the questioning must be done in a serious, respectful manner. All too many are those yet-immature individuals who declare themselves atheists or agnostics because they believe it is the fashion to do so. We would generally place these "fashionable" non-believers and questioners in the category of pseudo-intellectuals—of which we have many on this campus.

We must add, though, that there are a few persons who have, through long and intensified thought and heart-searching, come to be agnostics or non-believers. Here we will not concern ourselves as to whether they are right, but only with the fact that they are sincere, and a small minority.

Not so sincere is the larger group of self-styled agnostics and atheists who feel it is a sign of the times to renounce God or religion. This larger group is composed of the shallow bookish intellectuals who parade round the campus in their fashionable way.

We would suggest that as many students as possible avail themselves of the opportunity to hear Mr. Palmer and to question him. It may not be "fashionable" to do so, but it could be the basis for sincere, intelligent discussion and reappraisal of our views regarding God and religion as a whole.



YOU'RE PROBABLY WONDERING WHY I WAS ASKED TO SPEAK ON THIS PROBLEM . . .



"WALLS DO NOT A PRISON MAKE"

Spectrum

The Campus Power Elite

A good case can be made for the point of view that we get the kind of student government we deserve. Student government on this campus is dull, unimaginative, and in some cases inefficient.

This is not, however, the sole fault of the people who are in power now, although they are the ones who are dull and unimaginative. They are an ingrown and self-satisfied group, but the only reason they have become this way is because their power has been unchallenged.

Consider the following: at least as far back as 1956 Students' Council has been dominated by the fraternities. In this period there has never been an executive with less than 70 per cent fraternity membership. There has never been a council with less than 60 per cent fraternity membership. All major committees dealing with student affairs have always had at least a near majority of fraternity members.

Why, however, should this affect the quality of student government? For a number of reasons. The fraternity population is a relatively small proportion of the campus, and has a fairly common social background. That is to say, fraternity people mix more among themselves than the rest of the students. Their activity revolves more around the frat house than the campus as a whole. There is more communication among them than any other groups, leading to a greater uniformity of opinion and action.

Hence, if any particular policy is supported by a group of frat members, they have an advantage in getting this policy accepted by the people influential in student decision making. If the fraternity group which controls student government is efficient, things get done (whether

we actually want them done or not). If it isn't efficient, which is the case here, things get done at best in a bungling way.

This is a major reason for the foul-ups in SUB expansion. It is a cause of numerous other policy bumbles in the last few years.

It is not, of course, in the best interests of representative democracy for us to be represented by such an unrepresentative group. It makes even less sense that they represent us so badly.

The time has come for a reappraisal of student politics. No longer should we be content to let The Gateway alone keep a watchful eye on council for us. Students pay a quarter of a million dollars in Students' Union fees. It is about time they decided how it is spent. The first item on an agenda with this as the aim is the electoral defeat of the fraternity group.

This of course is not going to be easy. The fraternities are well organized, have a lot of money, and a lot of people to help them. They have houses to centre their campaign near the campus. But the fraternities are not, of course, invincible. A strong, grass roots organization bent on restoring democracy to campus politics could knock them out, if enough students took interest in it. Students on this campus are well enough aware of the stagnancy in their government that issues would be easily taken before them, and well received.

Last year in the Students' Union elections we saw the first sign of dissatisfaction with the fraternity establishment. Then we still had to choose between one frat member and another, however. Perhaps this year the voter of the student body will be presented with a real choice.

FABIUS