Man's definition of God reduces his humanity, says Muehl

BY MORAG FULLLOVE
Thresher Reporter

God is dead for modern man because he has reduced his essential humanity to the point that he is unable to comprehend the eternal in the temporal.

By denying God's complexity in order to fit Him into an understandable pattern, man also ignores the complexity of life, diminishing both himself and the meaningfulness of his actions.

This was the basic cycle pointed out by Dr. William Muehl in three Religious Emphasis Lectures last Tuesday through Thursday.

The Murderer

The Yale Divinity School professor entitled his series "How Jesus Murdered God," although more properly he might have said "How Man's Image of Jesus Murdered God."

Christian man has tried to build an ethic based on the model of the historical Jesus, yet consistently confronted by the impossibility of emulating Him, his attempts to follow this model only result in frustration and cynicism, Muehl explained.

Futile Acts

If Jesus is the complete revelation of God's will to man, man's action can only seem so inferior by comparison as to make all action futile. Modern society increases the difficulty of following Christ's example.

It is obvious Christ would never have been able to hold a position of social responsibility since he refused to be guided by the canons of judgment, yet to do so would have been less than compassion. Christ was totally self-giving, the embodiment of the mercy of God.

Isolation

Muehl pointed out in his final lecture that when man accepts this ethic he loses power in ethical decisions because others will not take him seriously. This ethical isolation coupled with the inability to attain perfection, frustrates all action, defeating the purpose of any ethic.

The idea of a God of true mercy reduces life to a spiritual interlude from which escape is desirable. Life becomes flat, shallow, and common place compared to God's kingdom.

Conversion

The high point in life becomes conversion; the rest of life a holding action. This view, according to Muehl, undermines all human activity and rejects aspects of life which man finds pleasant and natural.

When virtue thus becomes associated with weakness, man clings to his vices, and, finding it impossible to move up by his own power, moves down.

Hypocrisy

Concentrating on the idea of a God of mercy, men try to honor God by stressing their