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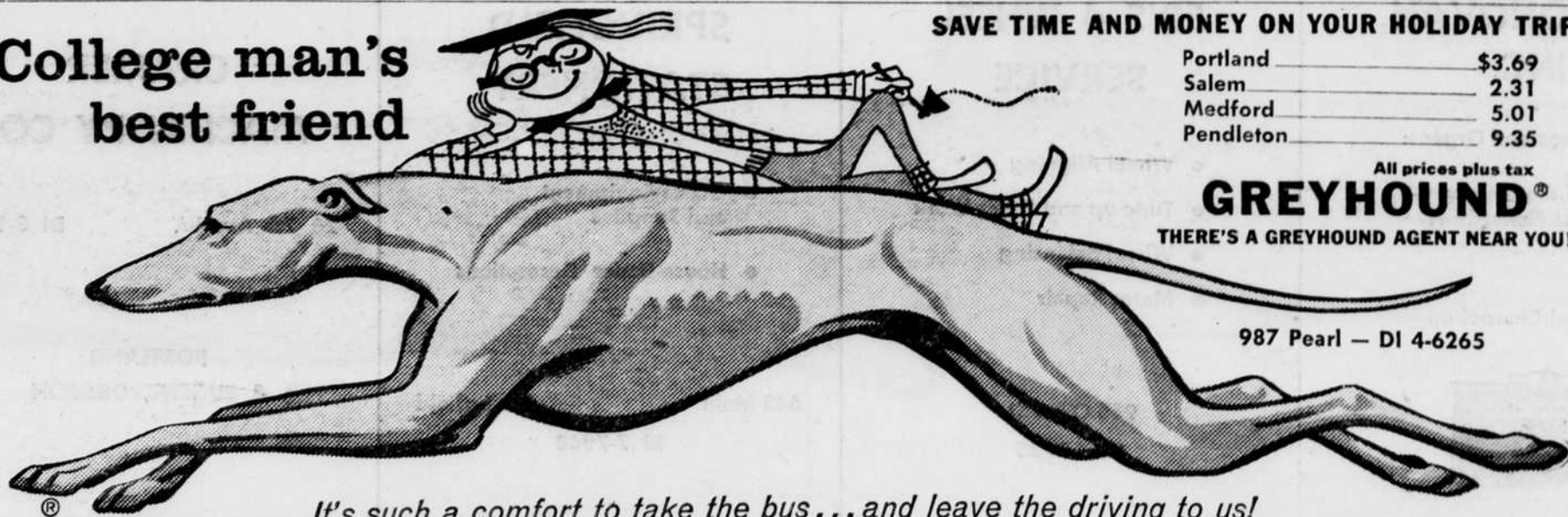


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# Christmas: Ideas Changing

BY KAY JOSSELYN  
Religious News Editor

"Merry Christmas, everyone!" This can be heard on many parts of the campus right now. With this happy season comes the usual round of parties, activities, and, here at school, more studying and exams.

In all the excitement of the holiday season do we remember the reason for Christmas? Or is it forgotten in the shuffle of things, the rush for last minute items in the store, the parties, the books? Do college students remember the religious origin of Christmas?

College students, in general, express a need for religion as part of their lives, a "need to believe." Many of these people feel that their present status in religion is a fair guide for their conduct, and many attend church services with fair regularity.

### Situation Affects

But how does the campus situation affect the religious ideals of a student during the four years he is a part of an institution of higher learning? Each person differs in his reaction to this situation, and many solve their problems in different ways.

Practically every person, at one time, takes a long look at religion and reorients himself to it. For the college student, this most often happens during his time at school. It seems to be an almost universal experience as many students will themselves admit. Suddenly, the religion a person holds seems to be "full of holes," and a serious questioning attitude is taken toward religion. The truth is sought.

For some, the questions begin in a social science course. Although faculty attempts to present material objectively, this is not completely possible in most instances. Inquiring students will see religious questions reflected in much of the material that is presented.

For others, the questions begin in social discussions. Sometimes the inquiry takes the form of learning more about the background of the church with which one identifies himself, according to local ministers, who answer inquiries of this type.

Many new interests face a student entering college. These tend

to distract from the church and an organized religion. Studies, activities, and houses leave little time, apparently, for participation in activities of the church. Many students do take the time to attend church services on week-ends but leave their religion for just that time. Students themselves recognize this deficiency quite often.

Instead of integrating religion with every aspect of the campus life, it is "turned off" on week days. God is recognized as being present and guiding, but few students seem to relate the practical course of their everyday living with their religious beliefs.

There is conflicting evidence on whether the campus atmosphere tends to change religious beliefs, or whether these beliefs remain, for the most part unchanged during the college years. Some studies, referred to in Phillip Jacobs "Changing Values in College" indicate a rising interest in religion among college students.

These also indicate the possibility that upperclassmen believe in a more impersonal God than freshmen do. For the main part, studies on this question have indicated that religious beliefs and values have remained persistent throughout college years.

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