

One of the first problems encountered by God when he physically came to earth was the lack of space. There wasn't much room for him. Luckily, he was small – small enough for a teenage womb and an animal trough.

Despite the welcome, Christ's crude Bethlehem accommodations were soon welcoming and making room for others – local hill shepherds and foreign kings. When he started his ministry he called people to be with him and he made space in his company for fishermen, insurgents, tax collectors, mystics and women. On his lap he made room for children. In his agony he made room for a thief.

Making room was his life. He made room in his heart, in his schedule and in his scruples. He is now making room in paradise, that we all may be with him there. (The One denied a room by a few of us is preparing rooms for a whole bunch of us – how like Him.)

How could such a small, in-a-trough-one-minute-in-Egypt-the-next refugee have so much room for so many – even for his enemies? He brought his own room. The incarnation, observed C. S. Lewis, was not so much heaven coming to earth as it was heaven drawing earth up into itself. The inside of that stable suddenly became bigger than the outside – bigger than the whole universe.

All things, by the blood of Christ, have been reconciled and drawn back into God's kingdom. And we, by giving Jesus a small place in the hovel of our lives, find ourselves placed in his glorious spaciousness where there is room to stretch, to share and to spare.

How do we make room for God and for others (an inseparable pair) amidst the increased clutter, clamour and cramp of Christmas? By remembering that the first Christmas brought us room – immeasurable room and unlimited resources – enough for extra time to meditate, extra patience in a store, extra driving, an extra chair at the table, an extra gift under the tree, extra expenses, extra energy to sing and to smile, to listen and laugh. Room for all.

There are people from other countries and cultures who have travelled to our busy, bustling, Bethlehemish towns. At the best of times there is very little room for these people. There is less at Christmas time. "We have our traditions. And, after all, Christmas is about family." Has Jesus come to your family? Has he made room in your family? Enough room for another family who have no family? Room for a family who would like to experience Christmas? Room to spare?

Could your home be a "Holiday Home"? Could you host a newcomer to Canada this Christmas?