

A New Greeting

1103

Eph. 1:2

5th Ave State St. 12/27/53

Yough Chatham 7/4/54

Newtonville 12/30/56

West End Amsterdam 12/29/57

Trinity Albany 12/28/58

#1103

A NEW GREETING

"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Ephesians 1:2

Read Ephesians 1:1-2

I. What do we say when we meet each other?

A. Some just nod

B. Others say

1. Good-morning
2. How do you do?
3. Hello!

a. "Hello" evolved from various early words or sounds used to attract the attention of persons at a distance.

b. Possibly the ancestor was the sailors "ahoy" which was said to have been originally the war cry of the Vikings

c. It was used in 1878 when the first experimental telephone switchboard was installed at New Haven

d. For a year or two persons answered the phone by saying: "Are you ready to talk?" or "Are you there?"

e. Thomas Edison is believed to have been the first person to use Hello on the telephone.

f. In 1941 US War Department ordered all its employees to give their names in order to save time.

C. The Jewish greeting was and is "peace" - shalom. When I used to call Temple Beth-el in Troy the Rabbi's secretary always said: "Shalom, This is Temple Beth-el."

D. Now when we write we always begin a letter with a greeting

1. Dear Sir:

Gentlemen:

Dear Friends:

E. Paul adds something to the old Jewish greeting and makes a new greeting, one that was copied by other early Christian writers

1. To the Hebrew word "shalom" he adds the Greek word "charis" - grace

2. So in the Ephesian letter we read this morning -- "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ"

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II. John Gossip says: "The central Christian word is 'Grace'"

A. He defines grace better than all the theologians:

"And that means what can be had from God for nothing, for the accepting, for the carrying away."

B. Here is the "good news" of the gospel

1. Moffatt translates Luke 2:10

"This is the good news I am bringing you, news of a great joy that is meant for all the people."

2. We tend to communicate only bad news

a. A telegram - usually we think of bad news

b. A phone call in the night

Call someone up at 2 in the morning and say: Hey there--I've got good news for you!

c. The newspaper--"Read all about it!" But it is usually bad news.

C. Basically Christianity is good news for all mankind

1. We do not minimize the fact of suffering

2. But we do stress joy -- Grace and peace be to you from God our Father.

3. God has done something for our world!

4. The tragedy is that so many Christian do not act as if this were true.

5. Dr. Pusey the new President of Harvard writes:

"We have been too pre-occupied with the secular order, the accumulation of knowledge, and with good works." (A Religion For Now)

D. Albert C. Outler in "Psychotherapy and the Christian Message" writes:

1. "Christianity is a religion of high hopes, of great expectations!... The Christian wisdom points to a power at work in life and history, beyond our full knowledge, possession or manipulation... It calls this power God's grace."

2. He writes further: "There is, of course, nothing of grace that is merited or controlled by man... THE ESSENTIAL QUALITY OF CHRISTIAN LIVING IS AN UNANIMOUS CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S PRESENCE AND ACTION IN LIFE, GIVING MEANING TO ALL WE CAN DO WITH HIS GIFTS AND SECURING THE VALUES WHICH WE HAVE COME TO CHERISH THROUGH HIS LOVE."

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E. Dr. John A. Mackay in "God's Order", a book about the Letter to the Ephesians says "The Ephesian letter... provides TRUTH WITH A LIFT... The truth we need is truth that sings."

III. Now we are getting ready to start a new year

A. What shall be our greeting, as Christians? Happy New Year? NO!

B. As Christians we should have a new greeting We have been to Bethlehem - we have seen a star in the sky - we have heard the angels sing

C. "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!"

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"Grace be to you, and peace,
from God our Father,
and from the Lord Jesus
Christ." Colossians 1:2

I. Introduction - What
do we say when we
meet each other?

A. Some just nod

B. Others say

1. Good morning
2. How do you do?
3. Hello

C. How did "Hello" originate?
(Book of A. Thomson Things are)

1. Evolved from various
early words & sounds
used to attract the
attention of persons
at a distance.
2. Possibly the answer
was the sailors Ahoy

3. This nautical hail
is said to have been
originally the usage
of the Vikings

4. It was used in 1871
when the first experimental
telephone switchboard
was installed at New
Haven.

5. For years two per-
sons answered the phone
by saying "Are you ready
to talk?" or "Are you
there?"

6. Thomas Edison is
believed to have been
the first person to use
Hello on the telephone

7. In 1871 U.S. War Dept.
ordered all its
employees to give their
names in order to save
time.

D. The Jewish greeting was
and is "peace" - shalom.

E. Paul adds something
to his old greeting
and makes a new greeting

1. He adds - Grace
2. "Grace be to you and
peace, from God our
Father, and from the
Lord Jesus Christ."

John Gossips says: "The
central Christian word is
grace."

A. He defines grace
better than all the
theologians: "And
that means what
can be had from God
for nothing, for the
accepting, for the
carrying away."

B. This formula "Grace to
you and peace" so
found in all of Paul's
letters.

1. The Greek greeted
people with the word
χαίρει which meant
joy.

2. Paul by using
Χαίρει - grace.
that beauty which
brings delight to the
beholder.

C. Here is the "good news"
of the gospel.

1. Moffatt translation
Luke 2:10

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I am bringing you,
news of a great joy
that is meant for all
the people."

2. We tend to
communicate

only bad news.

- a. A telegram
- b. A phone call in
the night
- c. The newspaper

Read all about
it! ^{Opportunity} ^{Christianity}
3. Basically Christianity
is good news for all
mankind

- a. We do not
minimize the fact
of suffering
- b. But we do stress
joy - Grace and peace
be to you from God
our Father - God
has done something
for our world!

The tragedy is that
too many
Christians just do
not act like it
were so!

How we are greeting
ready to start a new
year.

A. As Christians we
should have a new
greeting.

B. Wagsay New Year -
No.

C. Grace and peace
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus
Christ.

The Hope Of The World

THAT CHRIST MAY DWELL IN YOUR HEARTS
 "That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith"
 Ephesians 3:17

I. What is the purpose of Christmas?

- A. To improve business?
 1. We are exploited at Christ time
 2. Lights in the business section
 3. Christmas carols blaring from store fronts
 One merchant played only marches. Tendency to march right by!
- B. To get, or for that matter, to give gifts
 1. Certainly the exchange of gifts is a part of Christmas we would not want to lose
 2. Yet we have stressed this out of all proportion
- C. To remember our friends--to renew friendships
 1. This is a valuable part of Christmas
 2. To go through our cards just to see who is thinking of us.
- D. To have a family gathering
 1. Surely this is a by-product of Christmas
 2. In our country it plays a very large part
- E. To sing Christmas music?
 1. You see the Carols were written originally to express something--not to give us an opportunity to perform
 2. We sing to glorify God
 3. When we use the Christmas story just as an occasion to put on a pageant or to sing a program we are no better than the merchant who tries to draw you into his store with a Christmas carol!
- F. Actually all of these things are by-products and lose their value when we fail to remember the real purpose of Christmas.

II. The purpose of Christmas is to help us remember a personality. It is to remind us that the historical appearance of Christ gives human life its ultimate meaning. The author of the letter to the Ephesians puts it this way: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith." (Eph. 3:17)

- A. The whole drama of Christmas is played to this end.
- B. What a truth it reveals! That God enters history--not as an observer, to watch--not as a dictator, to control--but rather as a Man to participate in the historical process itself.

III. There are four Concerns--

- A. Our first concern, then, should be our own relationship to this great revelation
 1. We are so concerned about the innkeeper--the shepherds--the wise men.
 2. We need to be concerned about ourselves
 3. The church sensed this when it evolved the Advent season
 4. Dicken's Christmas Carol is significant because Scrooge saw HIMSELF in relation to life.
 5. If Christ dwells in our hearts we continually measure OURSELVES against his goodness

- B. But the Christmas revelation not only challenges our self-complacency it also challenges our values

1. G.K. Chesterton wrote:

"The crazy stable close at hand,
 With shaking timber and shifting sand,
 Grew a stronger thing to abide and stand
 Than all the square stones of Rome."

2. Not a palace, but a stable.

a. Perhaps today we should say--not a laboratory

b. Not an atom or hydrogen bomb, but a baby

3. The Christian revelation is a direct challenge to all of the values of our day

bigness
 power
 force
 efficiency

4. I heard some people talking: "You know what they say is out of this world?--it is that show they put on in Radio City at Christmas. 'You know with the Rockettes--and everything.'"

a. The idea of a "big show" was quite absent that first Christmas

b. Remember that the Christmas story was written or told by people who knew Jesus and they could think of Him only in a humble setting.

5. If Christ dwells in our hearts we value the grain of mustard seed
 the leaven
 love
 sacrifice.

- C. In the third place the Christmas revelation is not intended to add to our burdens

1. Christ is the Light
2. Christ is the Life
3. Christ is the Door

-2-

-3-

4. He himself declared that His Yoke was easy and his burden light
5. Christ, dwelling in our hearts gives us a new strength

- D. And finally, the Christmas revelation demands our Commitment.

1. We are not merely spectators at a drama, but participants in a movement
2. My friends who went to "see a show" missed the whole point.
3. After all Christmas is your response to God's message. Nothing is cheap at Christmas.
4. J. H. Oldham has a book called "Life is Commitment"
 1. He says: "Unless you commit yourself, unless you stake everything on the truth of what you say, you cannot be a witness"
 2. He says further: "one cannot live without committing oneself and the more whole-heartedly one commits oneself the more one enters into the fulness of life."
5. A little girl pushed her way up on the stage of a church that had just given a Christmas play. All of the characters were still there waiting to have their pictures taken. This little tot would not be denied. She could not reach the manger but she gave her lollipop to an angel and said: Give it to the baby Jesus for when he grows up!"
6. This is the end of the whole story--have we committed ourselves? to anything?
 Shepherds bowed in adoration
 Wise men brought forth treasures.
 Albert Schweitzer is in Africa

This is the hope of the world. That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And that you and you and you will commit yourselves to him

"Out of our crowded lives we come
 Chanting our Christmas songs
 Gentle and kind, with a Christlike mind
 Joining the reverent throngs,
 Back into life again we go
 Back where he strives with men
 When hate blasphemous and lust tramples his dreams
 Say...will we serve him then?"

PRAYER

O God, thou art our salvation; we will trust, and not be afraid. Thou art our strength and our song. We thank thee for the birth of Jesus, that thy Spirit was upon him, that he was anointed to preach good tidings to the poor, to set at liberty them that are bound. Enable us, as we worship thee, to kindle with the joy of simple shepherds long ago at the thought of all that came to the world in the birth of Jesus.

Our Heavenly Father, let us not forget Thee. In our busy preparations and joyous festivities, may we not crowd Thee out of our thoughts as Thou wast crowded out of the inn on that first Christmas. Draw us back to Thy manger, rekindle our sense of wonder and worship. Restore our faith in the things we cannot see or hear: the star that shines in the souls of men, and the song of peace that lingers on in a world of strife.

If we be in a far country grant us such wisdom that we may lift up our eyes to see that star which shines from the darkest skies, and send us forth on that pilgrimage of the soul, and in the fullness of time we may stand where the highest peace is known in the humblest place, and thy great purpose incarnate in the mystery of the helpless Child.

Kindle within us the spirit of renewal, that we may live and move and have our being wholly in the realm of love, whose foundation was so humble and whose reaches so boundless. Help us to forget hatreds and enmities. Place our sorrows and disappointments in the background of a larger hope, that at this time of rejoicing and gratitude we may sense the outward reach of new opportunities and noble beginnings.

Teach us how to make precious gifts out of whatever serves the needs of thy children, and if we be wise help us to kneel humbly in wonder lest thy grace come not in to bless us. As the shepherds returned to their tasks, may we return to our daily work feeling that heaven is not so far away, and praising Thee that thou dost reveal thyself not only in temples but also among the common things of life.

Help us to lead Christlike lives. Take from us doubt and despair, deliver us from anxiety, and give us the happy countenances which come of faith. Make the good will of angelic song a reality in us.

"In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for thou alone, O Lord, makest me dwell in safety."

Tranquilizes a faith.

*"Cheered by the Presence of God I will do each moment without anxiety, according to the strength which He shall give me, His work His Providence assigns me."
-Dunstan*

FOREST AVENUE METHODIST CHURCH
Amsterdam, New York

December 29, 1957

Eleven O'Clock

ORDER OF WORSHIP

ORGAN PRELUDE

Mrs. Edward Going

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN 90 "As With Gladness Men Of Old"

UNISON PRAYER

Our Heavenly Father, who didst cause light to shine out of darkness in the advent of our Lord Jesus Christ we humbly confess our transgressions and implore Thy forgiveness. We are ashamed of that within us which maketh neither for good will to others nor for growth in goodness in our own lives. We beseech Thee that the Spirit of Christ may be born anew within us, and that we may glorify His nativity with hearts of compassion, deeds of kindly service, and the spirit of good will toward all mankind; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

SILENT PRAYER WORDS OF ASSURANCE THE LORD'S PRAYER

ANTHEM "As Lately We Watched" Senior Choir

*THE RESPONSIVE READING First Reading Page 621

*THE GLORIA PATRI
THE SCRIPTURE READING - *Epheians 1:1-14*

THE MORNING PRAYER Choral Response

PRESENTATION OF OFFERING

*THE DOXOLOGY AND PRAYER OF DEDICATION

*HYMN 100 "O Little Town of Bethlehem"

THE SERMON The Rev. Harold W. Griffis

*RECESSIONAL HYMN 111 "Fairest Lord Jesus"

*THE BENEDICTION Choral Response

*ORGAN POSTLUDE Mrs. Edward Going

* Indicates the congregation will stand

THE ALTAR FLOWERS today are given in memory of Mrs. Harry McNeill by Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Ritchie and Margaret.

A CORDIAL WELCOME is extended to all who worship with us today. All visitors are requested to register in our Guest Book before leaving.

Calendar For The Week

TODAY 7:00 P.M., Junior and Senior High Youth Fellowship Meetings.

THURSDAY 7:15 P.M., Senoir Choir Rehearsal

FRIDAY 8:00 P.M., Basketball Game at the Y. M. C. A., Forest Avenue vs. Grace Methodist.

SATURDAY 8:00 P.M., Married Couples' Meeting in the Pine Room.

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WE ARE HAPPY TO WELCOME the Rev. Harold Griffis, our District Superintendent, to our pulpit today, who will bring the morning sermon.

NEXT SUNDAY MORNING, our Lay Preacher, Robert B. Brumagim, will bring the morning sermon. Let's give our support to Mr. Brumagim next Sunday morning.

WE WELCOME Wilson Delamater to our church as director of the Senior Choir. We are glad Wilson is back with us again.

OUR NEW CHURCH SECRETARY is Mrs. Edward Levandoski and she has already begun her duties of collecting notices and material for the weekly bulletins. Until our new minister, the Rev. Royal Fishbeck, arrives, Miss Therza Hugo and Mrs. Levandoski will have charge of the bulletins. If you have notices, please hand them to one of these persons by noon on Thursdays.



Christianity on the Campus

WHATEVER IS TRUE, *whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.*
—Philippians 4:8 (R.S.V.)

The freshman entering college is often bewildered by the amount of new information thrown at him from almost every field of human knowledge—sociology, biology, philosophy, business administration, and many more.

The new facts usually challenge the notions that he brings to college, and sometimes even his religious faith. "Just how does all this fit into my understanding of God?" the student asks.

Feeling that the church, as well as the student, has a stake in the answer, Methodists have established over six hundred Methodist student centers at state, private, and church colleges. These centers are staffed with committed Christian ministers and lay workers who are eager to help students with their personal problems, to encourage wholesome social activities, and to stimulate religious growth equivalent to their intellectual growth.

One of the results of this program is that thousands of young laymen are coming from colleges and universities into our churches each year with a zest for work and a desire to serve Christ. Many of the home churches encourage such interest by praying for their students away at college, by sending them letters, church news, and Christian magazines, and by observing Student Recognition Day.

As the number of students going to college increases, the challenge will become greater for the church to follow its students and encourage them in the Christian way.

What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, do; and the God of peace will be with you.

—Philippians 4:9 (R.S.V.)

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METHODIST
BULLETIN
LITHO IN U.S.A.
EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS



A New Year for Christ