

in eternity, and that the only realities are those that we can appreciate in our present temporary habitation. Hence the current hysterical preoccupation with physical security, particularly in relation to the hydrogen bomb, which infects the lives of many professing Christians. When, we may well ask, have Christians been promised physical security? In the early Church it is evident that they did not even expect it! Their security, their true life, was rooted in God; and neither the daily insecurities of the decaying Roman Empire, nor the organized persecution which followed later, could affect their basic confidence.

Peace Prayer

By John Foley

We celebrate the Lord's Supper weekly—and in a circle, at the end of worship. A word of direction is given, and with this everyone stands and moves to the walls. The cup is passed in two forms: in a chalice and then in small individual cups. You are free to choose.

And as this is the Supper of the Lord Christ, please listen to the instructions we give as to what qualifies a visitor to participate. **But whether you intend to take communion or not, please join us in the circle.**

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First Sunday in Advent



His
name shall
be
called....
Prince
of
Peace....
- Isaiah 9:6 -

He will judge between the nations
and will settle disputes for many peoples.
They will beat their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks.
Nation will not take up sword against nation,
nor will they train for war anymore.
-Isaiah 2:4-

Old Orchard Church

November 28, 2010-10:15 to 11:50 a.m.

Celebrating Our Messiah Jesus: Prince of Peace

The Roman empire trumpets peace when there is none,
While slave and soldier, prince and plebe mark weary years,
But in the East, a blazing host calms shepherd fears,
Speaks peace, good will, and tells a curious tale of one
Who, fit to rule on Caesar's throne,
Calls want, blood, tears, and us his own.



Today's Scripture

Old Testament Lesson: Isaiah 9:1-7

Gospel Reading: Luke 1:67-80

Sermon Series on Ruth

“Naomi: White Knuckle Faith and the Doctrine of Perseverance”
Ruth 1-4

Ron Lutjens, senior pastor, preaching

The Dangers of Advent

By J. B. Philips (1963)

By far the most important and significant event in the whole course of human history will be celebrated, with or without understanding, at the end of this season, Advent. The towering miracle of God's visit to this planet on which we live will be glossed over, brushed aside or rendered impotent by over-familiarity. Even by the believer the full weight of the event is not always appreciated. His faith is in Jesus Christ—he believes with all his heart that this man, who lived and died and rose again in Palestine, was truly the Son of God. He may have, in addition, some working experience that the man Jesus is still alive, and yet be largely unaware of the intense meaning of what he believes.

Does he, for instance, as he daily treads the surface of this planet, reflect with confidence that “my God has been here, here on this earth”? Does he keep his faith wrapped in a napkin as a precious thing and apart; or does he allow every discovery of the truth to enlarge his conception of the God behind this immensely complex universe? And does he then marvel and adore the infinite wisdom and power, which so humbly descends to human stature? We rejoice in the fact that God has actually been here—and that is one half of the meaning of Advent.

But there is another half. The eleven, who had had six weeks' experience of the risen Christ, were told after he had finally left their sight, that **“This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”**

As a translator of the New Testament I find in it no support whatever for the belief that one day all evil will be eradicated from the earth, all problems solved, and health and wealth be every man's portion! Even among some Christians such a belief is quite commonly held, so that the “second advent” of Christ is no more and no less than the infinite number of “comings” of Christ into men's minds. Of course, no one would deny that there are millions of such “comings” every year—but that is not what the Christian Church believes by the second advent of Christ; and it is most emphatically not what any writer of the New Testament ever meant in foretelling his second coming.

The New Testament is indeed a book full of hope, but we may search it in vain for any vague humanist optimism. The second coming of Christ, the second irruption of eternity into time, will be immediate, violent and conclusive. The human experiment is to end, illusion will give way to reality, the temporary will disappear before the permanent, and the king will be seen for who he is. The thief in the night, the lightning flash, the sound of the last trumpet, the voice of God's archangel...are pictures of something sudden, catastrophic, and decisive. By no stretch of the imagination do they describe a gradual process.

I believe that the atheistic-scientific-humanist point of view is, despite its apparent humanitarianism, both misleading and cruel. In appearance it may resemble Christianity in that it would encourage tolerance, love, understanding, and the amelioration of human conditions. But at heart it is cruel, because it teaches that this life is the only life, that we have no place prepared for us