

HARVEST FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

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M E R R Y C H R I S T M A S !

The people living in darkness have seen a great light; and for those living in the shadow of death – upon them, the light has dawned.” (MATT 4:16 / re: IS 9:2)

BEFORE CHRIST

It would be difficult for most of us, especially American Christians, to comprehend the darkness of the world into which Christ was born. Historian John Mc Manners writes that the Classical world “*regarded mercy and pity as pathological emotions – defects of character to be avoided by all rational men.*” Can you imagine - considering mercy and compassion pathological?

AFTER CHRIST

When the Light entered the world, He immediately began to expel the darkness. When Jesus ascended back into heaven, His followers continued the same. Christians are proud of how the Early Church spread His light.

THE REALITY OF CHRISTMAS SPREADS

Christians are proud of the report of the great theologian Tertullian (155-220). He became a Christian at age 40. He was the first of the Church Fathers who used the term ‘Trinity.’ He writes: “We are but of yesterday but we already fill your cities, islands, your camps, tents, palace, senate forum. We have left only your (*pagan*) temples.”

His report was furthered substantiated by Eusebius, who wrote the first history of the Christian Church (c 342). He states that the gospel spread through the world like a *sunbeam*.”

We are proud of the charitable work of the early Christians. Their generosity was such that it acutely disturbed the evil Emperor Julian, the Apostate, so called by the Christians because he was raised in a Christian home but left the faith. He writes in c 362 to the head pagan priest lamenting: “It is disgraceful that....the impious Galileans (Christians) support not only their own poor but ours as well, all men see that our people lack aid from us.”

We are proud of a monk named Telemachus. He began a long walk from Asia to Rome. He didn’t know why but felt led by the Holy Spirit. At that time, multitudes flocked to the Coliseum to witness and cheer for the brutal gladiatorial games and the killing of Christians. Telemachus, led by the Spirit, attended an event. So horrified, he jumped into the arena shouting that this barbaric ‘sport’ must be stopped in the Name of Christ. Telemachus was martyred on the spot. The next day, the Emperor issued an edict forbidding the games forever!

In 452 AD, Attila the Hun is about to sack a defenseless and beleaguered Rome. Leo I confronts the barbarian and talks him out of it! Attila leaves with his army. We could go on and on; too numerous to mention. Above all, we are most proud of the One True Light. After all, Jesus is indeed is the reason for the season! *Merry Christmas!*

H A P P Y N E W Y E A R !