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SHORT TITLE

A THEOLOGY FOR RACIAL INTEGRATION

Schulze, STM, 1964

Thesis presented to the Faculty
of the Episcopal Seminary, St. Albans,
Department of Dogmatic Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Degree of
Master of Sacred Theology

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CHRIST AS CREATOR: A THEOLOGY FROM PAUL FOR
RACIAL INTEGRATION IN THE CHURCH BASED
ESPECIALLY ON COLOSSIANS 1:15-20

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Exegetical Theology
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Sacred Theology

by
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June 1964

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CHAPTER I

THE ISSUE DEMANDS A BIBLICAL CHRISTOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to relate a New Testament

to the explosive issue of race relations in the

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We shall examine the race issue by looking at the very center of all theology, namely, Jesus Christ Himself. We shall ask the question, "Who is Jesus Christ?" in terms of his relationship to a distressed world¹ of people and human situations. Does Jesus Christ reduce situations of distress today? Does a biblical Christology speak to the matter of

¹In the light of Paul's theology in Colossians which we shall examine, he would probably prefer the term "universe" today.

CHAPTER I

THE ISSUE DEMANDS A BIBLICAL CHRISTOLOGY

The purpose of this thesis is to relate a New Testament theology to the explosive issue of race relations in the world today. If the Church of Christ is to be the light and leaven of the world, then it is safe to say that she should bear much responsibility for alleviating the current racial unrest. The writer will operate primarily in the field of exegetical theology, with complementary references to the fields of dogmatic and practical theology.

We have assumed the task of interpreting a fundamental teaching of Scripture in the general terms of a theology of race and, in particular, of a theology for racial integration within the Church. This basic teaching we subsume under the heading, "Christ as Creator."

We shall examine the race issue by looking at the very center of all theology, namely, Jesus Christ Himself. We shall ask the question, "Who is Jesus Christ?" in terms of his relationship to a distressed world¹ of people and human situations. Does Jesus Christ redeem situations of distress today? Does a biblical Christology speak to the matter of

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existing racial barriers? Does the God Who created a unified world concern Himself with racial discrimination in His redemption of this world? Positive answers to such questions will be attempted in the following three chapters.

We are suggesting that the most valid approach to the problems of discrimination is derived from a proper Christology. If we are to begin with God rather than man, then we can well begin with the incarnate God as Creator of a new unity in His Body, the Church. In Christ as Creator we are able to see God's ultimate revelation of His creative will and man's moral responsibility to that creation.

By returning to a Christological view of Creation such as that held by the Church Father Irenaeus,² we hope to discover some possible theological guidelines for the Church as well as indications of the power that is hers as she faces the challenge of the present racial crisis. Our research basically involves one of the great biblical treatments of the doctrine of Christ: Colossians 1:15-20.³

Before we examine and apply this material, we shall suggest several preliminary theological problems that may

²Gustaf Wingren, Man and the Incarnation: A Study in the Biblical Theology of Irenaeus, translated from the Swedish by Ross Mackenzie (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1959), pp. 24-29, 52-53, 70-84, 119-148, 213.

³Unless otherwise indicated, scriptural references throughout this thesis will be to the RSV.

lie behind some of the church's neglect of the concept, "Christ as Creator," which, in turn, may account for some of the past indifference to the race problem on the part of the churches. After this we shall attempt a brief analysis of the current need in scholarship of applying this doctrine to the task of racial integration in the church.

One thing that presents a problem in coming to grips with the New Testament concept of Christ as Creator is the trinitarian distinctions of the catholic creeds. In an effort to distinguish the three Persons of God, we run the risk of diminishing the unity of their purpose. Although the Athanasian Creed urges us to remember "the Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the Persons nor dividing the Substance," the catechism of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod titles the first article of the Apostles' Creed, "Creation."⁴ The Son's work in creation, as mentioned in the Nicene Creed ("by Whom all things were made . . .") or His creative role in the miracles and in the entire work of redemption is almost lost entirely.⁵ The Son of God becomes synonymous

⁴ A Short Explanation of Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism: A Handbook of Christian Doctrine (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1943), p. 9 and p. 90.

⁵ Ibid., With the following exceptions: John 1:3 is chosen to illustrate that Creation is one of Christ's "divine works," (p. 104), and Matthew 28:18 to substantiate the fact that He "rules over all creatures. . . ." (p. 108.)

with the Jesus known in the Gospels, the Father with what is read in the Old Testament, and the Holy Spirit with church history. Christ as Creator or re-creator, a concept so thoroughly biblical, is forgotten. But how can a theology of Christ speak to such an issue as racial integration in the church? What business has a first century Redeemer with such a twentieth century situation?

Formulations of a theology of creation risk certain pitfalls. One of these lies in a static conception of the creation of the world.⁶ Being obsessed with the pristine origin of the world, some scholars have confined the Creator's activity to a six-day week "5,968" years ago.⁷ This tends to make God a distant deity whose finished work is to be admired, rather than the eternally creating God to Whom all history must be credited as "His story." The God of creation is the God of preservation, as Luther explains in the first article of the Creed. It is often overlooked that "faithful neighbors" are as much God's creation as the rib of Adam, and unloving neighbors today are as much the concern of the creative

⁶ For this and the following paragraph I am largely indebted to Gustaf Wingren, loc. cit.

⁷ Holy Bible, Authorized Version. Concordia Edition dates the Genesis account at 4004 B.C. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, n.d.), p. 1.

Christ as the unloved lepers He once healed.

Another reason for the failure of Creation theology to involve Christ has been the ignoring of the conflict between God's creative will and the destructive forces of evil. We fail to understand God as Creator until we deal with the existence of the powerful anti-Creator. The full import of what God wants to do in the world is not grasped if we ignore His role as "counter-Creator": His creating of what He called "good" to stand over against what we know as evil,⁸ the light to oppose the darkness,⁹ the surrounding fruit trees of Eden over against the middle tree,¹⁰ the Seed of the woman to overcome the seed of the serpent,¹¹ the resurrection of the second Adam to undo the death of the first,¹² the suffering of believers to complete the sufferings of Christ for His people.¹³ A theology of creation without tension and struggle will not find Christ relevant to contemporary issues involving conflict, nor regard Him as effective in situations today that are bereft of the Creator's life. A revival of theological interest in the conflict of our Lord's ministry (against Pharisees, Tempter, plotters) could provide another opportunity to apply this teaching to the subject which concerns us in our thesis.

⁸Gen. 1:18.

⁹Gen. 1:2-3.

¹⁰Gen. 3:2-3.

¹¹Gen. 3:15.

¹²I Cor. 15:22.

¹³Col. 1:24.

The Thomistic dichotomy of man as body and soul and the Gnostic view of soul as being superior to body have also contributed to the failure of theology to explore the full potentials of the creative work of Christ so richly proclaimed in the Bible. These false views have produced a popular notion that the church's major concern is with the souls of people and that her business should be to redeem these souls, rather than whole persons with physical, psychic, and social as well as spiritual needs. Until only about a decade ago attempts within The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod to construct a theology of race relations were therefore labeled as "social gospelizing."¹⁴ Efforts on the part of many church people to go beyond "preaching, teaching, and reaching" were met with frowns that indicated too much concern for non-spiritual matters. A concept of Christ as Creator of the whole man for the whole life could possibly have helped to broaden such limited concerns and make the Church of Christ more the means for redeeming people as whole persons.

¹⁴ An example of such attacks would be a review of My Neighbor of Another Color, circulated in August 1942 which accused this treatise on race relations in the Church of advocating "social gospel," and "miscegenation." The reviewer seriously considered race segregation as an adiaphoron that had "nothing to do with the spiritual truths which Christianity teaches." [Reviewer's name withheld.] "A Review and Opinion on My Neighbor of Another Color (Andrew Schulze, Author)," dated August 21, 1942. In possession of and available from Andrew Schulze, Valparaiso, Indiana. (mimeographed)

Another popular idea that has hampered the progress of the Church in its obligation to create unity through Christ has resulted from the improper division of the functions of Church and State. This is the notion which holds that the Church's business is souls and the State's responsibility is bodies. Consequently, the responsibility for racial equity lies with the State, and any movements to rectify wrongs are extraneous to the Church's mission to "save souls." The following is a typical statement of this position:

Being an adiaphoron, racial segregation is subject to the laws of the State. For this reason there is one problem of the State and one of the Church which must be kept carefully separate from each other because the aims and means of each are not the same, and because one of these problems concerns only Christians, while the other concerns all who live together in a given community.¹⁵

Such logic has produced in many quarters an image of the church as being aloof from the injustices of society and unconcerned about the need of minorities to enjoy a full share in the privileges of the State. This is to say nothing of the common failure of the organized church to extend her own privileges to the disenfranchised within her own communities.

One more problem with which theology must deal in applying God's creation to Christ and His Church is the

¹⁵ Gerhard Huebener, "Scriptural Principles Concerning the Racial Problem Controversy," The Confessional Lutheran XVI, no. 1 (January 1955), 9.

contemporary institutional view of the Church. This emphasis has become standard for much institutional activism and lack of real Church activity.

The most conscientious parish priests and ministers are tempted to fall victims to it [institutionalism], at the expense of nurture and even of vital pastoral activities; laymen can become so organized and their activities so routinized that the machinery of church life, smoothly oiled, takes the place of the deity in many a hierarchy of values. Spiritual energies are dissipated.¹⁶

The success for which the church is striving is called "soul winning and keeping." The command of the Creator-Christ to witness for Him wherever there are needy people¹⁷ is commonly understood as a command to improve statistics. The commission to make disciples of all men is applied to all middle-class men of the same ethnic and class origin. The Lord's will to create a body of dissimilar yet interdependent members is all but forgotten in much ecclesiology. In practice, the institution of the church has over-shadowed its witnessing mission. Marty summarized this situation in his analysis of the suburban church:

the do-it-yourself cult [is] turned to religious ends. . . . the suburb also poses "a threat to the church's witness to Christ's lordship"; it "has introduced its concept of success into the very center of church life." Advancement, monetary and numerical extension of power --these are the measures. "'Salvation' and 'redemption' are disturbing to suburbia . . . the biblical faith is

¹⁶Martin E. Marty, The New Shape of American Religion (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959), p. 135.

¹⁷Matt. 28:19-- πάντα τὰ ἔθνη

rarely met with. . . . Yet the church's insulation from the world was not created by suburbia; it has found its consummation there."¹⁸

These theological problems bespeak a crisis for the church as she confronts our present age of racial tensions. That is to say, the challenge of existing in a predominantly colored world, where the dogma of white supremacy is upheld, is basically a theological one. The writer will attempt to face the issue by formulating a biblical Christology in which we see the Creator-Christ offering through His Church a divine strategy for racial integration.

Let us briefly analyze the current need to apply such a theology to the matter of race and the church. The world in which the church finds herself today has set the standard of racial inequality. At best, the world has created the principle of "separate but equal." At its worst it has fostered greed, hate, and silent apathy.¹⁹ The world has been the sponsor of uncharitable stereotyping, prejudice-prompting propaganda and bold practices of discrimination in employment, housing, education, suffrage, and public accommodations.

Injustice against the Negro in the United States is vast in its scope and multiple in its origins. Like

¹⁸ Marty, op. cit., p. 100. Quoting from Gibson Winter, The Christian Century, (September 28, 1955).

¹⁹ Kyle Haselden, The Racial Problem in Christian Perspective (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), pp. 96ff.

the banyan, it spreads over a great area and sends down many roots. The extent of such oppression, reaching into every phase of Negro life, is common knowledge.²⁰

What about the people of the Church who are to be in yet not of this world? According to critics, the world seems to have gotten hold of the church,²¹ apparently using her to proclaim the status quo teachings of her demonic sponsorship. Haselden, looking at the church's own practices since the Civil War finds she "has been and is the mother of racial patterns, the purveyor of arrant sedatives, and the teacher of immoral moralities."²² American Protestantism has been remarkably slow in facing the dilemma of the relationship between white and Negro people.

Protestantism is deeply involved in this problem. It cannot escape responsibility in relation to its solution, a responsibility of which it is becoming aware but in the discharge of which it has made only dim beginnings. The record of its policies and practices makes it evident that in many respects it has contributed to the seriousness of the very problem it should be helping to solve.²³

²⁰ Ibid., p. 90.

²¹ Cf. Louis Lomax, The Negro Revolt (New York: The American Library, 1963), p. 188; also Peter Berger, The Noise of Solemn Assemblies (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1961), pp. 17-90; and Marty, op. cit., pp. 122-33.

²² Haselden, op. cit., p. 14.

²³ Frank S. Loescher, The Protestant Church and the Negro: A Pattern of Segregation (New York: Association Press, 1948), p. 27.

Until only a decade or two ago the silence of theological seminaries²⁴ paved the way for the church's sins of omission, while officialdom and regional leaders followed suit. The resulting inadequacy of the local clergyman in facing the rising tide of racial unrest is vividly portrayed in a study of the ministers of Little Rock, Arkansas, where the positive influence of the clergy was notably lacking during the 1957 crisis:

The minister finds himself unprepared for the new role. He is trained and experienced in the role of coordinator, evangelist, and administrator. He knows what the specific criteria are for success in these roles, but he has no comparable training, experience, and criteria of success for the social reformer role. "Actually, we've been taught that controversy is unchristian," pointed out one pastor. "I knew I should be doing something," confided another, "but I am afraid I simply do not know what to do."²⁵

Until the middle 1950's very little was being spoken in the official circles of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod on the race issue. Perusing two important synodical periodicals, the Concordia Theological Monthly²⁶ and The Lutheran

²⁴Evidenced by the fact that Negroes were refused admission in theological institutions of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod as late as 1947. Cf. letters dated August 1946 from the president of Concordia Seminary, Springfield, Ill., and registrar of Concordia College, Fort Wayne, Ind., to a Negro applicant's pastor, the Rev. Andrew Schulze, stating that the student could not be received. Letters in possession of and available from recipient, Valparaiso, Ind.

²⁵Ernest Q. Campbell and Thomas F. Pettigrew, Christians in Racial Crisis (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1959), p. 130.

²⁶Concordia Theological Monthly, I-XXVII (1930-1956).

Witness²⁷ we find few positive articles until after 1954, the year of the May 17 Supreme Court Decision. Even after favorable resolutions were passed in convention, official publications remained silent.²⁸ As a result, congregations by the score failed to address themselves to the spiritual and social needs of approaching minorities until in frustration they sold their property to these groups.

In the meantime, the church's struggle to realize her own intrinsic nature does not seem to have kept pace with the inevitable meeting of brothers--black face to white face, and it no longer seems strange to hear prophets say that this confrontation could some day mean a world-wide explosion.²⁹

What has theology had to say about the church's role in this crisis? Although church leaders, especially those of the ecumenical movement, have been making pronouncements for almost twenty years, Christological theology has not fared as well in speaking relevantly to the field of race relations. The earliest effort in Missouri Synod circles to arrive at this was My Neighbor of Another Color.³⁰ The author combined

²⁷The Lutheran Witness, LXVIII-LXXV (1949-1956).

²⁸Andrew Schulze, "Can a Church Paper Remain Silent?", The Vanguard, VI (January 1959), 1 and 4.

²⁹Lomax, op. cit., p. 260.

³⁰Andrew Schulze, My Neighbor of Another Color (St. Louis: published by the author, 1941).

a New Testament analysis with such modern terms as "integration" and "discrimination." Until the 1960's, writers of various Protestant affiliations and disciplines tended to be diagnostic or, at best, moralistic in tone. Although many works have made excellent contributions to the discussion of the sociological implications of the Gospel, their theology has been basically deductive. Little was done exegetically. If Christ was mentioned, it was His teachings, His occasional example or statement, rather than His entire creative person and work that was applied to the issue. Examples of these are Crook,³¹ Mays,³² and Pope³³ and even much writing from the World Council of Churches.³⁴ There were some exceptions--smaller efforts that did more justice to New Testament

³¹Roger H. Crook, No South or North (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1949), passim.

³²Benjamin E. Mays, Seeking to be Christian in Race Relations (New York: Friendship Press, 1957), passim.

³³Liston Pope, The Kingdom Beyond Caste (New York: Friendship Press, 1957). Pages 143-160 deal with false biblical notions, set down several paragraphs on Christology, and devote the rest to interpreting Acts and Pauline theology of the Church. At page 156 the central message of the New Testament is clearly stated but no elaboration is made as to how this applies to God's new creation of the Church for eliminating racial discrimination.

³⁴An example: Daisuke Kitagawa, "Theological and Non-Theological Factors in Race Relations," The Ecumenical Review, XIII (April, 1961), 335-41. (Kitagawa admits that the writers are generally not exegetical and seem to be groping; p. 335.)

theology, notably George Kelsey's The Christian Way in Race Relations³⁵ which applies the concept of redemption to the American discrimination system, but does not spell out any implications for the local parish encountering integration. Within Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod circles there were the pamphlet, The Christian and Race,³⁶ and the reliable offerings of various Lutheran theologians available in the Proceedings of the annual Valparaiso University Institutes on Human Relations,³⁷ and from beyond the confines of the Synod the work in pamphlet form titled, Grace and Race in the Lutheran Church,³⁸ a Lutheran reaction to Pope's work³⁹ which emphasizes the creative possibilities of the Gospel in bringing all men into the unity of the Church.

In the 1960's more explicitly biblical studies have appeared; however, the same weakness is evident in this

³⁵George D. Kelsey, "The Christian Way in Race Relations," The Christian Way in Race Relations, edited by William Stuard Nelson (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948), pp. 29-48.

³⁶J. Smallwood, M. Scharlemann and P. Johnson, The Christian and Race (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955), passim.

³⁷Available from the Lutheran Human Relations Association of America, Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana; as well as in the collection of Concordia Seminary Library, St. Louis, Missouri.

³⁸Alf M. Kraabel, Grace and Race in the Lutheran Church (Chicago: National Lutheran Council--Division of American Missions, 1957), passim.

³⁹Pope, op. cit., passim.

literature. In the view of this writer, solidly Christological theology which involves the redemption and applies it to the matter of racial integration and the church is still scarce. Evidence of this lack might be seen by perusing three of the most reputed works on the issue:

1. The title of Kyle Haselden's book (by the author's own admission)⁴⁰ indicates, despite many excellent insights, its theological limitations. Haselden's "Christian perspective" is based on a deductive treatment of biblical material with little supporting exegesis and no clear statement on the atonement or application thereof.

2. James Sellers⁴¹ develops an excellent psychological "theology" from what he sees as God's speaking through the events and conditions of recent times in the southern part of the United States. Pleading for a return to the "wisdom" of Rauschenbusch's social gospel, he asks for a re-emphasis on Calvin's stress on the transcendence of God. The writer goes no farther with the gospel of redemption than to make it a definition of man: that "which tells us that men have fellowship with each other in Jesus Christ."⁴² Dr. Martin

⁴⁰Haselden, op. cit., p. 12.

⁴¹James Sellers, The South and Christian Ethics (New York: Association Press, 1962), passim.

⁴²Ibid., p. 97.

Scharlemann's criticism of Sellers' typical Protestant writing (which tends to concern itself with mere neighborliness) summarizes the lack of the biblical theology we are looking for:

One whole dimension gets lost in this shuffle; namely the church's responsibility to be, within itself, that new community which God has created in Jesus Christ to transcend the tensions and differences that prevail in and among men. That is to say, the Church as such has a claim on our faith and way of life quite distinct from the mere general question of neighborliness. In fact, the Church's primary task is to be that community which God has called out to manifest and practice a new quality of life. . . .⁴³

3. Will D. Campbell⁴⁴ diagnoses the American church's past role in racism and segregation, and also concludes that "the sovereignty of God is the beginning and the end of Christian race relations."⁴⁵ The writer makes one passing hint at a need for a theology "of the new creation in Jesus Christ," but only in the oversimplified terms of a hoped-for unsegregated conclusion,⁴⁶ and a later statement that this conclusion has not been reached.⁴⁷

⁴³Martin H. Scharlemann, "A Look Around: A Book From the South," The Vanguard, IX (November 1962), 3.

⁴⁴Will D. Campbell, Race and the Renewal of the Church (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), passim.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 58.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 54.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 60.

It is therefore our conviction that the field is ripe for a New Testament approach that operates with the great biblical theme: "Christ as Creator." We shall not base our material on what Scripture or Christ has said on race relations, but rather on What He, our creating Lord, is.

We have chosen a section of Paul's letter to the Colossians that was brought to the attention of the Christian world by Dr. Joseph Sittler in his opening essay at the 1961 meeting of the World Council of Churches in New Delhi. Urging the church to consider Christ as Creator, "that in everything he might be pre-eminent,"⁴⁸ Dr. Sittler said:

the root-pathos of our time is the struggle by the peoples of the world in many and various ways to find some principle, order, or power which shall be strong enough to contain the raging "thrones, dominions, principalities" which restrict and ravage human life.⁴⁹

Pleading that the doctrine of redemption through grace be brought within the scope of the doctrines of creation and nature, Sittler said:

a doctrine of redemption is meaningful only when it swings within the larger orbit of a doctrine of creation. For God's creation of earth cannot be redeemed in any intelligible sense of the word apart from a doctrine of the cosmos which is his home, his definite place, the theatre of his selfhood under God, in corporation with his neighbour, and in caring-relationship with nature, his sister.⁵⁰

⁴⁸Col. 1:18.

⁴⁹Joseph Sittler, "Called to Unity," The Ecumenical Review, XIV, no. 2 (January 1962), 183.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 178.

We are indebted to the above document for the inspiration to recognize in Colossians 1:15-20 the universal nature of Christ's atonement that would include the world challenge of racial togetherness. Since, as we have indicated, the past neglect of our theology to cope with this pressing matter has been due in part to our modern Gnostic separation of the Church's concern from such "non-spiritual" interests as ethnic discrimination, we could settle for a no more relevant Scripture than Colossians, for Paul here makes it plain that the Church is God's only cosmic agent chosen "to reconcile to himself all things. . . ."51

To show that Christ is the Creator adequate for the challenge of racial integration, let us now examine (1) His Creator-nature, (2) the creative aspects of His incarnation, and (3) His work of creating the one Body, the Church.

The opening verses of the paragraph from Colossians refer to our Lord as Creator, and the latter verses to His creative work through the Church. In using these opening lines in the next chapter, we shall try to demonstrate that He qualifies as Creator by nature of His relationship to God and to the universe. In the following chapter we shall examine the incarnation in terms of its creativity. In the final chapter we shall look at the Church as the contemporary

⁵¹Col. 1:20. The words underlined (τὰ πάντα) occur five times in this paragraph!

instrument of His creative work. By so doing we hope to make clear that Jesus Christ is central to the cause of integration both by virtue of His nature and His work. Our division is basically that of the first two catholic creeds, an effort to see Jesus as Creator in the universe, in the redemption, and in the Church. Thus, as we explore the timeless credentials of the world's Savior, we shall see that His very existence in time is for the purpose of creating his separated people into one new "integrated" Body.

CHAPTER II

CHRIST AS THE CREATOR-GOD

If we are looking for a reliable theology to meet today's challenge of racial integration in the Church, St. Paul provides the answer for us in verse 17.

"He [Christ] is before all things (πρὸ πάντων)." Christ the Creator-God is the source of our theology. He Who was before created what we know exists today, and in Him we are able to understand what the creation should be. If we could know what existed at the beginning we would be able to judge what things should be like today. As Bonhoeffer would say, we are not able to understand the origin of things except from Christ.¹ His priority over all things makes Him the Lord of all things. He is the only valid starting point we have for any theological subject, since, in the words of the Nicene Creed, He is the "God of God . . . by Whom all things were made." What comes after the Creator-Christ is subject to Him, and any consideration such as the vital one we are undertaking should be informed by Him, not merely in any words that He might address to our urgent problem of the 1960's, but in His very being as Creator-God.

¹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Creation and Fall: A Theological Interpretation of Genesis 1-3 (London: S C M Press, Ltd., 1959), p. 8.

The Colossians in their day were also bothered by social problems. The third and fourth chapters of Paul's epistle are devoted to them. But the origin of problems among people stems from an inadequate regard for the Creator-Christ, or an ignoring of Him Who is "before all things." In verse 18 of chapter one Paul very appropriately calls Christ "the beginning," (ἀρχή) or, as we could translate it, "the beginning principle," by and under Whom all things must be ascertained. What firmer indication have we that any theology of the Church and race should begin with Christ as Creator?

The first two chapters of this epistle are devoted to a refutation of the "Colossian heresy"² which either disregarded Christ, or perhaps thought of Him as being only one of "certain spiritual agencies, intermediate beings between God and man, . . . the instruments of communication and the objects of worship."³ Although the last two chapters deal with social problems in Colossae, Paul's first thrust is towards a proper and effective Christology. In seeking to establish a theology of race relations, Colossians therefore teaches us to confront those concepts that evade the

² This heresy was possibly influenced by an incipient Gnosticism which regarded God as unknowable and absolutely good, from Whom, after a series of "emanations" there came matter, which is evil. Cf. J. B. Lightfoot, D.D., Saint Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon (London: Macmillan and Co., 1879), p. 73.

³ Loc. cit.

Creator-Christ, and once again place Him "before all things" in our thinking. Whatever things we must deal with in discussing social problems among the churches, our primary pursuit is to set forth the creative person of Christ at the very outset. Nor is this Christ merely God's most recent exposition for the current scene. He is the Creator of the components of the contemporary situation! To regard Christ before all things is to postpone all ethical judgments until we have established Who He is. This Christ priority is not an innovation in the writings of Paul. It is intrinsic to the ministry of our Lord Himself, Who taught people that He was to be the object of their concern, sometimes even before their own personal concerns would be fulfilled.⁴ The Church is interested in Christ "before all things," because

it sees the creation sub specie Christi; better still in the fallen, old world it believes in the new creation world of the beginning and of the end, because it believes in Christ and in nothing else.⁵

Does not our problem of church integration then also fall sub specie Christi? Does He not qualify for being the primary consideration? He is not our universal priority simply because in terms of time he precedes the issues of the universe. The Creator Who came before all things is the

⁴Cf. His ministry to the disciples and the people of Sychar in John 4.

⁵Bonhoeffer, op. cit., p. 7.

Christ Who now also "holds all things together."⁶ All the created elements of the world continue enduring under His preserving power. Without Him the world would fall apart.

Already we are tempted to allude to the words of the next verse and to our fourth chapter in which we shall be saying that the Creator-Christ uses His Body the Church to hold things together. Suffice it to say here that in speaking of the Head of that Body, we are already speaking of a unifying factor that alone is capable of holding the often-dismembered elements of the world together. Despite all opposing wills and forces within and without His Body, it is His determined will that all things be constituted in Him Who is their creator. It is also the will of the Creator to unify. This will to unite is implicit in the word *συνέσκηκεν* ("holds together") written by Paul as he applied himself to the disunity at Colossae.⁷

Once we have established Christ as antecedent to and preserver of all things, it is safe to proceed to another aspect of His creativity. In verse 15 Paul calls Him "the image of the invisible God."⁸ What does this expression mean? Mankind cannot see what an invisible deity has in

⁶Col. 1:17b.

⁷Cf. Col. chapters 2-4 and the fact that disruptive influences seem to have gotten within the fellowship.

⁸*εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου.*

mind for the world. This was the bewildering plight of the Colossians and could possibly be interpreted as Christianity's dilemma today as it faces the combustible tension between the majority and minority groups in our world. The invisible God is an unknown, or distant, and inoperative deity. If He has not appeared on the scene He must be unrelated to the issues of man. If He has not directly shown Himself to man, then He has not revealed a plan, nor manifested Himself as Ruler in the plan. But God is on the scene. He has presented Himself to us in the "image" (Εἰκόν) of Christ.

Another way of saying this is that Christ has come to "project the image"⁹ of God's will for His people; i.e., what God wants to do can be observed in what Christ does. We might say that looking at Christ is like looking at God's "character"¹⁰--what we can accept as the very nature and behavior of God Himself. Jesus is God's genuine revelation. In Him we can understand what God wants to be doing in His world. We would have no knowledge of the Creator's attitude

⁹The verbal idea emphasizes the verbal-noun character of Εἰκόν, more clearly understood in the noun "reflection" although the latter loses some of the uniqueness of God's "image-projecting" nature by its connotation of repeating the original image.

¹⁰I conclude this from χαράκτηρ which appears only in Heb. 1:3 but as it is used there seems closely allied (Cf. Lightfoot, op. cit., p. 145) to God's activity of revealing His will to us in Christ.

toward such a contemporary crisis as racial segregation if we did not have God present in the Creator Christ. The commonly understood notion of the word "image" is that of an artificial reproduction representing in physical form the original bodily appearance. This has made of the biblical concept a lifeless and static thing, just as the copper image of the Abraham Lincoln penny does little more than remind Americans of a dead emancipator. And many unmoved people have circulated these images. God's character is not of the dead past. So Christ is the genuine living God. "He in whom God is adequately represented, in whom is manifested the plan of God for the world."¹¹

If Christ is the representation of the eternally acting God, then we must say that God has not ceased His creative activity with the founding of the world, nor at the holy inspiring of the Scriptures, but is active in His Son, through the Holy Spirit, creating today. To look at Christ as the "image of the invisible God" is not to look at printed words or statues or still-life reproductions. It is as though we are looking at a motion picture of God in which the creative Lord steps out of the screen into the world to manifest and execute God's plan in our midst. God's moving

¹¹Christian Senft, "Image," Vocabulary of the Bible, edited by J. J. Von Allmen (London: Butterworth Press, 1958), p. 180. Cf. also Gerhard Kittel, Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, edited by Gerhard Friedrich (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer G M B H,) II, (1935) 386.

"image" as we see it in our Lord moves in two directions. His will is that the Father be glorified and that man be served redemptively. Let us elucidate both of these intentions of the Creator-Christ.

God's primary plan for man is that he live in community and in communion with God: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might."¹² St. Paul is saying that what we see in Jesus Christ is God's perfect representation. He is history's perfect exhibit of the glorification of God. The driving passion of our Lord's entire earthly career was clearly evident in His words ("Father, glorify thy name")¹³ and in His deeds ("I glorified thee on earth, having accomplished the work which thou gavest me to do").¹⁴ This vertical dimension of "the image of the invisible God" is expressed by Paul in the paragraph immediately preceding our basic material in Colossians one. He writes that because of "the beloved Son,"¹⁵ we are able to give thanks to the Father for qualifying us "to share in the inheritance of the saints

¹² Deut. 6:5.

¹³ John 12:28.

¹⁴ John 17:4. The Gospels use δοξάζω eleven times to describe the people's response to God over what Christ had performed: Matt. 9:8,15; Mark 2:12; Luke 5:25,26; 7:16; 13:13; 17:15; 18:43; 23:47; John 11:4.

¹⁵ Col. 1:13b.

in light."¹⁶ We see in Christ's action the action of God, the action of putting people into the perspective of the vertical, getting people to say "Thy will be done," and getting them to do it. The paragraph immediately following our chosen text says the same thing:

And you, who once were estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled . . . in order to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him.¹⁷

We might relate this primary aspect of Christ's "injecting God's image" to the contemporary situation. Religion has been a false authority among those promoting the status quo of racial segregation. By its condoning silence or blatant promotion it has given men the "image" of God as remaining aloof from such a "non-religious" matter.¹⁸ This invisible God is too busy with His spiritual kingdom, so His church spokesmen have been teaching, to be concerned about any change. But theologian Paul's Creator-Christ bolts through this lifeless portrait of a distant deity as the living "image of the invisible God," Who is on the move to "reconcile to himself all things" (1:20). Here is the visible God! He is not an inanimate icon to be vaguely

¹⁶ Col. 1:12a. Εἰς τὴν μερίδα τοῦ κλήρου τῶν ἀγγέλων ἐν τῷ φωτί.

¹⁷ Col. 1:21-22. (Cf. also Col. 3:1-2a.)

¹⁸ Cf. James Sellers, The South and Christian Ethics (New York: Association Press, 1962), pp. 115-27.

respected, but, like Francis Thompson's "Hound of Heaven," is seeking whom He can and what He can for reconciliation with God and God's creative plan. Colossians and contemporary Christians need no longer escape with the exasperation: "God has not made Himself clear on this issue. . . ."; for Christ is here to "manifest the character" of God's pursuit to us and make us grateful victims, eager to pursue in all matters such a course of action "that in everything he might be pre-eminent."¹⁹ Now we know what the image of God is, for Jesus has created us into new people who are able to ask in every human situation: "What is the Lord's will?" and in every inquiry find an answering, creative God.

Christ as "the image of the invisible God" is understood in the first place as being the perfect representation of that which is to glorify God. Christ has done this that we might respond vertically by letting Him be Lord in all things. The second aspect of Christ as the image of God in action is seen in His horizontal service to man whereby He creatively redeems man from himself and frees him for a responsive service to his fellowman. This counterpart of God's plan visibly manifested for us in the Creator-Christ is clearly evident in Paul's material addressed to the Ephesians²⁰ and Colossians, and, as we shall see, in the

¹⁹Col. 1:18b.

²⁰Recognized by some modern scholars as from the same time of authorship. Cf. Alfred Wikenhauser, New Testament Introduction, translated by Joseph Cunningham (New York: Herder and Herder, 1960), p. 426.

incarnation of Jesus of Nazareth. We have already mentioned that Paul clearly spells out the social implications of his Christology in the last two chapters of Colossians. This, then, is the object of God's "character-manifestation" of Himself to us in the visible Christ: that as Christ moves out from behind the screen of God's unapproachable majesty, we might be involved in God's pursuit of people.

A key passage that indicates the intention of God's revealing of this horizontal "projecting" in Christ occurs in Colossians 3:10, and its immediate context. Having listed some of the unloving characteristics that Christians of Colossae exhibited before God's idol-shattering appearance, Paul reminds them of their "new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator." This means that the out-reaching, man-serving nature of God as witnessed in Jesus Christ, has made an impression on ("projected itself into") His new creations.²¹ Just as God is not a static image, so it is God's intention in His Son that His creature-children also be active. Just as Christ is not the direct and final object of the Father's "image-manifestation," so Christ's new people are not the final end of His creative action, but are rather the "indirect objects" whom He impels to extend His serving hands to other men--the "direct objects."

²¹Cf. 2 Cor. 5:17.

The remarkable words that follow in Col. 3:11 reveal what God wants His image to be creating on the horizontal scene as far as racial, social, or ethnic differences among people are concerned. In this new creation "there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all." The problems of prejudice persisted in the 60's as they do now in the 1960's. The barriers between people of Jewish ("circumcised") and Gentile origins, between savage Scythians and cultured Greeks, between free and slave were just as real as those between Negro and white today. We could conjecture that the barriers accepted and promoted by the majority groups, and the resulting tensions, made it impossible for members on either side to discuss the problems unemotionally. And then came the revolutionary religion of the Creator-Christ. Old divisions are gone (not to be eliminated gradually) and brotherhood has replaced barriers. This is what "the image of the invisible God" has accomplished. Before God brought this image to the world it would have been tantamount to disaster to suggest even a gradual change in the psychological or physical partitioning of peoples of different birth, ceremonial, culture, or class make-up.²² But now God has presented a different

²² T. K. Abbott, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians. The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T.

"image" of what reality should be. He has created both the explosive change and the ability on both sides to adjust, since He has now appeared on both sides. "Christ is all and in all."²³

The radical impact that this image of Christ manifested to His people had upon the first century is reassuring evidence that He can deal creatively with the issue of racial barriers today. It took about sixty years for the Church to break the centuries-old impasse between Jew and Gentile.²⁴ The "image"²⁵ of a body of people whose past distinctions were obliterated at Pentecost became commonly recognized. "Mark how they love one another" are words that were frequently spoken of this quickly integrated church. Paul praises the Christians in Colossae for their demonstration of this miraculous ἀγάπη love.²⁶ The revolutionary breaking of the slave-master barrier was also accomplished at this early time. The apostle's teaching that "there cannot be

Clark, 1897), p. 285. Abbott suggests how this passage shows in summary fashion the same barriers being destroyed in Paul's day that are peculiar to modern society.

²³Col. 3:11b (πάντα καὶ ἐν πάντι).

²⁴Col. 3:11a. Most scholars date this epistle between 58-63, during either the Caesarean (58-60) or the Roman imprisonment (61-63). Cf. Wikenhauser, *op. cit.*, p. 418.

²⁴Here understood in the modern sense of the impression a person or group makes on those without.

²⁶Col. 1:4,8; 2:2.

. . . slave (or) free" was also his practice: former-slave Onesimus is returned to former-master Philemon "as a beloved brother . . . in the Lord,"²⁷ probably in the year 63!

The fourteen verses preceding Paul's phrase "He is the image of the invisible God" set forth in similar terms what we would call an uninterrupted "chain reaction" of God's image-projection: The invisible God--the visible Christ--the visible Paul--his absent brethren--their sin-separating fellow saints. Once the apostle had seen Christ²⁸ he did not fall into a mystic stare at the Lord's appearance, but became the minister of His image, on the move to bring Christ to people and people through Christ to one another. This is how the active God looks today. No longer invisible, He is creatively at work in the visible Redeemer, redeeming people from the visible and invisible²⁹ forces that once were made for their support but are now upsetting them, causing a demonic upheaval in the created order of things, alienating them from Him and from one another. To this confusion comes the calming stability of the image of "the God who said, 'let light shine out of darkness,' who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."³⁰

²⁷ Philemon, v. 16.

²⁸₁ Cor. 5:8-10.

²⁹ Col. 1:16.

³⁰₂ Cor. 4:6.

Christ is Creator-God. We have seen Him as the Creator-God first in terms of His preceding all things, and secondly in His being the image (εἰκὼν) of the invisible God--God's genuine revelation of His creative purposes, and the Way³¹ of carrying out His plan to unite people for Him and for one another.

We turn now to another insight from Colossians that portrays Christ as Creator. In verse 19 the apostle writes of our Lord: "For in him all the fullness (πλήρωμα) of God was pleased to dwell."³² A parallel expression is found in the next chapter: (2:9) "For in Him the whole fullness (πλήρωμα) of deity dwells bodily." We have been looking for an answer from God for the problem of racial divisions that threaten our world today. God's answer comes in the Christ who is the beginning principle, the performer of His creative plan, . . . and His last and final Word. Ephesians uses the word "fullness" in discussing various aspects of the growth which God's people should experience as they carry out His plan for the world.³³ In 3:19 Paul says that as Christians grow in knowing the love of Christ they will "be filled with all the fullness of God." Like God's "image," His fullness

³¹ John 10:6.

³² Πλήρωμα (The Greek omits the words "of God.")

³³ Eph. 1:9-10,23; 3:19; 4:13.

is not something that He or we are merely to admire. Once again we have a description of a moving God. The apostle is emphasizing that everything God stands for is available for us in Jesus Christ.³⁴ In the above passage God is not pictured as being interested in the fullness which He has in Himself, but in offering Himself and all that He has to us. What comfort and what confidence the people of the Church can have today, knowing that, as John's Gospel puts it, "from His fullness have we all received, grace upon grace,"³⁵ and that there is no other direction to follow in facing the challenge of integration than that which is provided for us in Christ the Creator.

Although the Epistle to the Colossians does not say it, we can surmise that the ethical obligations of the Christians in Colossae toward their fellowmen were not being fulfilled as well as they might because they were not getting the "fullness" of Christ in their lives. It is possible that the very word "fullness" was

a quasi-technical term used by the Colossian heretics, . . . who seem to have held that Christ was only one of many partial manifestations of the Deity ("Godhead");

³⁴ "Gott wirkt durch Christus in seiner ganzen Fülle, . . . seinem vollen Gottsein. . . ." Kittel, op. cit., VI, 302.

³⁵ John 1:16.

personally acknowledges their existence and demonic powers.⁴⁰ And yet he was determined that Christians were neither to fear nor ignore their status. We must not fear these "power structures," he felt, because in fearing them we have forgotten by and for Whom they were created. But neither must we ignore them, since their harmful operations are all evident. They must be a challenge for the people of Christ, because they also belong under His creation. He is the Creator of all powers, and since this includes those which are opposed to His creative plan, Christ as our Creator-God is aggressively eager to effect their liquidation. The assault succeeded when "he disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them triumphing over them in (His cross)."⁴¹ And now He is effecting the completion of His creative assault through His "wrestling"⁴² saints who will finish the attack. The past and present creating of the Creator-Christ are never separated in Paul's mind. The powers of darkness⁴³ were created "through" (past) and "for"⁴⁴ (present) Him. Since they do not yet recognize His control, He is depending on His Body, the

⁴⁰ Eph. 6:12.

⁴¹ Col. 2:15.

⁴² Eph. 6:12 (KJV).

⁴³ Cf. E. K. Simpson and F. F. Bruce, Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957), p. 198.

⁴⁴ Col. 1:16b (δὲ...ἐῖς).

Church, to subdue them.

How should the Church today view these invisible "power structures"? The Creator-Christ would have us neither ignore nor fear them. Modern minds are not as bothered by "wickedness in the heavenly places."⁴⁵ Here the Church has an advantage.

When the early Church saw in Christ the breaking of the power of the demons they were perceiving in the outward form of experience structures which were correlative with their inward sense of liberation. Although the forms of expression familiar in these times are now archaic, . . . the existential experience which led men to formulate such doctrines have their counterpart in modern life.⁴⁶

Since we no longer need to concern ourselves with the strat-
ospheric location of evil forces, we can concentrate on their
conduct. Disregarding their altitude, we know that their
great strategy is to be elusive.⁴⁷ And we know that they are
opposed to the plan of the Creator, especially His plan for
the Church, and are doing everything possible to upset God's
order without God's people noticing it.⁴⁸ So, rather than
ignore them, we should try to identify them. The apostle's
names for the invisible powers cannot be improved. We can

⁴⁵Eph. 6:12 (KJV)

⁴⁶Galloway, op. cit., p. 241.

⁴⁷Eph. 6:12.

⁴⁸Hence Paul's urging of the church to be on the alert.
(Eph. 6:13ff.)

best identify them today by throwing light on the activities of their visible agents, and calling these by name.

If Christ is to serve as Creator in the current scene of racial bigotry and discrimination, we will have to evaluate rather than evade the present power structures. Theology has more or less chosen to ignore the task of calling these by name, leaving it to the sociologists and novelists, who in turn wonder why the church has kept silent. Secular writers such as Lillian Smith denounced the church's silence:

Had the church only spoken out while these laws were being passed. Had one bishop, one priest, one prominent preacher in each Southern state taken a bold stand against this desecration of the human spirit.⁴⁹

A strong reason for the silence of the church seems to be that she herself has been the foremost of the power structures, "the mother of racial patterns, the purveyor of arrant sedatives, the teacher of immoral moralities."⁵⁰ (In this connection we might ask whether the church's silence has been an accidental omission or actually the defense of a flagrant participation in the status quo whereby she has often aggrandized an institution of respectable upper-caste people who

⁴⁹Lillian Smith, Now is the Time (New York: The Viking Press, 1955), p. 46. Among some brave efforts on the part of churchmen in the past to identify the forces behind segregation should be mentioned Fred D. Wentzel, Epistle to White Christians (Philadelphia: The Christian Education Press, 1948).

⁵⁰Kyle Haselden, The Racial Problem in Christian Perspective (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), p. 14.

remain so through the exploiting of the lower castes.) As we indicated in the first chapter, the church has stealthily "passed by on the other side"⁵¹ for the sake of her security in the "spiritual" business of "soul"-canvassing, or preaching to the "needs" of its good-paying members. The so-called "moral leadership" of the organized church in the community and nation has distinguished itself as a supreme "power structure" (to apply this expression contemporarily) in erecting and maintaining today's insidious racial barriers. If we of the church were assuming no further responsibility than to religiously redeem the secular world, our unjust teachings and practices would be enough to incriminate us. But since our religious activity has also been with people in the world and has been watched by people of the world, we must accept responsibility for the secular evils of society.

We now pass on in our identification of the power structures to those begotten of the organized church. Today, Paul's "wickedness in high places"⁵² has descended to the visible plane of this world, where we could name such elevated boundary lords as government demagogues, employment engineers, real estate tycoons, the success-enslaved press and conforming educators. In addition there are the invisible demons who promote the propaganda of the stereotype, make prejudice, fear, and ignorance seem plausible, and

⁵¹Luke 10:31-2.

⁵²Eph. 6:12 (KJV).

irresponsibility to poisoned humanity palatable.

But we are speaking of power structures that have a Creator. They all were brought into existence through Christ and for Him. Beginning with the organized church and continuing to the last bigoted treasurer of the local White Citizens Council, Christ the Lord is determined to "cast down every idol throne, reign supreme and reign alone."⁵³ In our fourth chapter we will suggest a theology of Christ as Creator in which the Church is creatively engaged in restoring all power structures (including the institutional church) to their God-intended subservience.

⁵³ Andrew Reed, "Holy Ghost, with Light Divine," The Lutheran Hymnal (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1941), Hymn 234, stanza 5.

CHAPTER III

CHRIST'S INCARNATION MEANS CREATION

At the outset we tried to establish that a theology of Church and race is shallow and moralistic if it is limited to the sayings of Paul or even of Jesus Himself on the subject of racial barriers. In fact, many Christians, following their spiritual teachers, have regarded this matter as irrelevant to their faith and to the concern of the Church. In this connection we mentioned in Chapter One some of the theological liabilities which have contributed to the prevalent notion that Christ and the cause of racial integration are incompatible. Chapter Two endeavored to present Christ the Creator-God as One Whose will it is to effect a change in the status quo. The present chapter addresses itself to the so-called dichotomy of the Church and race in terms of the creative nature of the earthly life of our Lord. The final undertaking will then be to apply the redemption to the issue of racial barriers in terms of the doctrine of the Church-creating Christ.

In looking at the Creator-Christ in the incarnation we must acknowledge a real debt to Gustav Wingren who has revived the teachings of Irenaeus, a second century theologian. Irenaeus found in the incarnation of the Son of God a sure reply to the heresies of the Gnostics who dichotomized man into flesh and soul. He demonstrated that, in the redemption

by the human Savior, God is creating a new, unified humanity and that, in this Creator-Christ, He is restoring all that was lost to Satan since the beginning. It was Irenaeus' unsurpassed linking of the Old and New Testaments and his insistence on putting the first article of the creed before the second that established his broad and brilliant theology of the incarnation as creation.

Irenaeus, were he living today, would see in Christianity's bungling of the racial issue a reincarnation of the Gnostic principle of old: that men are hopelessly imprisoned in their various human groups and that only the spiritually elite can benefit from the Gospel. To this hideous heresy Irenaeus would repeat His theology of the redemption as creation and say that Christ's victory means that He is the Lord of power under Whose dominion

all men can be raised from the condition in which they are. . . . Those who deny men's freedom "allege that the Lord is powerless" and helpless in dealing with human nature.¹

Contemporary systematic theology can therefore learn from Irenaeus to expand its Christology to the fuller creative dimensions of the New Testament. When we have rediscovered this vision of the redemption, we will be equipped to end our silent approval of the status quo, and put to

¹Gustaf Wingren, Man and the Incarnation: A Study in the Biblical Theology of Irenaeus (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1959), pp. 140-41, quoted from Adversus Haereses IV, 61.

naught the church's reputation of aloofness, in which as Sittler confesses, "the address of Christian thought is most weak precisely where man's ache is most strong."² Our effort in the following pages will be to examine the earthly career of the Christ whom Paul calls "the beginning"³ and to whose credit we now attribute the creation of a new humanity.

We already accept in our traditional doctrine of the redemption that man becomes a new creation "not first by altering the circumference of his being but by having the center of that being displaced by that which is truly central in the universe."⁴ He who is central in the universe, "the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end,"⁵ became central to the needs of man when the Word "became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth."⁶ God's creation of the new man took place when the "power of the Most High overshadowed"⁷ a maiden in Nazareth and a new humanity was conceived. God's creative history had run its course from the "first Adam to the last,"⁸ and

²Joseph Sittler, "Called to Unity," The Ecumenical Review, XIV (1960), 183.

³Col. 1:18.

⁴Kyle Haselden, The Racial Problem in Christian Perspective (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), p. 88.

⁵Rev. 22:13.

⁶John 1:14.

⁷Luke 1:35 Ἐπιτοκιάσει

⁸1 Cor. 15:45. This Christological view of God's creative plan is beautifully handled in the entire work of

the disordered world was reoriented around the Creator in the manger.

In Creation the whole of the universe comes into being, while in the Incarnation it is a single, hidden human being who comes into existence, but in this one man there is to be found the purity which the whole world has lost.⁹

Worshippers of the Christmas creation are all agreed that the tremendous mystery of the Bethlehem event lies in the incomprehensible potential of the incarnation. God become man is still the infinite God, and, therefore, can perform as creatively in the Gospels as He can in Genesis, because He is the same. The humiliation of God into rebellious humanity does not limit his creativity. There is nothing in the incarnation that is

irregular and anomalous; the glory of it is that it is the fulfillment of an original and divine purpose-- that it is the means of removing the discord and anomalies that were resisting that purpose.¹⁰

The humanity does not lessen the creativity but the humanity is highly exalted and given a name at which heaven and earth should prostrate themselves.¹¹

And so from Nazareth to the Galilean mountain we see a

the same title: C. K. Barrett, D.D., From First Adam to Last: A Study in Pauline Theology (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962).

⁹Wingren, op. cit., p. 84.

¹⁰Frederick Denison Maurice, The Doctrine of Sacrifice Deduced from the Scriptures (London: Macmillan and Co., 1879), p. 215.

¹¹Phil. 2:9-10.

career of creation. Irenaeus points out that it is intrinsic to the nature of God's incarnation that the humanity grow from infancy to maturity, so that with God once more on the scene man can achieve "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."¹² "When God Who gives is in humanity, humanity grows."¹³ Humanity grows out of its slavish attachment to itself. Self-seeking disciples are converted into God-glorifying martyrs. Rebellious demons once in control of the minds, bodies, and estates of men are dethroned and the rule of God is re-established. As Martin Luther emphasized, the overwhelming thrust of Jesus' teaching and conversation in the four Gospels was that God is creating a new kingdom--a new orientation for mankind. "Man is the creature of God, and, as a creature, he has an existence which is not centered in himself but in God."¹⁴ And the kingdom did not limit its creativity to didactic discourses. The God Who beheld all of His pristine handiwork, and considered it "very good,"¹⁵ is the same Creator Who "has done all things

¹²Eph. 4:13-14. ἕως μέτρον ἡλικίας τοῦ πληρωματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

¹³Wingren, op. cit., p. 109. (Wingren's emphasis.)

¹⁴Henry W. Reimann, Jr., "Luther and Brunner on Creation" (Unpublished Master's Thesis, St. Louis, Concordia Seminary, 1951), p. 14. Prof. Reimann illustrates this with two parables from Luke 12:16ff., and 20:9ff.

¹⁵Gen. 1:31.

well."¹⁶ His miracles of healing were as redemptive as His battles with the tempter, creating life in its entirety and returning people to the divine economy of wholesome relationships, inward, outward and upward.¹⁷

Had Jesus become incarnate in a land where today's kind of racism was rampant, His ministry would have been oriented in this direction. The demons of the status kingdom would be exorcised, self-redeeming religious bigots would be humiliated, the lords of white supremacy condemned, fear-ridden disciples chided and untold thousands of innocent minority victims restored to the wholeness of the first Adam.

But Christ as Creator is none the less relevant to today's situation. His redemptive visit to Palestine stands out indisputably as creation history. There is therefore no unredeemed matter in Christ's cosmos, including those forces openly or secretly opposed to His will, that does not fall under His creative purview, for

unless the reference and power of the redemptive act includes the whole of man's experience and environment, straight out to its farthest horizon, then the redemption is incomplete. There is and will always remain something of evil to be overcome. And more. The actual man in his existence will be tempted to

¹⁶Mark 7:37. (The Greek word (καλλός) is the same in both cases!)

¹⁷Wingren discovered from Irenaeus that "one of the important reasons for our inability to interpret healing passages correctly is that we lack the concept of salvation as restoration of creation." Gustaf Wingren, Creation and Law (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1961), p. 64.

reduce the redemption of man to what purgation, transformation, forgiveness and blessedness is available by an "angelic" escape from the cosmos . . . and in that option accept some sort of dualism which is as offensive to biblical theology as it is beloved of all Gnosticism, then as now.¹⁸

Let us summarize our examination of this early period of the creative incarnation in the following paraphrased arrangement of our primary text employing those concepts we have treated so far: "In order that He might become pre-eminent¹⁹ in all things, it has pleased God to reconcile all things to Himself through Him Who is the first-born from the dead." Christ is the beginning of the new man, as we have seen in our view of the beginning of his earthly career.

Let us now briefly examine the passion, death, and resurrection of our Lord to see how this, the epitome of His incarnation, is the crowning achievement of the Creator-Christ, and then apply this redemptive activity to the challenge before the church.

Our text leads us to this consideration with the words: "He is . . . the first-born from the dead. . . ."; or (adding the words that follow in Colossians one verses 19-20 in a paraphrased meaning for today: "Among those who rise from the old death²⁰ He is the most highly honored by God.

¹⁸Sittler, op. cit., p. 179.

¹⁹The Greek (ἄνωγεῖν) says: "come to have first place."

²⁰These words especially, but also what follows, are based on the following: (1) A possible variant reading

and should be by His new people. His victory on the Cross is creating a new life." These words that interpret for us the "cosmic" redemption give us the scope we need to apply the principle "Christ as Creator" to such a challenge as racial integration for the churches. For when we say Christ died for the sins of the world, we are saying that a new world was created through His conflict with the forces of evil.²¹ The conflict culminated in the holy week events and was victoriously completed in the bodily ascension. The "segregation" of death was destroyed and an "integration" of life was established. The horrifying sinfulness of "man's inhumanity to man" need no longer be shrugged off as something beyond our grasp, for we see mob psychology and

(contained in manuscript p⁴⁶, the original $\delta\varsigma$ and eight church fathers including Irenaeus!) omits the $\xi\kappa$ (so does Rev. 1:15) making it "first-born amongst" (partitive genitive) the dead, i.e., of the post-Adam world; (2) Christ is given primacy over Adam not because, as in primitive tradition, God prefers Him Who is earliest on the scene, but (as $\pi\pi\omega\tau\omicron\tau\omicron\kappa\omicron\varsigma$ is consistently used in both O.T. and N.T.) because of some more pre-eminent reason for bestowing honor; (3) That reason is found in the overcoming by the "Last Adam" of the "first adam's" (humanity's) loss. I.e., Paul goes beyond the traditional praising of Christ for His personal resurrection from a bodily death, (He was not the first to achieve this!) to bestowing on Him the coveted "birth-right" because out of a decaying humanity a new world is given birth; (4) "The blood of his cross" (concluding the entire discussion in verse 20b) points to the reason for His cosmic supremacy. By grappling with and succumbing to the murderous evil forces, He joins them in their demise, and rises as the Creator-Victor, to await the worship and service of His new people. $\pi\pi\omega\tau\omicron\tau\omicron\kappa\omicron\varsigma$, as used in 1:15 "of all creation" can then be understood in terms of the redemption as it is discussed above.

²¹Satan's will is to oppose God's plan and keep His people separate in sin from Him and one another.

hateful lynching at their guiltiest on Calvary, and we observe in the risen Savior a creative power for love far beyond our fondest imagination. This is death creative and resurrection creating. This is why we bestow on God's "Last Adam" the accolades that would be due any hero who could achieve the title "first-born from the dead," the Redeemer-Creator, Who, out of an irreconcilable, cosmic "segregation," established vertical and horizontal peace for the world "by the blood of his cross."²²

It is very significant that the verses immediately following this apex of our chosen paragraph apply two telling words to the past peaceless segregation from which (Paul repeats!) the Cross had freed the Colossians:

And you, who once were estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in the body of his flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him. . . .²³

Both of these words are used by Paul in a horizontal as well as vertical application to the human situation.²⁴

We are indeed grateful to the apostle to the Gentiles for giving us a theology that is pre-eminently qualified to encounter the current world crisis of racism. As surely

²²Col. 1:20b.

²³Col. 1:21-22.

²⁴ἀπὸ γνησίου (Eph. 2:12; 4:18; Col. 1:21) καὶ ἐχθροῦ (Roms. 5:10; 11:28; 12:20; 1 Cor. 15:25,26; Gal. 4:16; Phil. 3:18; Col. 1:21; 2 Thess. 3:15.)

then as Christ is our pre-eminent Creator, so certainly is it now the church's bounden duty as the bodily extension of her "Head"²⁵ here on earth "through him to reconcile . . . all things";²⁶ Because of this cosmic challenge our final project is to apply Paul's theology of Christ as the Creator of His Church to the contemporary racial problem.

²⁵Col. 1:18a.

²⁶Col. 1:20.

CHAPTER IV

CHRIST CREATES HIS CHURCH

The Church belongs to the $\tau\acute{\alpha}$ πάντα created through and for Christ.¹ The purpose of this final chapter will be to examine Christ the Creator's intentions when He said " . . . I will build my church . . . "² Jesus spoke these words in the presence of those whom He had chosen. They were people. This we must emphasize. The Church is the people who have been called into a new existence. One does not have to read St. Paul very long to see that his theology is true to this "common proclamation of both O. T. and N. T.--God's dealings with all that is meant by mankind."³ Colossians proclaims that whatever Christ the head does He does it for or through His body composed of people. We observe in Colossians the following three "body of Christ"⁴ teachings that

¹Col. 1:16b-18.

²Matt. 16:18b. ὀικοδομήσω μου τὴν ἑκκλησίαν

³Gustaf Wingren, Creation and Law (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1961), p. 10.

⁴Only Col. 1:18,24; 2:19 and 3:15 use σώμα, and none of these add "of Christ." Hence our material does not concentrate on an exegesis of this concept so familiar to Ephesians and Corinthians, but rather to an application of verse 18 as a whole, and in its context in Colossians.

apply also creatively to the challenge of racial barriers.

Christ Creates One Organism of People Functioning as
Children of the Second Adam

God's encounter with humanity creates in Christ a new existence. "He is the head of the body, the church, he is the beginning."⁵ The old nature is removed and man is given the new nature which is created after the singular image of its Creator.⁶ The old depravation (from which the fallen man is renewed) is individualism, and the new "image" is one of fellowship. Yet man's new relation is not merely a private one with God. Christ is the beginning! When Paul writes in Col. 3:1: "Seek the things that are above, where Christ is," he means that this victorious Christ is able to raise us from selfishness, from escaping responsibility in earthly things to facing this responsibility towards the earthly brother.⁷ The new man is a man of community. The old humanity was doomed in its self-determined death, but Christ is the "matrix and prius"⁸ of those who have been "born from the dead."⁹ He is the One to watch for what the new life will bring because He is God's beloved Son by Whom the

⁵Col. 1:18a.

⁶Col. 3:9-10.

⁷As indicated in Col. 3:5ff.

⁸Joseph Sittler, "Called to Unity," The Ecumenical Review, XIV (1962), 177.

⁹Col. 1:18, applying our rendering on page 48.

Father "has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his dear Son in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sons."¹⁰ When we have learned to know the infinite love of this creative Redeemer, we will be "filled with all the fulness of God."¹¹ Those who have been called into the fellowship of the Church are children of "The Last Adam," for "what is done in the Church counteracts the Fall."¹² The balance of God's creative plan was upset by the old, and reset by the new. In the old, man idolized imaginary emanations, ignoring his God and looking down on his fellowman. In the new, Christ the Creator is central, and man looks up to God in worship and out to the brother in what we might call "response-ability"--the ability to respond to the image of the Creator-Christ. This is the Church of Christ. "She is His new creation by water and the Word."¹³ This is then the raison d'être of the body of Christ: we are redeemed (created into) one organism of people whose response to the Cross gives us a new ability to respond to the body.

¹⁰ Col. 1:13-14.

¹¹ Eph. 3:19. In Eph. 1:23 Paul adds "The fullness of him who fills all in all ($\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\alpha \ \acute{\epsilon}\nu \ \pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\iota\nu$).

¹² C. K. Barrett, D.D., From First Adam to Last (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962), p. 141.

¹³ Samuel J. Stone, "The Church's One Foundation," The Lutheran Hymnal (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1941), Hymn 473, stanza 1.

The work of the new Adam is not simply to produce a handful of new individual men, all bearing the image of the heavenly Man, but to produce a new unit of existence. . . .¹⁴

In this new existence the estranged are reconciled and hostility¹⁵ is removed by the Cross. We people of the Church are finding ourselves caught up in the activity of renewal¹⁶ as this proceeds from the Head and from the fellow members of the body. It is a renewal that is so intimately¹⁷ engaged in the projecting of the image of the Creator-Christ, that we cannot possibly see any threat in another member who may be of another class or race. "Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all."¹⁸ In fact, we are so busy functioning under the impulses of our Creator-Head, so mutually dependent on the other members of the body, and so actively engaged in passing on the life of Him who is our "all in all,"¹⁹ that we are blind to any and all differences. We all belong together!

It is fitting at this point to make a direct application

¹⁴Barrett, op. cit., p. 110. (His emphasis.)

¹⁵Col. 1:21-22.

¹⁶Col. 3:10 (ἀνακατανοούμενον).

¹⁷Ibid.; ἐπίγνωσις (knowledge) can mean "union with"!

¹⁸Col. 3:11--comes after Col. 3:10!

¹⁹Col. 3:11b. (πάντα καὶ ἐν πᾶσι .)

to the challenge before the churches today to integrate. The savage Scythian and sophisticated Greek that Paul mentions belong to the same church! If there is no other reason for the "white" churches of our land to welcome all men, it is that all colors and classes of mankind already belong to today's church. When a Negro Lutheran moves to town, the church council of the local parish cannot say of this brother: "He is not our business." The increasing mobility of our society is forcing us to re-evaluate the "morality" of barring or segregating minorities from our mission and fellowship, since many of these approaching neighbors are already redeemed members of our one body, church people who not only need our acceptance, but who have something vital to offer us. Without these people Christianity has been much like a body with a vital member severed. "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.'"²⁰ As these newcomers now approach our churches they should not be feared as a threat but welcomed as brothers who will enable us to become an integrated (whole) body. There is therefore no reason to avoid what will be a blessing to us.

What has hindered the Church from realizing the full meaning of the body of Christ? Our first chapter indicated that it has been partly due to the institutionalizing of the

²⁰
1 Cor. 12:21.

Church organism into a success-minded organization.²¹ As people of lower economic groups surround our congregations, fear arises that the economic stability of the church may be affected. Rather than risk bankruptcy it seems logical to escape. Yet nowhere in Scripture are congregations commanded to be financially solvent. On the contrary, we are told to beware of actions that will keep the various members of the body apart from one another and the entire organism from its mission.

Are we not compelled to re-examine the nature of [the] . . . congregation to which we belong, to see whether it is a true community of those who are in Christ, or whether it is one of those human groups to which mortal man resorts in order to assert his self-identity within the state of his fall?²²

We also observe a real need in today's church polity to distinguish between organism and organization. Our popular concept of the Church has perhaps suffered too much from the latter²³ and neglect of the voluminous Pauline material supporting the former. Were the great itinerant apostle to visit our churches today, his concern would be the same: the unity of the church; organism before organization.

It is intrinsic to the Church's nature as a living

²¹ Supra., pages 7 and 8.

²² Daisuke Kitagawa, "Theological and Non-Theological Factors in Race Relations," The Ecumenical Review, XIII (April 1961), 339.

²³ Martin E. Marty, The New Shape of American Religion (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), pp. 134-38.

organism that it be localized in one way or another.²⁴ There can be no unity without a togetherness of the members. When Paul speaks of the localized realm of the Church, however, he is chiefly concerned with the goal of the program in that place! In addition to the danger of neglecting some people who already belong to the body, there is the possibility of becoming so ingrown that we forget to function as God's mission to all men. The body of Christ has no time to admire itself. The theology of parishioners should always be directed away from spiritual narcissism to glorifying Him Who wills that we extend the image of Christ to the world. This direction may lead to a re-evaluation or even a revamping of the entire parish program, its mission planning or any other phase of the "localized" Church.

Christ Creates His Church in a Physical Environment

Once a community has accepted a redemptive faith, the impact of their environment upon them forces them either to narrow their concept of redemption by giving it an other-worldly interpretation, or to widen its reference so as to include the whole of their environment.²⁵

This is the way we would like to view Dr. Sittler's plea that "nature as well as history is the theatre of grace and the

²⁴ Cf. Col. 4:15: "the church in Nympha's house."

²⁵ Allan Galloway, The Cosmic Christ (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951), p. 232.

scope of redemption."²⁶ We agree with him at least in holding that the theology of the cosmic Christ has as many infinite possibilities of application as there are a magnitude of unredeemed forces (invisible and visible) busy estranging God's people, barring them from His fullness, and thereby preventing them from carrying out His great redemptive plan.

Redemptive history deals with the healing of man, since it was man, and not the whole of Creation, who violated the will of God. Man must be restored in order that God's Creation may become whole and perfect again, for the injury lies in man. . . .²⁷

In seeking to apply the theology of Christ as Creator to the contemporary scene, this writer would react to the above statement of Sittler by accepting the word "history" but questioning the word "nature." We find an affinity to the cause of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People as compared to that of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. The former is concerned about the injustices that affect human beings. Dr. Sittler would have to agree that, although St. Paul could have included neglected pets as a part of the creation of travelling spectators,²⁸ it is with us children that the puppies are empathetically groaning, to see when redemption will

²⁶Sittler, op. cit., p. 183.

²⁷Wingren, op. cit., p. 101. (Wingren's emphasis.)

²⁸Rom. 8:22-23.

finally succeed in adopting our bodies.

Man's bodies? People with stomachs to feed, heads to shelter, minds to nourish, social needs to be met--is this the business of the Church? "The redemption of nature is conditional upon the redemption of man just as much as the redemption of man is conditional upon the redemption of nature."²⁹ Martin Luther therefore saw the whole world of nature and history as inextricably related to the Church. Although he divided God's kingdom into "left and right hand," and laid the final blessing on the right, he always remembered Adam's dominion over the creatures,³⁰ and in Sittler's words affirmed as inherent in Christ

God's proper Man for man's proper selfhood and society--the world political, the world economical, the world aesthetic, and all other commanded orderings of actuality which flow from the ancient summons to tend this garden of the Lord.³¹

Christ's living organism cannot then ignore the physical environment in which people find themselves today. Rather, the Church is under an imperative to follow her Head in His creating of τὰ πάντα. Christ's living organism is the light of the world. "I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light

²⁹Galloway, op. cit., p. 50; cf. Rom. 8:18-21.

³⁰Henry W. Reimann, Jr., "Luther and Brunner on Creation." (Unpublished Master's Thesis, St. Louis: Concordia Seminary, 1951), p. 74.

³¹Sittler, op. cit., p. 184.

of life."³²

If the Church is the earthly embodiment that has "come to fullness . . . in him who is the head of all, . . ."³³ what then should be her position toward "social action"?

The provision of a decent minimum level of wages and decent housing, health, and school facilities to the hard-core minorities . . . may do more . . . than all the pious sermons preached in all the Protestant churches in America. . . .³⁴

If nothing else, the Church as Christ's creation is to be an example in her own practises. In terms of the "social action" of integration, our churches have many doors to open. Opening these doors can possibly lead the parish community to follow suit.³⁵

Once a parish is integrated, our social action would not be limited to passing out offering plates and hymnals. Dark, demonic power structures that are ravaging the people we would like to welcome must first be brought to our light, so that these brothers who have suffered so long from

³²John 8:12.

³³John 2:10.

³⁴Karl H. Hertz, "The Church and Social Action," Theology in the Life of the Church, edited by Robert W. Bertram (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963), p. 170.

³⁵This writer was privileged to play a pastoral part in integrating within a short period of time over 75 Negro Christians into a nearby all-white parish, and can vouch for the resulting impetus for "social action" in an entire community. Cf. "Integration Said Smooth in 2 Lutheran Churches," Alton Evening Telegraph (Alton, Illinois: May 2, 1963), p. 1.

discriminative exploitation can be restored to all of nature's blessings. Then wherever we see

plunder, pillage, rape, exploitation, oppression . . . in the Lord's name and for the Lord's sake, we must protest no matter what the cost. For this is my neighbor in need, and I must simply ask, "What is it that I can do right now?"³⁶

If as churchmen we follow nothing more than the principle of the functioning organism reaching out in love towards the fellow members³⁷ we will see a reason for the Church to protest against social injustices. We have an obligation to speak because many influential figures among the powers behind these wrongdoings are brother Christians.³⁸ Therefore the church must also

love the racist and redeem him. It must somehow set him free. With the same love that it is commanded to shower upon the innocent victim of his frustration and hostility, the church must love the racist. Moreover, the church is called to love those who use and exploit both the racists and their victims for personal wealth and political gain. The church must stand in love and judgment upon the victim, the victimized, and those, both black and white, who exploit both.
 . . .³⁹

In order to be creative "Christs" in terms of our

³⁶Hertz, op. cit., p. 168.

³⁷Cf. Supra., p. 57ff.

³⁸James Sellers speaks boldly, yet compassionately, to the segregation "theology" of his southern brethren. The South and Christian Ethics (New York: Association Press, 1962), pp. 113-45.

³⁹Will D. Campbell, Race and the Renewal of the Church (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), p. 25.

neighbor's needs we must also add our church's support to emerging voices in both races by identifying with their organized efforts to return all men to all of the opportunities of Eden.

To keep any citizen of our community from developing to his fullest potential and capacity for production to the common good is to cripple individuals and to deprive our communities and nation of great natural resources. This is at one level folly. But for the man who is willing to be confronted by God, it is the realization of a great sin, the sin of not helping a creature of God develop his full stewardship of the gifts God has given him.⁴⁰

So we remove the quotation marks from "social action" and say that this is a moral imperative. This is the very cause of the Creator-Christ. It was of such a godly crusade that the Creator's expectant mother sang:

He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted those of low degree; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away.⁴¹

And it is by this type of activity that our Christus Consummator⁴² will finally open to us the doors of the eternal Eden when He says:

Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed

⁴⁰ Karl Lutze, "Those Awful Demonstrations," The Vanguard, X (August 1963), 1.

⁴¹ Luke, 1:52-53.

⁴² L. W. Thornton, The Common Life in the Body of Christ (Westminster: Daore Press, 1942), p. 178.

me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me. I was in prison and you came to me.⁴³

Christ Creates Through His People

Finally we wish to set forth a few additional principles of the Creator-Christ concept applicable to a parish integration program:

1. Christ as Creator adds new members to His body. Here the picture of the organism breaks down but we can apply the grafting concept.⁴⁴ The epistles teach that when the body is doing its job of sharing the Gospel, numbers will be added.⁴⁵ But no enrollment quotas are set. If the statistics do not improve, either there has been a failure to project the image of Christ to all men, or the situation is one in which God's people are simply called to give witness without any apparent success. Christ gives the growth. This much, however, is certain: When the church adds members of another class or color, something is gained. It is therefore better to lose "offended" members and decrease in numbers than to fail in witnessing to the universality of the Church.

2. Christ strengthens the unity of His people through worship. The Colossians undoubtedly grew in love towards

⁴³Matt. 25:34-36.

⁴⁴Rom. 11:17-24, a tremendous integration text.

⁴⁵Cf. Col. 1:6a and 2:12 (Baptism adds new members.)

each other⁴⁶ by sharing in a common worship⁴⁷ with those who have shared the common Baptism.⁴⁸ The increased use of Holy Communion in our churches is teaching us the unifying power of this means of grace. Rather than being a cause for fear in an integrating congregation, the regular sharing of the common cup has proved to be a glorious experience of the merger in Christ of redemption and creation.⁴⁹

3. Christ creates through His suffering people.

This is a sine qua non that God's people must be willing to accept in carrying out the principles set forth in these pages. The forces of evil within and without the church are viciously opposed to the true functioning of the Body of Christ. Just as these powers were toppled in the sufferings of the Head, so they must be removed by the members through the same principle: "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is the church. . . ." ⁵⁰ Just as our Lord's suffering restored the world to the image of the Creator, so we who now are in His

⁴⁶Col. 1:4,8; 2:2.

⁴⁷Col. 3:12-16.

⁴⁸Cf. baptismal references in Col. 3:5,8,9,10 as they are followed by v. 11!

⁴⁹Jim Kulp, "No Outward Bias to Negro Shown by Lutherans," Alton Evening Telegraph (Alton, Illinois: May 9, 1963), p. 3.

⁵⁰Col. 1:24. Only four verses between creation and redemption and even those deal with the people of the Church.

image are to "finish off"⁵¹ the job. This means letting those who rebel against the principles of the new organism, as well as those who would "lose themselves" under its functioning, vent their hostilities on us. In applying the principles of suffering to social action, we are saying nothing strange, for the people of God who are the Creator-Christ's Church in the world are

responsible to him, even when this means to bear the cross of economic boycott, of social ostracism, or perhaps even of violence. Each of us must also ask himself whether to refuse the cross is not a betrayal of the citizenship God has bestowed upon him.⁵²

Perhaps it would be wise for us to discontinue the word "even" when we refer to suffering, and bravely ask God the question, "Where suffer?," for in this sharing of our victorious Head's afflictions there is nothing to fear, not even the monster of death: "Shall I fear, or could the Head rise, and leave His members dead?"⁵³

⁵¹This expression avoids the idea of insufficiency in *ὑποσημα* yet keeps the extension of the image. (Cf. G. H. P. Thompson, "Eph. 3:13 and 2 Tim. 2:10 in the light of Col. 1:24," The Expository Times, LXII (March 1960), 187-89.)

⁵²Hertz, op. cit., p. 168.

⁵³"Jesus Christ, My Sure Defense," The Lutheran Hymnal (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1941), Hymn 206, stanza 2.

CONCLUSIONS

We have undertaken to demonstrate that the current racial crisis in the United States calls for a soundly theological solution. Although many churches are welcoming Negroes and integration is now considered imperative by many and at least inevitable by others, the problem still seems to be that of determining what the Church's role should be.

We suggested that such inadequacy stems at least in part from a failure of theological scholarship to make Christ the Redeemer, Who Paul says should be "pre-eminent in all things," pre-eminent in this crucial issue. Examining the material in Colossians 1:15-20, we applied St. Paul's concept of "Christ as Creator" (which has been long neglected for reasons we conjectured) to the present dilemma.

Taking the apostle's words: "He is before all things" as our starting point, we determined that all moral or ethical criteria affecting the racial conflict should be postponed until we have fully answered the question "Who is Jesus Christ?" The solution to this contemporary problem does not therefore come from the random teachings or example of Christ, but rather from His being the Redeemer Who died and rose again.

To show that this Christ is the Creator adequate for the challenge of racial integration, we first examined His Creator nature: He is the God Whose will is to "hold all

things together," i.e., to unify the creation under His supreme rule. As the "image of the invisible God" He projects God's character to man--His will to reconcile all things so that mankind, once "estranged and hostile" towards God and one another, might find themselves renewed and returned to the unity of creation "through the blood of His Cross." As the "fullness of God" being offered for the benefit of His people, Christ supplies us with all that we need to carry out His will to "integrate" (a word indicating unity or the achieving of "fullness") those who are estranged into one body. This "fullness" also represents a victory over all evil powers that are at work to distort and destroy the unity and fellowship of God's people implicit in Creation, since even these wicked forces were "created through and for Him" and His purposes.

Taking a look at the earthly career of the Creator-Christ we saw in the incarnation of this "last Adam," especially in His victory over the Cross, the creative action by which God effects an "integration" for all who once were estranged and hostile.

Finally, we saw in the Church, the embodiment of Christ's creative will to integrate. The children of the Creator-Christ, as members of the one organism, can no longer function as independent, isolated individuals, but must survive and flourish in interdependent fellowship and growth through common worship with those from whom they

were formerly separated by social tradition and discrimination. Finding themselves in a physical environment where many of their fellowmen are deprived of the full blessings of Creation, these "little Christs" extend themselves in courageous love as the healing hands of the Creator-Christ, and, are willing to suffer and die for the sake of His Body.

APPENDIX

POSSIBLE GUIDELINES FOR CHURCH LEADERS AS THEY FACE THE PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES OF THE CURRENT WORLD-WIDE RACE ISSUE

1. A RETURN to the revolutionary spirit of the primitive Christian church (John 3:3; Acts 5:18-19; Acts 17:6).
2. REPENTANCE. First, personal, in private communion with God. Second, a public proclamation of such personal repentance together with a call to repentance.
3. A RE-EVALUATION of the institution--that is, the organized church--in its relation to the will of God.
4. PRAYER for a Christ-inspired and Spirit-filled determination to proclaim the will of God despite one's personal misgivings concerning the future of the organized church.
5. TO BE RESIGNED to the will of God concerning one's personal future status, including the possible loss of prestige and the danger of martyrdom.
6. A DETERMINATION TO become vocal wherever silence implies denial of the incarnate Son of God, the Holy Sufferer of Isaiah's prophecy, Who shall then "see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied."
7. TO CHOOSE rather than suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of a complacent semi-secularized church that offers ease and security while the sound of the redeemed of God--still wailing in bondage--haunts our steps by day and our bed by night.

Which means accepting the company of those rejected, seeking their association and their friendship after the example of Him Who "ate with publicans and sinners," healed the Syro-Phoenician woman, praised the faith of a Roman centurion, went into the home of a despised Zaccheus, refused to call down fire from heaven upon a Samaritan innkeeper but instead rebuked His own friends with the words, "You know not what manner of spirit you are of."

8. TO REMEMBER that in God's Kingdom as well as in this great democracy--according to the Gospel on the one hand and our American ideals on the other--there is neither East nor West, there is neither North nor South; the problem involved in American racism haunts all and the challenge to be both Christian and American is upon all.
9. TO HEED the solemn warnings of the Almighty in the voice of prophecy coming from the lips of the ancient seer, and apropos for church leaders in the year of our Lord 1958; "O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at My mouth, and warn them from Me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way, to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul." Ezekiel 33:7-9.

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