



November 2019

Dear listener,

Advent is a season of anticipation, a time when the expectation of fulfillment is more emphatically impressed upon us. Christmas is a season which places accents on light and love. Taken together, they alert us to what St. Paul calls the mystery of God's will "which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, *to unite all things in him*, things in heaven and things on earth" (Eph. 1:9f.).

The theme of unity is especially welcome in our cultural moment. The perils of fragmentation and antagonism are increasingly evident as the second decade of the third Christian millennium comes to a close. As the year ends, I expect many pundits will produce secular homilies stressing the idea of unity and calling for greater civility, tolerance, and social harmony.

Especially in this season, Christians do well to remind themselves that an *authentic* quest for unity cannot marginalize or relativize the place of Christ as the unifier, as the one in whom all things hold together (Col. 1:17). Deep dissatisfaction with discord should not be understood in merely psychological or sociological terms. It is a recognition (however faint) of the disordering effects of sin and a longing (however inchoate) for redemption.

All quests for unity will be thwarted as long as the conventional wisdom governing modern liberal societies remains dogmatically in place. That dogma holds that the common good is best served if we forget about achieving a common understanding of what is truly Good. Since disagreements about the Good provoke social conflict, social harmony would best be achieved if public life excludes all concern with what C. S. Lewis called "objective value." But the social and political friction triggered by the absence of any shared transcendent points of reference for the pursuit of happiness and the management of power is becoming more glaringly evident.

I think that Lewis's description of the West undergoing an *un-christening* is more precise and illuminating than the more common term "secularization." It's true that we live in a secular age, an age in which the only realities that have public consequence are temporal and empirically verifiable. But — more profoundly — our institutions are governed in accordance with *post-Christian* rules. (Note, however, that it is theologically false to say that we live in a "post-Christian" age. After the Incarnation, there is no such thing.)

The West has long been engaged in a project of promoting more humane societies *without* reference to the only Man who provides us with an adequate understanding of the human. The rules of liberal societies allow the Incarnation to be affirmed privately as a "religious belief." They do not permit the claim — which Christians must make — that the Incarnation is a historical *event* with cosmic (and thus public) consequences. The Incarnation reveals essential knowledge about the meaning of the human and the fundamental relation of the human to the divine, with ramifications for politics, science, education, and all other aspects of social order.

After its christening, Western calendars numbered the years from the birth of Christ. This was not a mere display to announce that Christians were now running things, a sectarian sign proclaiming “UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT.” It was an acknowledgment of the real beginning of the new Creation. *Anno Domini* announced a new epoch for all things, with comprehensive consequences that were in the long process of being fulfilled.

After its christening, Western thinkers recognized that everything in the universe is held together by the one who is the *Logos*. Everything in Creation has its integrity, its coherence, its order and hence its rationality and intelligibility, its knowableness, *in Christ*. The meaning and meaningfulness of everything is sustained by intrinsic connection with the *Logos*. All things *are*, and are *what* they are, in Christ. And still further, through Christ all things in the world, now blighted by the Fall and the Curse, are reconciled to God. All the disruptive, fragmenting, chaos-inviting effects of the Fall are undone by Christ’s bodily action on a specific afternoon in a specific place in the Middle East. A *comprehensible* world is held in being by Christ, and a *comprehensive* salvation was accomplished, promising the establishment of a new harmonious order.

Within the baptismal rituals of many Christian traditions, when one is christened, one renounces the world, the flesh, and the Devil. In the process of promoting its unchristening, the West is renouncing the Center that for centuries was recognized as the ultimate and only source of unity. That Center — before the foundation of the world — was designated as the One in whom all things were to be united, things in heaven and things on earth. Apart from that Center, that Still Point, the West’s unbalanced spinning is tossing persons and practices into division, mutual hostility, and confusion. And there are theological reasons to believe that the destructive momentum of that spinning must increase, unless the un-christening itself is renounced.

In such a time, it’s imperative for Christians to cultivate Christocentric imaginations, to intuitively recognize all of Creation as something made by, through, and for Christ, and thus as a case in point of Christ’s love. It is essential for Christians to harbor the conviction that “in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross” (Col. 1:19f.). And it is pressing for Christians to learn to think about all aspects of human experience, all expressions of human culture, in light of the comprehensive dynamic set in motion by the *Logos* made flesh.

The mission of MARS HILL AUDIO is to assist in the formation of such imaginations.

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I hope that you have found and will continue to find that our work encourages you to grow in your faithfulness to Christ and his rule, and that you will be able to be a partner with us as we continue to pursue our important mission.

Thank you,



Ken Myers
Producer and Host