



THE FACE OF JESUS, PART II

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At this point, some concrete examples will help make clearer this Philippians 2–II Corinthians 5 christology of the arts. How, artistically, have we made Christ into our sin, and how might we reform our profane imaginations?

A classic example is the imposition of white images of Jesus upon Africans enslaved in America and upon their heirs for years after the end of slavery. In a system of such profound injustice, when there were lords using human lives for their own ends, to name Jesus as “Lord,” and then to show this Lord in a white skin, was nothing short of blasphemous. It was also not scripturally or historically accurate (recall here Luther’s concern for historical accuracy), for Jesus Christ was not white at all but born a Jew. It is easy to see how forgetting the fact of Jesus’ Jewishness lent Jesus’ authority to an ideological evil—the implicit claim that the Lord is white. In the white face of Jesus we see human sin laid upon him.

But consider what an interesting puzzle this puts before us. How did the slaves and their descendents respond to this white Lord Jesus Christ? By and large, they did not reject him and the offer of salvation he extended. They did in fact hear his gospel and come to believe. The gospel squeezed through the ideology. However—this is more to the point for our discussion—they also did *not* correct the white Christ with a Jewish one. They corrected it with a black one. That tradition continues to this day and reaches its mature intellectual expression in the work of black theologian James Cone, who says simply and boldly: God is black.

This complicates the issue. We can certainly appreciate and even sympathize with the black correction to the ideologically white Jesus, even if it is not technically accurate itself. But how exactly did that white Jesus come into existence in the first place? It’s not as though slaveholders in colonial America first commissioned such pictures to keep their slaves under control. The Jesus of distinctly northern European features had been around for a very long time already—as long as the gospel had been doing its work on the European continent. Long before America and slaves, Europeans were doing the same thing that Africans in America did much later: they made Christ in their own image. They adopted him as one of their own.

Now what do we with this? Is the adoption of Jesus into our own racial colors, whatever they may be, a wise impulse or a corrupted one? For the moment let’s move the discussion out of the realm of painful white-black relations in America. Consider the works of the great contemporary Chinese Lutheran artist He Qi. His express purpose in his artwork is to “help change the ‘foreign image’ of Christianity in China by using artistic language.”¹ As such, his biblical figures have Chinese features, wear Chinese dress, and

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are depicted in a style adapted from classical Chinese Buddhist art. As westerners, especially conscious these days of our colonial sins, we instinctively applaud this impulse: yes, there is more to Jesus than the Renaissance

masters had to show us. But it’s really the same thing the white Europeans did. Europeans did not embrace a Jewish Jesus but a European one, and we now recognize the problems that *that* ultimately created. In painting a Jesus with a Chinese face, He Qi is doing what the nations have always done—adopting Jesus in their own racial and ethnic

family—but this very process implies a racism of its own.

The fact is: a Jesus with a differently colored and featured face is much harder to place one's faith in. We address this problem artistically by making him look more familiar. And in the process we suppress an essential fact about Jesus, historically and scripturally: that he was born a Jew.

I keep coming back to this matter of Jesus being a Jew because the single human distinction that matters most in the Scriptures is the difference between Jews and Gentiles. All other differences—including those between men and women, and between slaves and free—pale in comparison. The unity of Jews and Gentiles in Christ is the source of nearly all the tensions in the earliest churches. Think of the problem of meat sacrificed to idols, or Peter's refusal to share a meal with Gentile Christians, or circumcision, or the perplexing problem of the chosen people not believing while the ingrafted ones do, as Paul discusses in Romans 9–11. That Jesus Christ, born a Jew and the Messiah to Israel, is *also* the savior of the nations is a scandal and a stumbling block. We take it far too lightly. I imagine most of the people who will read this are full-blood pagan Gentiles: why are we not regularly shocked and staggered that we have been grafted into this Jewish faith in a Jewish savior? In part, I suggest, it's because when we have gazed upon the countenance of Christ, he has reflected our own faces back again.

This point was brought home to me in a painful way by a pair of children's books (of all things!). Long ago I was given a picture book simply entitled *Easter* by the Polish artist Jan Pieńkowski. It is a gorgeous, dramatic book, with all the figures in black silhouette on top of brightly colored backgrounds. The profiles of the figures show them to be ordinary folks with perhaps a slight Polish quality about them. Just a year ago I finally found the book's companion, called *Christmas*. In this book the Polish set-

ting is all the more obvious, and all the more charming. The Mary beautifully fits Luther's request for a lowly and insignificant mother of God. But

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there is one horrible marring of the book: the profile of Herod. Here we have the most egregious stereotype of the Jew—big nose, sinister posture, fat and indulgent and probably a usurer to boot. The bad guy in the story is othered and made a Jew, but the Jewish family and Jewish savior are made into friendly fellow Poles.

With all these examples in mind, we're ready to home in on the heart of the issue. The christological question provoked by artistic images of Christ is this: is Jesus Christ particular, or is he universal? Does Jesus Christ stand with us in our created flesh, or against us in our sinful flesh? We will have to answer the first question before we can answer the second.

Jesus Christ, whom according to the Johannine epistles we must confess as having come in the flesh, is first of

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all particular. He is a Jew born to Jews from the tribe of Judah and in the lin-

eage of David, and he is the Messiah promised to Israel. Our relentlessly Jewish Scriptures constantly try to remind us deaf-eared Gentiles of the fact of Jesus' Jewishness. The moment we lose sight of this we become Marcionites, forgetting the Old Testament and the covenant made with Israel. All the nations could stand this reminder again and again.

Yet at the same time, Jesus Christ came as the Messiah to Israel not only for Israel, but for the whole world—Judea, Samaria, and *beyond*. The Christ turns out not to be for Israel alone; in fact, even Israel is not for Israel alone, but a blessing to the whole world. There is no human being outside the scope of Jesus Christ's salvific intentions. This profound connection between soteriology and christology was hammered out in the early church and reaches its most succinct and suggestive expression in the pithy phrase of Gregory of Nazianzus: "What is not assumed is not healed."² Gregory meant it with reference to the "parts" of the human being that the Son of God assumed, specifically against the Apollinarians who supposed that the Logos supplanted the ordinary human mind. Gregory retorted that if the Son did not also have a human mind, the human mind was neither healed nor saved—not a very worthy salvation, in that case.

Gregory's logic extends across racial and ethnic boundaries as well. As I mentioned above, the apostolic church itself struggled to apply the fullness of Christ's incarnation to the Gentiles. But by Gregory's time, it wasn't even a matter for discussion anymore. The overwhelmingly Gentile believers found no difficulty at all in being saved by a Jew in the flesh. His flesh had assumed and healed theirs as well. Jesus Christ stood with them, was with them, was even one of them.

On these grounds, then, a Chinese Christ legitimately testifies to the fullness of the incarnation, the total assumption of humanity. So does a black Christ. So does a white Christ. A Jewish-looking Christ witnesses to his

indispensable particularity, but images of Christ in other racial forms witness to his soteriologically necessary assumption of all human flesh. Just as the human beings who shared Jewish flesh with Christ rejected, scorned, and crucified him, so are we eminently capable of using the fullness of Christ's humanity to abuse him and others, as in the case of white Christs imposed upon black slaves. But what is necessary then is a correction, not a rejection, of the image. We must honor Barth's fear of the artistic abuse of Christ, but we cannot deprive our Lord of his face because of that fear.

If any doubt remains as to the pedagogical impact of how Jesus is racially depicted, consider this conversation I once had with an aged shut-in parishioner and his sister. The old gentleman asked me, quite out of the blue, "Was Jesus black?"

His sister scolded him, "Where do you come up with these things?"

I said, "No, he wasn't black, but he was Jewish. Where did you hear that he was black?"

The man said, "Oh, it was in the newspaper ten years ago or something."

I said, "Well, as far as I know, Jesus wasn't black, but he wasn't white like you or me either. He was Jewish."

The sister hastily injected, "But Jews are fair-skinned."

I said, "The Jews we know around here are fair-skinned because they're from Poland or Germany. But back in Jesus' time they were probably darker than that."

"Oh, really?" said the sister in an unconvinced tone.

"Yes, they probably had black hair, and darker skin," I suggested.

"Well, I don't know about that," said the sister. "I think they were fair-skinned... and Mary was, too. I know, because I've seen, and all the pictures show them with light skin."

"That's because they were painted by white people like you and me," I

said. "They made Jesus look like us. I've seen a painting of a Chinese Jesus by a Chinese artist. He has black hair and tilted eyes. It's a very beautiful painting."

The sister made a noncommittal noise and changed the subject. She was obviously offended at the thought of a Jesus not her color. Her proof that Jesus *was* her color was nothing other than the paintings and stained glass she'd been looking at her whole life, which had taught her: Jesus is white like you.

We have affirmed the simultaneous universality and particularity of Jesus Christ with reference to the matter of race and color. Now let us

also, like the husband, has the privilege of being created in the image of God. Their two natures are equally honorable; equal are their virtues; equal are their rewards; and alike are their condemnations."³ As with Gregory, Basil finds no difference between men and women that has any soteriological bearing upon them.

It is striking that Basil dreamed up this concern all by himself, answered it, and then forgot about it. The soteriological unity of men and women was simply not in question in the patristic period (at least among the orthodox—it was the gnostics who thought women had to become men if they were to be saved!). Since the earliest days of the church, women had always been

baptized, unlike in Jewish practice where circumcision is (obviously) only for males; they'd always been included in the Lord's Supper; they'd been deacons like Phoebe and apostles like Junia. What is not assumed is not healed; women are healed; therefore whatever women are has also been assumed.

And yet—Jesus has almost never been depicted artistically as a woman. For all his soteriologically necessary unity with women, the very prospect of a female Jesus tends to raise alarm, even today. It is taken to be dangerously misleading, for Jesus certainly was not a woman. It suggests, perhaps,

that we can warp the Son of God to fit our own desires, and it drives against Luther's concern for scriptural accuracy. But if the concern truly is for scriptural accuracy, then it is time to own up to the profound and equally dangerous *inaccuracy* of non-Jewish Jesuses. Consistency is demanded at this point, so preventing female Christs from finding their way into our worship settings implies removing non-Jewish Christs from our worship settings as well—again, if the issue really is scriptural accuracy.

More likely, though, the issue is not



He Qi, *The Risen Lord*

push this christological envelope a bit further. Gregory of Nazianzus's friend and fellow bishop Basil of Caesarea once preached a sermon that, among other things, dealt with the meaning of the word "man" (Greek *anthropos*) in Genesis 1. He imagined that a woman might take the word "man" to mean "husband" in such a way that she herself was not included in the creation account. But Basil puts her right: "So that no one, through ignorance, takes the word *man* to mean only the masculine sex, the Scriptures add 'man and woman He created them.' The wife

accuracy at all, but a manifestation of incomplete Christian conviction about the unity of the sexes that Basil proclaimed. Whatever the Scriptures might have thought about Jews and Gentiles, *we* take the biggest human divide to be between males and females. We find the unity in Christ, as spelled out by the Cappadocians, to be ultimately unconvincing.

In all fairness, there is a philosophical problem here in adopting Cappadocian anthropology (though the problem applies nearly as much to race as to sex). For Basil and Gregory, the nature was always more real than any given instance of that nature (i.e., an individual). Thus human nature was more real than any particular human. Further, the Cappadocians considered human nature to be prior to the sexual differentiation that appears in individual human beings, so they had no difficulty in saying that the Son assumed the original human nature in becoming a particular human being, and in such a way that males and females both were included in that nature.

This metaphysic is hard to defend anymore. But without getting caught up in their Platonism, we can still retain the Cappadocians' insight vis-à-vis human nature, and the place of sex

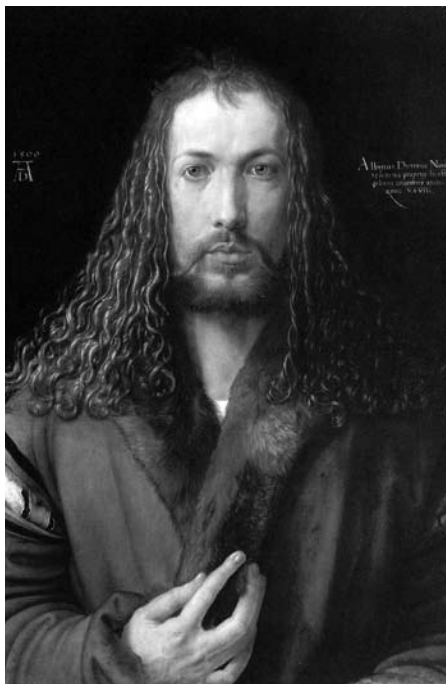
in human nature, along the following lines. We know that all human beings do in fact share something: not an ideal form or abstract "nature," but a biological genetic code. Even as males and females differentiate anatomically and biochemically (though in proportionately minor ways, let it be said), they still share the same DNA structure. More to the point here, it is their common code that allows them together to create a new life which is not identical to either source. The two sexes do not exist for themselves, but in order to beget, and as the sole condition for the possibility of, new *individuals*. And each individual in turn has the capacity in his or her sex to contribute to the begetting of still more new individuals.⁴ This suggests that the determinate anthropological realities are the common nature (human "nature" to the Cappadocians, human genetic code to us) and the individual. Sexuality serves to bridge the gap between nature and an instance of the nature; sex makes individuals possible. Sex serves individuation, but does not stand as an end in its own right. Christologically the result is that the male Jesus is organically, naturally connected to every other human individual insofar as all share in the same common humanity.

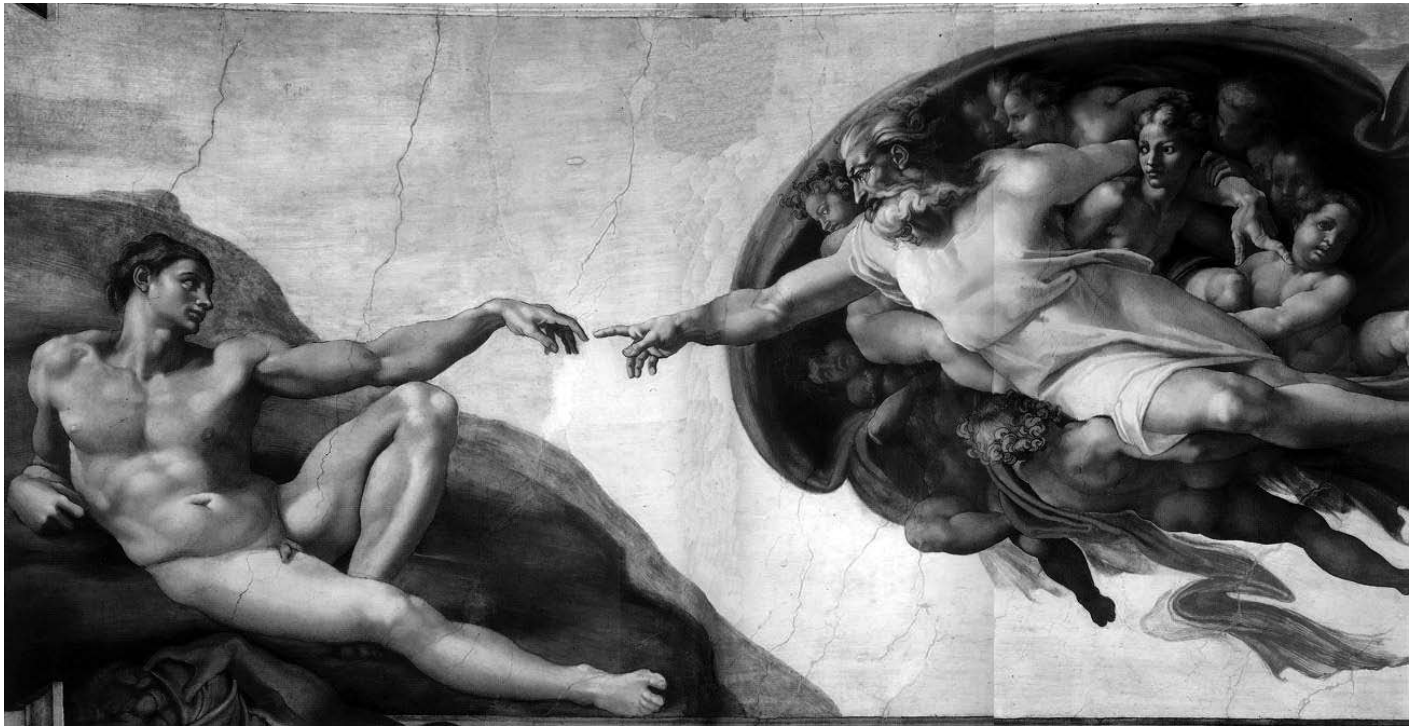
His maleness does not separate him from female human beings any more than he is separate from every other (male) human being. And he himself is a unique human being, as the doctrine of enhypostasis requires—there is no Jesus apart from the specific human individual that he is.⁵

The ramifications of this proposed "updated Cappadocianism" are greater than for art alone; art is simply emblematic of the larger issue. Consider, for example, the case of Daphne Hampson and her book *Theology and Feminism*. Hampson is a post-Christian feminist, because she has come to believe that Christianity is so utterly androcentric that there is simply nothing good to be found in it for women. She notes, as a test case for androcentrism, that everywhere that the gospel has been proclaimed, Jesus has been portrayed artistically in the local skin tones, facial features, and clothing, but almost universally Christ has not been depicted as a woman.⁶ To Hampson this is proof that race is not terribly important, but sex is—so important that men and women are really different kinds of things, and whatever Jesus is or has, women are not and have not.⁷ This assumption drives her whole deconstruction of Christianity. But if the Cappadocian insight (if not quite the philosophy that underpins it) is correct—all is assumed and all is healed—then Hampson's conclusion is mistaken. So are all church practices that suggest anything less than full anthropological unity.

It is curious, then, that we see in Christianity how our artists have shied away from one part of the unity declared in Galatians 3:28 while happily exploiting another for all it's worth. If all is assumed and all is healed, why should this be? Practically, I suspect, it is because every race and culture has both men and women, but many are—or at least have been—racially and culturally homogenous and isolated. A man is familiar to the far-flung regions of the earth in a way a Jew is not; less translation is necessary for the male Jesus than for the Jew-

Albrecht Dürer, *Self-Portraits*: 1500, 1522





Michelangelo, *Creation of Adam*

ish Jesus. On a deeper level, I think it is because we humans are trapped in the Genesis 3 curse of dissension and strife between the sexes. Culturally we take women and men to be more different than we can theologically justify. I believe that this is at the root of the church's failure to ordain women for so long. For the Scriptures are just not terribly interested in the differences between men and women, except insofar as they report on the bad things that result from their maltreatment of each other. Positively nothing is said of women qua women or men qua men; only of the relationships between them.⁸

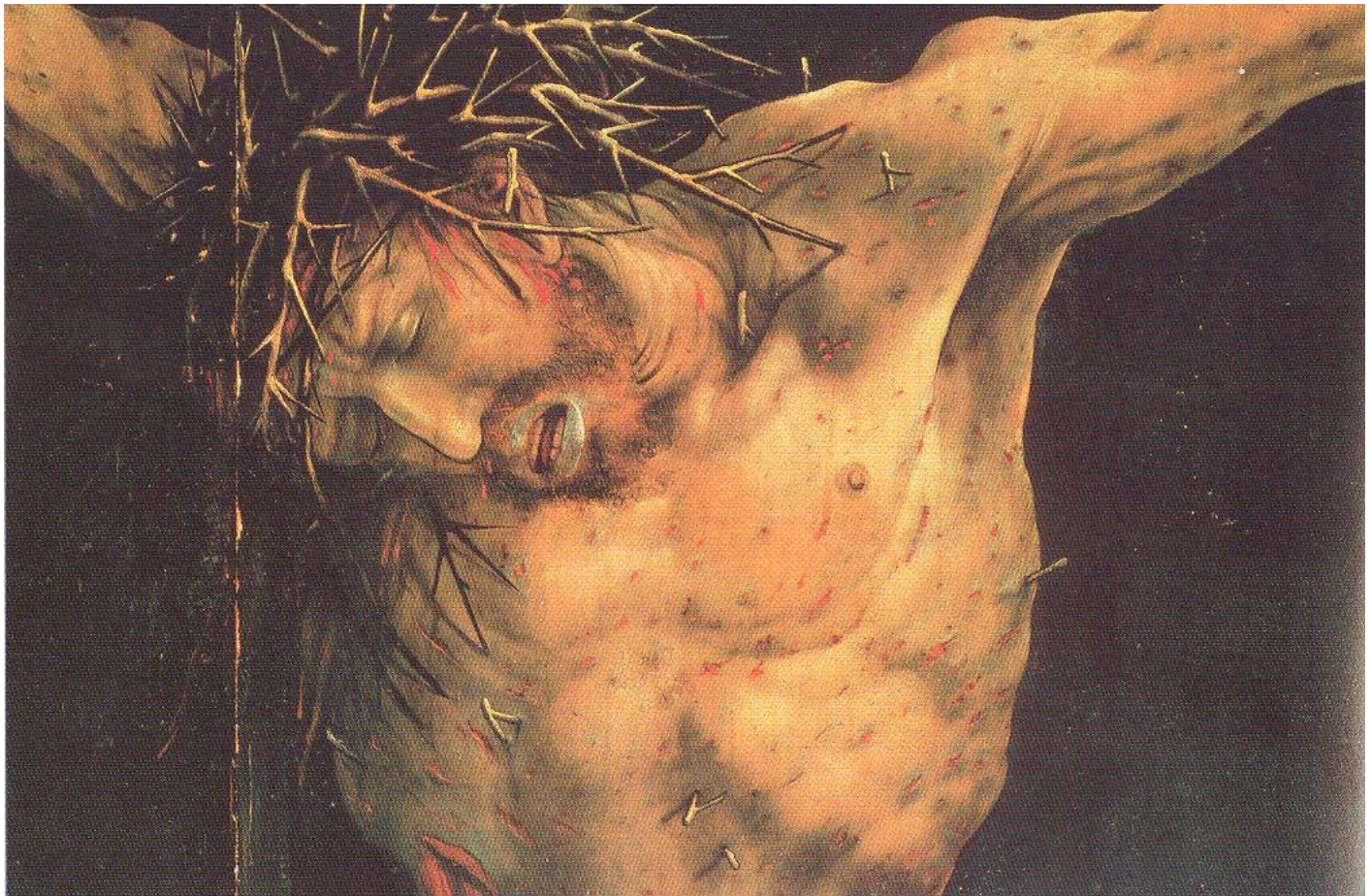
Back to images: some years ago an artist tried to cross this particular artistic boundary. Edwina Sandys created a sculpture of a woman hanging on a cross and called it "Christa." As Daphne Hampson noted, the name itself is telling. Why could it not simply be "Christ"? We do not insist on calling Christs painted in ethnic colors by the local name for him. In a strange way, naming the figure "Christa" actually suggests the insufficiency of the male Christ for the salvation of women. A crucified female identified simply as "Christ" would make the

stronger point: the flesh of women is also assumed and also healed in the crucifixion and resurrection of the historically particular Jewish male Jesus. A female Christ is no more or less historically accurate than He Qi's Chinese Christ, for both truly testify to the total assumption of all humanity in the incarnation. Of course, Sandys was venturing into uncharted territory with no tradition to guide her. But the negative public reaction to her sculpture ended up exposing Christian unwillingness to take seriously the christological anthropology of Basil, Gregory, and Galatians 3, for no non-Jewish Jesus had ever earned such censure. Which means that the "Christa" exposed not only Christian disregard for the unity of the sexes, but also Christian contempt for the Jewishness of Jesus.

For those who thrive on theses, here is what I propose we say about the universality and particularity of Jesus Christ as discerned through the christological witness of the arts. It is incorrect to say, for example, that Jesus is black. It is also incorrect to say that Jesus is *not* black. But it is correct to say: Jesus is *not not* black. And likewise:

we cannot say that Jesus is female, nor should we say he is not female. What we should say is that he is not *not* female. And so on for all human attributes that the particular and historical Jesus did not himself possess. Further, while it is true to say that Jesus is Jewish, let us add that he is not *only* Jewish. While it is true to say that Jesus is male, let us add that he is not *only* male.

The artistic implications of my proposed theses can be demonstrated by none other than the well-known and well-loved Lutheran artist Albrecht Dürer. Twice he committed an artistic no-no almost on par with a female Jesus: he depicted *himself* as Christ. The first time was in the year 1500, before Luther broke on the scene. Here Dürer put himself in the classic christic posture, with the apparent suggestion that human genius derives from and mirrors divine creativity. But the second time, in 1522, Dürer was suffering from malaria, in real danger of death, so he painted his emaciated and naked body gripping a whip and scourge—the instruments of torture used upon Jesus—to align his suffering with Christ's. Roland Bainton, in writing on this second picture, adds a nuance to the general scholarly



Matthias Grünewald, detail of the *Isenheim Altarpiece*

assumption that this is an instance of *imitatio christi*; he proposes that it is more rightly called *conformitas christi*. “The former was an endeavor on the part of man to follow Christ, the latter was a gift conferred by God of likeness to Christ.” Bainton goes on to say that in the age of Luther and Dürer, people “moved in a perpetual Passion play in which each and all might take the role of Christus.”⁹ If conformity to Christ is a gift from God, and any and all might be called upon to undergo this conformation, then there is nothing blasphemous in depicting oneself—or a Chinese man—or a white woman—as Christ. If anything, conformity to Christ is the Holy Spirit’s ultimate goal for us.¹⁰ Yet conformity to Christ does not deprive any of us of our own color or sex or any other individuating feature.

Throughout this discussion, I have been talking about the full assumption of humanity by Jesus as

the basis for universalizing his face and color and sex. But I have deliberately avoided using the more common anthropological confession that we are created in “the image of God” to make this point (although I cited Basil’s usage of it). In Genesis, of course, since there are only two people, there is no race at all; and both the man and the woman are declared together to be made in God’s image and likeness. This “image of God” motif is largely neglected throughout the rest of the Old Testament.¹¹ I take the seed planted in Genesis to reach its full flowering in our christological affirmations about the person of Jesus, who is uniquely “the image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15).

If our humanity (which is first and foremost a physical, biological fact) is located primarily in Jesus Christ, then “the image of God” as applied to *us* should not be taken to mean “the image of the Father.” Rather, it means “the image of the Son,” in

whose humanity our humanity is recognized and blessed, whose full humanity was anticipated by Adam.¹² The Jews always recognized the profound danger of putting a face on Yahweh; Deuteronomy stringently forbids making God look like a male or a female or an animal or anything else (4:15–18). Even in the Christian tradition where the “old” second commandment against graven images was laid aside, it was laid aside only for the Son. It has remained illicit to depict the Father with a human face, even as the Son has been worshipfully accorded countless faces.¹³ As with the Father, so with the Spirit: visual depiction is limited to the various forms in which the Spirit appears, dove or wind or fire, but those appearances of the Spirit do not include hypostatic unions, the Spirit never takes human form at all, and we certainly never *see* the Spirit as such.

Christology always refers us back to the Trinity, and so the christology

of the arts prompts us to assert afresh the difference between the persons of the Father and the Son, and the Spirit and the Son. The Son alone has a human face; the Son alone can and even should be captured artistically; the Son alone has a body that we *can* crucify, and *may* glorify; therefore, insofar as we human beings in our bodies are images of God, we are images of the Son. I emphasize this because it is feminists of the Daphne Hampson type who find Jesus to be the final dealbreaker for women.¹⁴ It is one thing to have a modestly invisible Yahweh, Who accepts male pronouns but rejects male form. But, they say, for God to become incarnate as a male is to tie divinity inextricably to maleness. As the feminist theologian Mary Daly so pithily put it, “If God is male, then male is God.” Christology is thus a stumbling block for this kind of feminism; and even feminists who have not found it necessary to reject the male Christ altogether have sought solace in re-imagining the non-incarnate person of God whom we call the Father as Mother instead (among other images).

Such projects are misguided, I would argue, among other reasons because they start with cultural constructions of motherhood and fatherhood, and femininity and masculinity, and then retroject them back onto the Godhead. But the more significant point I would make is this: such efforts are really failures to recognize the difference between the Father and the Son. It is precisely because the Father has no human face and prohibits all images of Himself (including us in our bodies!), but in Scripture gives us the name Father and the male pronoun to refer to Him, that we dare not tamper and re-image. We cannot know Him and recognize Him in any other way.¹⁵ Rather, it is the historically specific, male, freeborn, Jewish Jesus that we are *free* to re-image, precisely because of his total assumption of humanity.¹⁶ Each of us is made in the Son’s image, so the Son may be found in each of our faces.

Therefore, if we were to play a round of that old theological parlor game, “Which heresy is worse?” I’d vote hands-down for the famous creation fresco of Michelangelo’s, in which we have an old-man God zapping Adam’s finger, over Edwina Sandys’s “Christa.” The Father is not a man and the Father has no human face—certainly not a white beard. But the Son is human and everything that is human is found in the Son.

It should be clear by now that I am sympathetic to Luther’s concern for scriptural accuracy in the arts—so much so that I am urging a greater accuracy than we have generally had so far. But unless this conviction is paired with a christologically explanatory scope for the artistic imagination, we will have little choice but to follow the lead of Karlstadt, Zwingli, and Barth, and tear down the misleading images that fill our churches. Under the banner of strict historical and scriptural accuracy, we would have to say that all of our icons are necessarily idols. For even if we have a rigorously, sensitively Jewish male Jesus in first-century Palestinian dress and hair, what are we going to do about his ears? Or his stature? We don’t actually know what the real man Jesus looked like, but we usually make him handsome and tall (though in all likelihood he was much shorter than the average American!).¹⁷ It is hard to imagine a society more obsessed with physical beauty than ours, so we must consider the possibility that a beautiful Jesus silently promotes our national idolatry. Ages past have undercut the beautiful-Jesus temptation by emphasizing his woundedness, for the cross itself suggests a different aesthetic. But even that doesn’t erase the sight of a beautiful Jesus underneath all those wounds. Isaiah describes a suffering servant who is unattractive even apart from his stripes: “He had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him” (52:3). Would we love an ugly Jesus as well as a handsome one? Or

is this the final breaking point for all our depictions of Christ, proving that we will always lay our sins upon his image, past the point of redemption, undermining all of our pedagogical hopes? Perhaps Barth was right after all!

Barth actually would be right in this case, as to the problem of the piety or impiety of any given artist’s imagination, were it not for one unavoidable fact that Luther brought to light: we are all image-makers. There is a pious or impious artist in each of our heads. There are three options for this artist. This artist can go unchallenged in an iconographically impoverished world. Or, this artist’s inherent racism, sexism, and beauty-ism can be confirmed by an unreformed Christian art inherited from previous ages and cultures. Or, this artist can be taught a christologically richer, truer Christianity by a faithful multiplicity of images that comment upon, correct, and enlighten each other. It is this third option that I would like to commend to the church.

On the one hand, a multiplicity of images of Christ can bespeak blessing upon the created goodness of skin that is white, brown, black, yellow, red, and any combination thereof, and of anatomy that is male or female, and of faces more and less beautiful. On the other hand, the images can convict the sin that assumes an easy alliance with Jesus because one is male or Jewish, as well as the sin that rejects Jesus because one is neither.

These multiplicities may in fact be the only means to dismantle the idolatries of our minds and hearts by giving Jesus a face that we never would have given him ourselves. We all need a Jesus who looks like us to stand with us in our humanity, but perhaps even more we all need a Jesus who looks different from us to stand against us in our sin. Or to put it another way, it is not ultimately for my own sake that I need a Jesus different from myself, but for the sake of my neighbor, so that I may learn to see in my neighbor the humanity that Jesus died to save. For

as you did it to one of the least of these, Jesus said, you did it unto me.

To end back at the beginning, images of Christ are not a means of grace. But they are teachers. If we are going to let them teach in our churches, we must be careful that they are teaching the gospel and not something else. Images of Christ can teach one side of the dialectic of his person or the other, either his particularity or his universality. They cannot teach both at the same time. Only the crucified and risen Lord Jesus in person can hold together at once his unique personhood and his sharing in the humanity of all his sisters and brothers.¹⁸ But images can teach us about this particular and universal Lord while we are waiting for the last day—when we will finally see him face to face. ✠

Notes

1. See the artist's statement on www.heqi-gallery.com, accessed April 10, 2008. Consider also, from the opening editorial in the Lutheran arts issue of *Christianity and the Arts* (August–October 1997): "According to Chinese Lutheran artist He Qi, 'It has been said in China: One more Christian, one less Chinese.' But with artworks like the resurrected Christ featured on the front cover, he seeks to change that perception... The Chinese have long associated Christianity with Western culture. Qi has generally sought to remedy this misunderstanding with works that introduce the gospel story to Chinese culture. In the case of the [LWF] assembly's poster, however, Qi's focus was on the universality of Christ. This is represented in His outstretched arms and nail-scarred hands, which show he is no longer nailed to the cross and transcends time and space," 4.

2. First Epistle Against Apollinarius (Epistle 51, To Cledonius).

3. Basil of Caesarea, "On the Origin of Man," Homily 1.18. Quoted in Elisabeth Behr-Sigel, *The Ministry of Women in the Church*, trans. Steven Bigham (Redondo Beach, California: Oakwood, 1987), 88.

4. This is why it is fundamentally wrong to clone human beings. Cloning deliberately refuses individuality to a new life.

5. This in turn perhaps raises the question of the virgin birth: *does* Jesus actually share our same genetic code? Let it be said, whatever else one may think about it, that the virgin birth does *not* mean that Jesus has half of our DNA structure inherited from Mary and the

other half supernaturally supplied by the Holy Spirit. This would in any case suggest that Jesus is not fully human after all, maybe just half human and half "divine" (if divinity could be genetically encoded!). Orthodox christology rather insists that Jesus is entirely human and entirely divine at the same time. It should also be noted that the evangelist with the "highest" christology—John—knows nothing of a virgin birth and mentions Jesus' human father Joseph by name while never mentioning his mother by name; yet the evangelist with the "lowest" christology—Luke—is the one who devotes the most attention to the virgin mother Mary.

6. It was this observation that first got me thinking about art and christology, for which I thank Hampson most sincerely!

7. Daphne Hampson, *Theology and Feminism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 76–77.

8. Christians of the conservative stripe are generally at great pains to prove that there is some great chasm (occasionally labelled an "ontological" one) between the being of men and the being of women, presumably out of the conviction that this safeguards the moral teaching of the Scriptures. Besides the fact that there is no biblical grounds for positing this chasm (the only places where male and female are discussed in terms of "being" is in Genesis 1 and 2, where they are proclaimed both to be in the image of God and of the same flesh and bone, and in Galatians 3, where their distinctive "being" as male and female becomes null and void in the unity of Christ), such a conclusion inadvertently credits Hampson with having discovered the truth about Christianity. If men and women are different kinds of things, then women cannot be saved by a male Christ, a Bible written mostly (probably entirely) by men cannot speak to female experience, and women would be wiser to cut out now. If the concern is to preserve the Scriptures' teaching on sexual morality, conservative efforts would be better spent on understanding how the Scriptures so comfortably *both* proclaim the ontological unity of men and women *and* command monogamous lifelong marriage between one man and one woman. The apparent disconnect is a contemporary one, not a scriptural one.

9. Roland H. Bainton, "The Man of Sorrows in Dürer and Luther," in *Studies on the Reformation* (Boston: Beacon, 1963), 51, 60.

10. Another example comes from a pastor friend of mine working in an inner city parish. She was trying to explain to her parishioners how they were all images of God. A child with Down's Syndrome asked her, "Does God have Down's Syndrome like me?" Clearly, if our starting point is the divine perfections, this question is at best cute and at worst blasphemous. Viewed through Christ's incarnation, suffering, and resurrection, though, it is a profound expression of *conformitas christi*—and perhaps a timely rebuke to those who place more

value on native intelligence than on walking in the way of the cross.

11. See Frederick J. Gaiser, "'To Whom Then Will You Compare Me?'" Agency in Second Isaiah," *Word & World* 19/2 (1999): 141–152. Throughout Isaiah, when God asks whether anyone compares to Him, the answer is always no—no human being can claim to be like God. But Gaiser suggests that the deliberate use of the term "likeness" from Genesis 1 in Isaiah 40, leading into the servant songs in the following chapters, allows for an unprecedented identification between Yahweh and the suffering servant. In the light of the New Testament's identification of the suffering servant with Jesus the Christ, then, only the Son is the likeness of the Father.

12. Astute readers will notice here a debt to Karl Barth, despite my disagreement with him earlier. What is human *is* human because it shares in the Son of God's primary humanity—that is Barth's conviction and one that I am glad to share.

13. Of course, this prohibition was breached on occasion.

14. See especially her first chapter, "Methodology."

15. Interestingly, Jesus issued a dire warning about the use of the term "father": he told us not to call any human person father, for the true Father is the heavenly one. This in turn places grave restrictions on drawing any conclusions about God the Father's unique characteristics on analogy to human fathers.

16. Already the Scriptures regularly imagine the freeborn Jesus as a slave (Philippians 2, for instance); that boundary line is freely blurred.

17. One curious constant in pictures of Jesus is long hair. This strikes me as particularly odd since we have a scriptural injunction against long hair on men: "Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair it is a disgrace for him?" (1 Corinthians 11:14).

18. My thanks to Paul R. Hinlicky for helping me to clarify this point.