

## Christmas 1 2021

In the prologue to John's gospel, he tells us that Christ was in the beginning with God.

We tend to equate Christ with Jesus, but Jesus was not in the beginning, only Christ.

Christ later came into the world as Jesus, but first, Christ was the pattern for all of

creation—the divine blueprint,

or, as John writes, Christ was the Word, the λόγος, the logic and reason behind the

creation.

Simply put, the universe is an expression of God's meaning, of God's love.

That *can* sound almost pollyanna-ish—pretty words for a pretty occasion that have very

little relationship with reality.

It is true that this world is harsh, but it is never without meaning, and we are never

without the possibility of showing love.

As John describes it, “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not

overcome it.”

The darker it is, in fact, the more the light stands out.

We Christians are those who follow a star, who follow the light through the darkness.

The bold claim of Christianity is that the entire creation is an outpouring of God, an

incarnation of God, as ordered by Christ.

Everything contains God.

Everything is sacred.

That includes you, me, and the pebbles on the ground.

Everything in the world contains the light of God.

All things fit together, all things work together, all things are purposeful.

This has many implications for us.

First, it means that, rather than seeking to dominate the world, we must learn to work with it, to understand the connections between things and to cooperate rather than to control.

Sir Francis Bacon claimed that we needed to vex nature in order to make her give up her secrets.

This attitude of control and domination has blinded us to the deleterious effects of our behavior.

We have become so enamored of the idea of living like gods that we neglect to value being a part of something.

We want to stand above rather than be a member of.

The more we stand above, however, the more alienated and empty we become.

The only things that make us feel whole are being in relationship with the world and one another, being a meaningful part of creation.

We feel at peace only when we dwell in these deep interconnections.

Second, if the whole universe is meaningful, then each of us has a role to play in it.

We are either sharing the light, or we are blocking it and increasing the darkness.

This depends on whether we think in terms of competition or cooperation.

Are we focused on proving ourselves or improving the world?

Do we see others in terms of what they can provide for us or how they fit into the world?

When we choose the second of these options, we are able to let the light of God shine  
through us.

When we choose the first, on the other hand, we become opaque and cast a long shadow.

We can block the light, but we cannot extinguish it.

It can take us many years of our lives to realize this distinction,

to understand that not everyone is cooperating, not everyone lets the light shine through.

Once we grasp this, we then realize the great importance of letting the light shine

through ourselves, of looking for solutions rather than pointing out problems, of  
looking for light rather than focusing on darkness.

This means that we have a choice and we have a home.

We can choose whether to focus on the light or on the dark, whether to cast a shadow or  
to be part of the solution.

It also means that, though the world may work to alienate us, to divide us, to shame us, we actually have a place in the world equally important to the place of anyone else.

We have a role to play in the creation.

It is our decision whether or not we participate in the Christ-determined creation, whether we pass on or block the light.

That is the implication of living in a Christ-soaked world.