

Some thoughts on Jesus' "Open Friendship" (Moltmann) and "the color-line" (Du Bois)

1. "Herein lie buried things which if read with patience may show the strange meaning of being black here in the dawning of the Twentieth Century. This meaning is not without interest to you, Gentle Reader; for the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line." (W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Forethought," *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) How prophetic!!! Liberation struggles in Europe's colonies around the world...Jim Crow segregation meeting resistance in the American civil rights movement ...historic legislation in the 60s....
2. Liberation spirituality (Gutierrez *A Theology of Liberation* 202): "By preaching the Gospel message, by its sacraments, and by the charity of its members, the Church proclaims and shelters the gift of the Kingdom of God in the heart of human history." (11) our theology is "indissolubly linked to historical practices"

"This radical liberation is the gift which Christ offers us. ...the Christian life is a Passover, a transition from sin to grace, from death to life, from injustice to justice," from the inhuman to the new creation (176)

[This] spirituality is inspired by the Spirit, of living the gospel, "before the Lord" and in solidarity with all, especially the exploited social class, the despised race, the dominated country. (204-5)

3. Liberating actions are part of our social, "political discipleship" (Jurgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 318)

Human emancipation from alienating dealings with others is only possible when different kinds of people encounter each other without anxiety, superiority or repressed feelings of guilt and regard their differences as fruitful, working together productively. (333)

"Accept one another 'as Christ has accepted you.' Only this attitude can give us a new orientation...It opens us up for others...."(Moltmann, *The Passion for Life*, 30) We stand on firm ground whenever we accept, recognize, and confirm each other. We cannot go far enough. In view of the life that has been passionately confirmed and accepted by God, there is no longer any worthless life, no 'second-class' citizens. (32)

"The contemptuous name 'friend of sinners' unintentionally expresses the truth of Jesus. As friend, he reveals God's friendship to those who have been treated in such unfriendly fashion. (56) The closed circle of friendship among peers is broken in principle by Christ.... For this reason Christian friendship cannot be lived within a closed circle of the faithful and pious, of peers in other words, but only in open affection and public respect of others. (61) It does not 'have to' happen at all; it happens wherever men and women are seized by joy in god, in people, and in the world. Open friendship transfigures an often unpleasant world." (63)