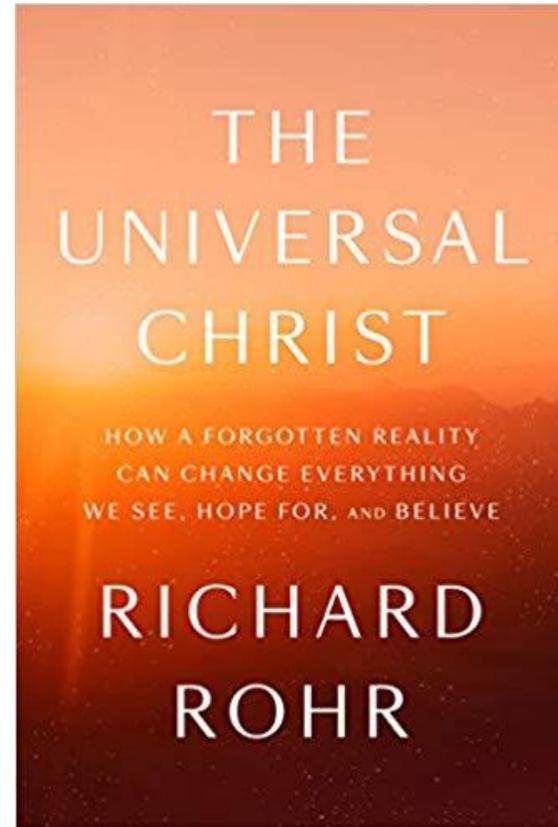


# The Universal Christ: *Original Goodness.*

*Earth's crammed with heaven, And  
every common bush afire with  
God; But only he who sees takes  
off his shoes...*

*Elizabeth Barrett Browning*

*Aurora Leigh*



## Rio Grand Gnarled Cottonwood

Divine perfection is precisely the ability to include what seems like imperfection

From the first moment of the Big Bang, nature was revealing the glory and goodness of the Divine Presence.

Jesus is the gift that honored the gift

Today many Christians limit God's provident care to (very few) humans!



Rohr points to “the imperfect”  
Daniel 3:57-82  
Psalms 98, 104, and 148  
Job 12:7-10  
Job 38-39

# The Great Chain of Being

“..to work up to loving God, start by loving the very humblest and simplest things, and then move up from there.” St Bonaventure

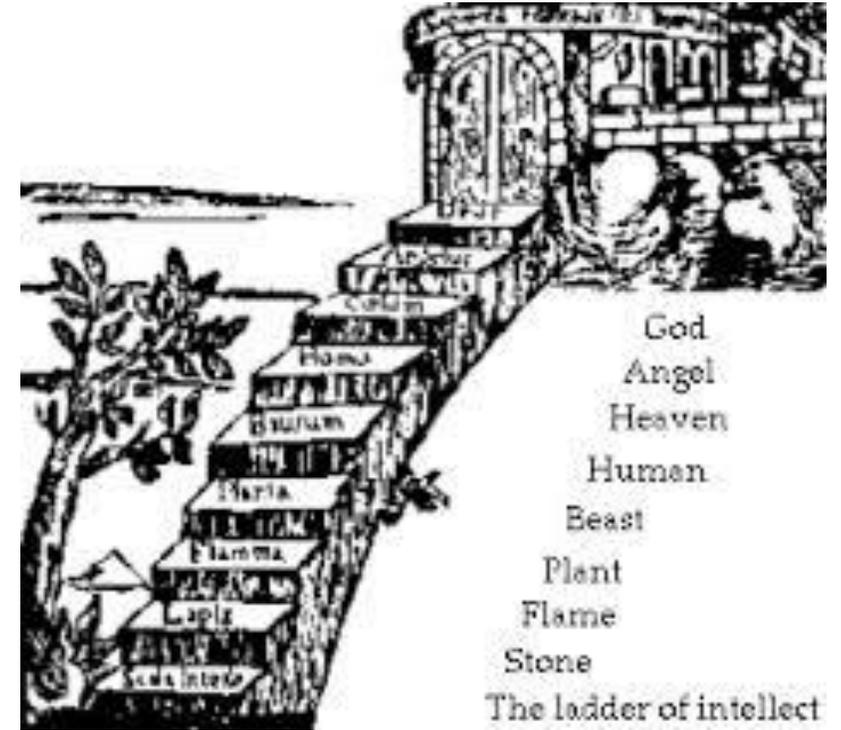
Don't start by trying to love God... even humans; start with rocks, work up...

“Anyone who says he loves God and hates his brother is a liar.” Jn 4:20

Did God have nothing to say for 13.7 billion years?

It takes contemplative practice

Creation 6 days... 7<sup>th</sup> Sabbath Rest



Original Goodness; Not Original Sin

Religion task: find divine goodness in everything.

divine mirror:

The Mind of Christ—fully knows and loves us from all eternity and reflects that image back to us.

happy & healthy

loneliness & alienation - violence

Implanted knowing... 1 John 21

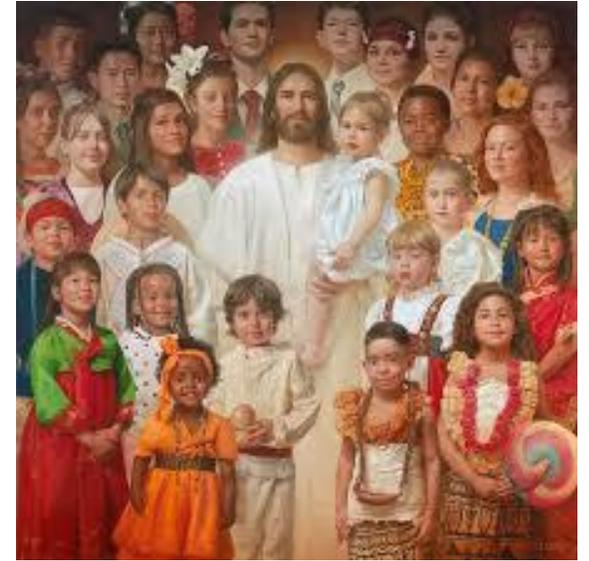
consciousness

soul

“the Law written in your heart” Jer 31:3

“indwelling of the Holy Spirit”

We are children of God... what we will be is yet to be revealed... we are like God 1 Jn 3:2



## Original Goodness; Not Original Sin (continued)

...all we will know is that we are like God, for we will finally see God as he really is! 1 Jn 3:2  
It is somehow *Being Itself*

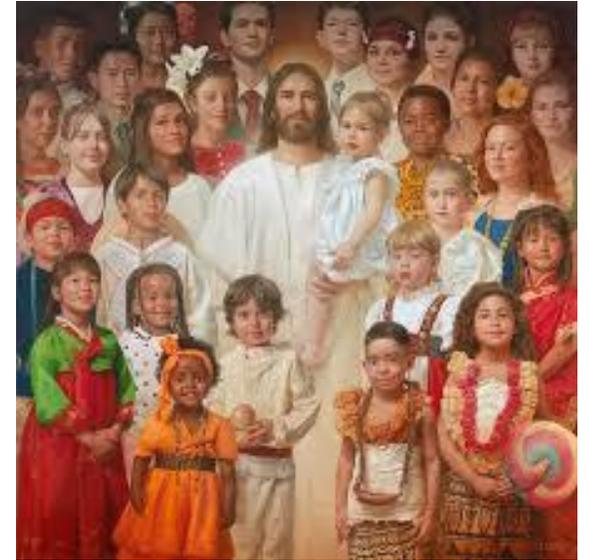
All creatures carry the divine DNA

“original participation”

“original blessing” or “original innocence”

“unwoundedness”

the “image of God” is absolute and unchanging  
pure and total gift



Original Goodness; Not Original Sin (continued)

Original Goodness complicated by *original sin*

Augustine (not mentioned in the Bible)

Adam & Eve ... fall (Rohr: “problem”)

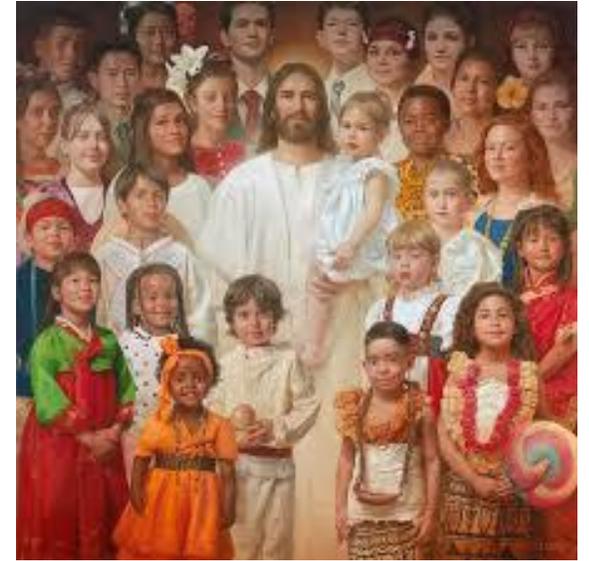
Jesus death rather than his life was defined as saving us!

“original sin” was good and helpful: it taught us... *the frailty and woundedness that we all carry.*

*Martin Luther “pile of manure”*

*John Calvin “total depravity”*

*Jonathan Edwards “sinners in the hands of an angry God”*

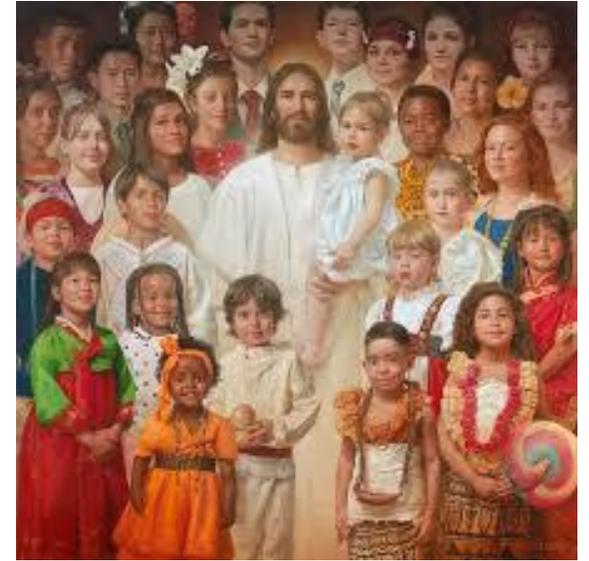


## Original Goodness; Not Original Sin (continued)

All done in the name of the one who  
did not come for the “righteous” or “virtuous, but  
for “sinners” Lk 15:1-7  
and to give us “life, and life abundantly” Jn 10:10

A theology of sin management (schizophrenic religion)  
People refuse to take the “Christian storyline seriously.

The Christian story line must start with a positive and  
overarching vision for humanity and for history or it  
will never get beyond the primitive, exclusionary, and  
fear-based stages of most early human development.



## Holding on to a Positive Vision

Brain studies: may be hardwired to focus on problems at the expense of a positive vision.

Rick Hanson, neuroscientist: we must consciously hold on to a positive thought or feeling for a minimum of 15 seconds before it leaves any imprint in the neurons... Velcro/Teflon theory of the mind.

The only way to increase authentic spirituality is to deliberately practice actually enjoying a positive response and grateful heart. *“neuroplasticity”*

*Jesus emphasized the absolute centrality of inner motivation and intention... Matt 5:20 -6:18*



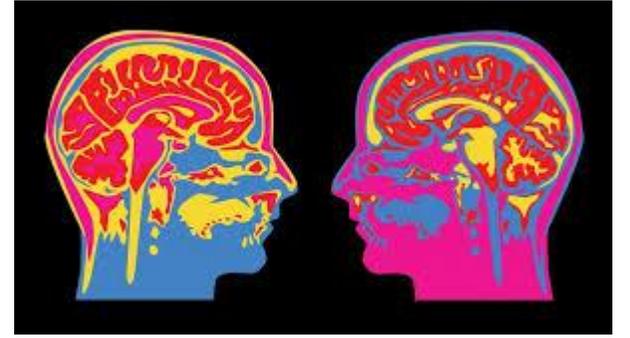
## Holding on to a Positive Vision

We must make a daily, even hourly choice to focus on the good, the true, and the beautiful  
Paul Philippians 4:4-9 “Rejoice in the Lord *always*”

Paul: “There are only three things that last, faith, hope, and love” 1 Cor 13:13

Theological virtues: “participation in the very life of God”

The Christian life is simply a matter of becoming who we already are (1 Jn 3:1-2 2 Peter 1:3-4)



# Holding on to a Positive Vision

## Trust

A trust in inner coherence itself: “It all means something!” (Faith)

A trust that this is positive and going somewhere good (Hope)

A trust that this includes me and even defines me (Love)

vs. cynicism, victim playing and making, and common self-pity

Reclaim Jesus as an inclusive Savior instead of an exclusionary Judge, as a Christ who holds history together as the cosmic Alpha and Omega.

