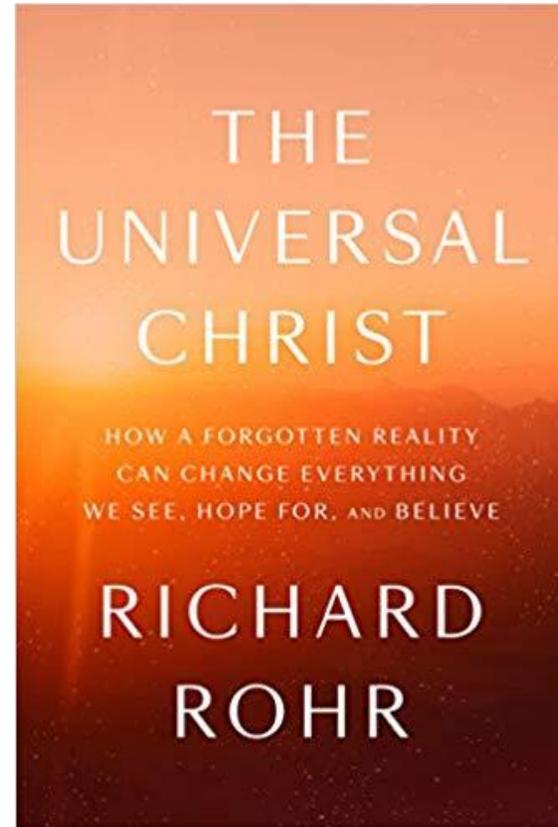


16

Chapter 15

The Universal Christ: *Two Witnesses to Jesus and Christ.*



A woman who became a follower and friend of Jesus after he had cast seven demons out of her (Lk 8:2)



Mentioned 12 times throughout the Gospels (more than most apostles).

(Prostitution is never mentioned as one of her demons... Rohr: I suspect sex is *our* demon and we projected it on to her).

All Gospels: Mary Magdalene with Jesus's mother and other women at the crucifixion.

Mary questions the “gardener.”

The man simply pronounces her name, “Mary!”

“she turned,” “she knew,” or “turning to face him

She cries out, “Rabbuni!” which means “Master.”

She sees relationally instead of merely physically. Still Jesus, but he has become fully the Christ.





Jesus the Christ speaks a somewhat shocking line:
“Do not touch me” or “Do not cling to me”

Mary sees the one before her in a different way:
relationally vs. merely physically

It is still Jesus, but he has fully become the Christ.

Jesus was not being aloof or rejecting Mary’s friendship,
he was saying that the Christ is untouchable *in a singular* form because he is omnipresent *in all forms*.

The “gardener”

wayfarer on the road to Emmaus

a man tending a cooking fire by the lake

Jesus in the process of returning to his God and Father
(my God and my Father; your God and your Father)

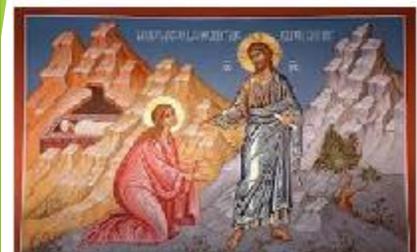
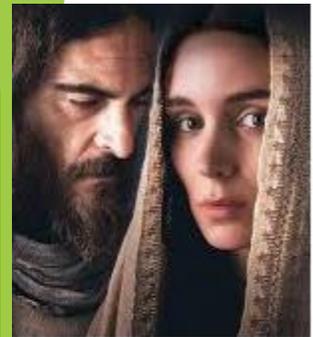
(Rohr: same kind of presence that so many people
experience right after the passing of a friend.)

Repeating “my” and “your” twice the text is trying to communicate that the event under way describes one common and shared God experience - his and ours.

This is the first premonition of what will become the doctrine of the Body of Christ, the radical unity between Christ and all people.

The first witness to the Omnipresent Christ... Mary passed the good news to the “apostles.” (“witness to the resurrection”)

Like Mary, we need to start with the concrete encounter before we move to the universal experience available to all. Spiritual knowing is an inner encounter and a calm inner knowing (soul knowledge)



Mary took her journey not by grasping on to the old Jesus, but by letting him introduce her to the even larger Christ. (Rohr: if we don't learn how to send people on inner journeys or *love journeys*, the whole religious project will continue to fall apart...)



Mark 16:12: “he showed himself under another form”
Other texts have him bilocating, passing through doors, walking on water.

Mary Magdalene serves as a witness to personal love and intimacy... then in the garden at Easter, she experienced a sudden shift of recognition toward the universal Presence of Christ.





Paul

Unlike Mary Magdalene, the apostle Paul never knew Jesus in the flesh; he only and forever knew the Risen Christ.

Paul's favorite phrase "*en Cristo*"

moved from narrow religion to universal vision: Paul started with Christ and made a full identification with Jesus, whose voice he heard on the Damascus road.

Read Paul as personal and cultural transformation vs. arguments about sin and salvation...

"Why do you persecute me?" (not my followers)

typical conversion progression, from self-love, to group-love, to universal love.



In Paul's understanding, Jesus had come to offer us a true alternative social order here and not just a "way to heaven" later.

Jesus directed his critical attention toward people who did not think they were sinners, who could not see their own shadows or dark sides, or acknowledge their complicity in the world's domination systems.

Jesus exposed the root cause of evil (almost always some form of idolatry) and did not waste time on the mere symptoms...

Sin, salvation, and forgiveness are always corporate, social and historical concepts for the Jewish prophets and for Paul.



Paul intended that his new people “live in the church,” and go out to the world. (We still have it backward: living fully in the worldly systems and occasionally going to church).

...looking at the statistics, we will see that Christians are not leaving Christianity as much as they are realigning with groups that live Christian values in the world, instead of just gathering to hear the readings, recite the creed,....



What matters is that God’s heart be made available and active on this earth



Just as the Universal Christ moved forward for billions of years without any name at all, so the Still-Evolving Christ continues to do the same. God is quite obviously very humble and patient.

If God can use a woman with seven devils and a murderous religious zealot to be his primary witnesses, then What were they witnessing to?

Not just some new ideas

But

a new lifestyle

a life energy

a worldview that really believed in “liberty and justice for all.”

