

"I John, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life' is describing the 'way' by which all humans and all religions must allow matter and spirit to operate as one."

The full Christian story is saying Jesus died and Chris arose as the corporate personality who includes and reveals all creation in its full purpose and goal.

"God was consistent in working through one man to reveal himself everywhere, as well as through the other parts of His creation, so that nothing was left devoid of divinity and his self knowledge so that the whole universe was filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the water fill the sea. The process is incarnation or salvation.

THE GOOD NEWS is we all can share in divine nature". In Genesis 1:26-27 we see "let us create in our image." The "our" is not a typo.

The soul of every creature could be easily seen as the self knowledge of God. Thus salvation might best be called "restoration." What we call the "soul" of every creature could be seen as the self knowledge of God.

As long as we keep god imprisoned in a retributive (retaliatory) frame instead of a restorative frame, we really have no substantial "**Good News,**" **no** substantial Gospel; it is neither good nor new, but the same old tired story line of history." We pull God down to our level.

This brings to mind Crossan's theme -- "*distributive justice vs. retribution justice*" as it parallels "Love vs. Selfishness." Of course there is no good news in retribution or selfishness; both of these prevail in our every day existence. The good news is that the opposite is possible, and it starts with each of us. And as is the 6th line of the Lord's Prayer, we are forgiven through forgiveness (sharing/distributing the love, relinquishing selfishness first).

"Faith at its essential core is accepting that you are accepted. How you get there is where you arrive."

I am, at this point, coming to the notion of Good News or the Gospel being experienced, rather than just being heard, which is the context that I normally put news. In other words accepting that I am accepted is actually experiencing God.

This brings me to Raimon Panikkar's discussion of "Faith," "Acts of Faith" and "belief" on pages 29 to 33 in his book, "*The Experience of GOD: Icons of the Mystery*." In short Panikkar term-differentiation helps distinguish faith from belief: one is accepting acceptance while the latter is thinking that you might be. The definitions follow:

Faith is "the capacity of opening to something "more," a capacity not given us either by senses or by intelligence." It is to surrender logic to the heart. It can be cultivated.

Acts of faith are “those activities by which we put our faith into practice. . . It is not a conditioned reflex; each is a free act that does not cut us off from the human condition but, on the contrary, allows our condition to attain its plenitude. “

Belief is “the formulation, the doctrinal articulation, generally announced by collectivity, which has crystallized progressively during the course of time in propositions, phases, affirmations, and, to use the Christian word, dogmas or doctrines. Belief is the more or less coherent symbolic expression of faith, often formulated in conceptual terms.”

Seeing & Recognizing are Not the Same.

The core message of the incarnation of God in Jesus is the divine Presence is here, in us and all creation, and not only “over there” in some other realm, (D’bwashmaya). The early Christians came to call this seemingly new and available Presence “both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36), and Jesus became the big billboard that announced god’s message in a personal way along the speedy highway of history. God needed something, or someone, to focus our attention. Jesus serves that role quite well.

- The four Gospels describe how the risen Christ transcends doors, walls, spaces, ethnicities, religions water, air, and times, eating food and sometimes even bi-locating. But always interacting with matter . . . a new kind of presence, a new kind of embodiment, and a new kind of godliness.
- Seeing and recognizing are not the same. We can read about these apparitions, see them in the mind’s eye, but do we recognize the Christ in it all? Usually not immediately. I think it takes a little of what Panikkar calls “Faith,” to begin to see meaning in any scripture, much less these particular apparitions.
 - Sacred moments of grace, sacraments, set a stage of expectation and desire that God’s presence can be seen in the ordinary and the material and we do not have to wait for supernatural apparitions. The visual and the tactile can be the door way to the invisible.
 - Though the Tres Dias community seem a little too fundamental for me these days, it was one of their weekends, back in 1989, that provided a visual and tactile experience that enabled me to see the invisible. Come Sunday, the final day of the weekend I could see Christ in everybody else face. It was like the candle flame mentioned; the weekend at some point began to blaze and it began to hold a personal meaning, and now a divine memory, for me.
 - Paul’s message connects Jesus’ single body with the rest of the human species, (1Corinthians 12:12ff), 1Corinthians 11:17ff and (Romans 8:18). This connection is also made in the gospel of John:1-14. With the Logos becoming flesh.

The sacramental principle is this: Begin with a concrete moment of encounter, based in this physical world, and the soul universalizes from there, so that what is true here becomes true everywhere else too. It is there that we must surrender, even if the object itself seems more than a bit unworthy of our awe, trust (faith), or surrender. Fundamentalists have trouble with this; they think Catholics are idle

worshippers, as in with the Israelites and the golden calf. I guess we can find flaws in their form of worship as well. ☺

Light and Enlightenment

“In Jesus Christ, God’s own broad, deep, and all-inclusive worldview is made available to us.”

“The true light that enlightens every person was coming into the world” This is not a one time thing; it is the forever coming of Christ . . . the ongoing promise of eternal resurrection.”

“ A mature Christian sees Christ in everything and every one else.”

“Jesus had no trouble at all with otherness. In fact, these lost sheep found out they were not lost to him at all, and tended to be his best followers.

Humans were fashioned to love people more than to love principles, and Jesus fully exemplified this pattern.

“God is not a God of the dead but of the living – for to him all people are alive!!”

An undivided church has not existed for 1,000 years. “The only thing Jesus excluded was exclusion itself.” This sings loudly to me; all I see around me, within the “body of Christ “or the church, are efforts of division. What I don’t understand is why I can’t reconcile in my own heart that division is simply a fact of worldly existence and get on with carrying my own cross, behind Jesus.

“I AM who I AM” god is clearly not tied to a name, nor does he seem to want us to tie the divinity to any one name. God gave us not a name but only pure presence – no handle that would allow us to think we “know” who god is or have him or her in our own private possession.”

“He came in mid-tone skin, from the underclass, a male body with a female soul from an often hated religion living in the very cusp of east and west. No one owns him and no one ever will.”

Loving Jesus , Loving Christ.

“Love by Jesus enlarges our heart capacity. Love by Christ enlarges our mental capacity. History has shown that worship of Jesus without whorship of Christ invariably becomes a time and culture bound religion, often ethnic or even implicitly racist, which excludes much of humanity from God’s embrace.”

“If it helps you to love and to hope, then it is true religion of Christ. No circumscribed group can ever claim that title.”

“ . . . the true self is always hidden with Christ in God.”

“You are a child of god, and always will be, even when you don’t believe it.”

“When my isolated ‘I’ turns into a connected ‘we’ we have moved from Jesus to Christ. We no longer have to carry the burden of being a perfect ‘I’ because we are saved ‘in Christ,’ and as Christ”. As we end our prayers, “THROUGH Christ our Lord, Amen.”