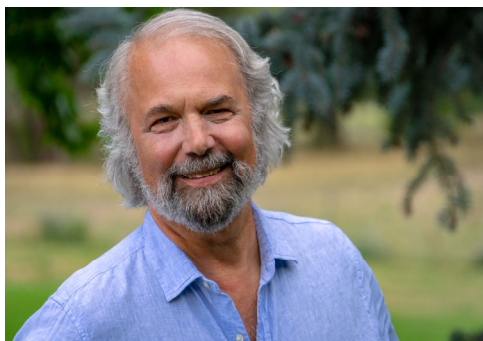


UNCHURCHIFIED SPIRITUALITY

PULSE OF SPIRIT
APRIL 17, 2024



DAVID KARCHERE is a speaker and workshop leader who assists people to renew their Primal Spirituality—an experience that virtually all human beings know at birth, and that ideally grows as they mature.

Do you consider yourself to have a good BS meter? I do. Particularly when it comes to essential matters of personal growth and spirituality. Knowing how crucial they are, I don't want to accept something as true into my experience when it isn't. And honestly, there are many people in the world with mixed motivations in this arena.

The Christian world can be like that for me. There are a lot of well-intentioned Christians in the world. And I love some of the messages I hear from people who are active Christians. Nonetheless, I hear a lot that I can't buy and that doesn't ring true—that doesn't sound right for me and doesn't resonate with what I know of Jesus of Nazareth.

I grew up in a Unitarian church. I don't think my parents placed much significance on Jesus. I remember being about eight years old when I heard Jesus' saying, *Turn the other cheek*. I

was halfway up the stairs in the house I grew up in, sitting on the oak stair and looking through the white banister at my mother. I asked her, *Was Jesus a real person?* She told me that historians don't know if he was a real person or not.

It was an unsatisfying answer for me as a child. But despite what she said, Jesus' saying had penetrated deeply for me—a tribute to his power as a teacher that a Unitarian kid two thousand years later could intuitively understand his message of love and non-reaction.

As a young adult, I had a full-on encounter with the Christ Spirit Jesus brought into the world. It was in a one-month class with Martin Cecil, Grace Van Duzen, and Bill Bahan. It satisfied the longing in my heart that I had expressed to my mother years before. And nothing set off the internal alarms I have

for pronouncements that don't ring true. The encounter affected my whole life. (That's as close as I come to a Christian testimony.)

This past Christmastime, I began thinking about Jesus of Nazareth and what happened to the message he brought to the world. A book started to write itself in my head, so I figured I had better write it down.

The more I wrote, the more came. I researched what he said. And then what the world did with what he said. And why.

He was born into a Jewish family and grew up in the Jewish tradition. He wasn't bucking that tradition. Nonetheless, he brought a radically new vision to the world.

The subjects Jesus addressed are strewn throughout the four gospels of the New Testament. I wondered, *What was he really saying? What was so radical about it?*

So I organized his teaching as it is represented in the red-letter words in the gospels (the words that are represented as what he, himself, said). When I put it together, I was overwhelmed by the truth he invited people to know for themselves. Essentially, it came down to this: *the fulfillment of love and knowing.*

This was what was so radical. Before that, people had taught a fearful kind of love in gods from afar. But they didn't teach the fulfillment of love in the human experience.

They taught superstitious faith without knowledge. But they hadn't taught that we have the opportunity to actually know—not

just believe—to know the Creator, ourselves, and each other.

The next part of my research was looking to identify, *What happened? How was his message received by those who were with him? What did people do with it after he was gone?*

Christianity has tried to characterize how people responded to Jesus as fate or destiny—God's plan. Doesn't that cover over what people did and did not do? Especially the really terrible part of all that?

What did the church do to his message? I had a general idea, as most of us do, because we all have some familiarity with Christianity today. We are at least somewhat familiar with where it all went. *But how did it get there?*

I researched the documents and the teachings of the apostles, the early church, and then the Roman Catholic Church. I read the Nicene Creed, and then what Martin Luther got up to. I felt like a detective.

I found points in history where it went all wrong—when the church said *this* when Jesus had said *that*. And they were not the same! Nonetheless, everyone believed the church and ignored the profound message Jesus had brought.

That's it! That's when it happened! I thought. *That's where it went off.*

What I found was that the people with Jesus and those who came after him tended to ignore what he taught and then thought about him in the same superstitious, ignorant, unloving way that people had been acting for millennia. And then they got on with their

business as usual. Seemingly, he hardly put a dent in human culture.

But wait a minute. That's not quite true. Even though his original teaching was covered over with the superstitious faith without knowledge that Christianity has tended to promote over the centuries, his teaching was so potent that it has had a profound subliminal impact on all humankind. It affected every little boy sitting on a staircase, every girl walking in the park, and every human soul who has longed to know love fulfilled in their life, as we all do.

What he brought was so potent that even though it has hardly persisted at a conscious level, the power of it has been at work in the mass subconscious ever since. And now it is surfacing.

The title of my book is *Primal Christianity: Uncovering the Original Teachings of Jesus of Nazareth*. It is about pulling off the shroud of superstitious faith without knowledge from the body of teaching he brought to the world.

Writing it has been such an exciting experience that I have been speaking about it to almost everyone I meet. Here is what I found. *It is surprising how many people have touched the spirit that Jesus brought to the world and feel deep love and affinity with that spirit. At the same time, many of the people I spoke to had lost their vivid sense of connection with him due to their feeling of alienation from the Christian church (including Catholicism).*

Then, at times, I received a *thank you* from people for giving them a way to connect to the Christ Spirit without it having to be

churchified. This desire to connect for real is present throughout the world, often right beneath the surface, out of conscious view. Somehow, we feel the monumental impact he brought to the world, like an underwater boulder in the ocean, hidden by the waves on the surface.

In his book *The Air We Breathe*, Glen Scrivener speaks of how revolutionary Jesus' message was and how it changed the course of world culture. The ideals of empathy, compassion, and equality are all born out of what he brought to the world. And they were largely foreign to the ancient world. Not that we practice those things perfectly today. But still, they are in the air in a way they weren't before Jesus was here. For instance, slavery was just accepted in the Greco-Roman world. There is still slavery in the world today, but by and large it's not accepted.

Jesus spoke a prayer late in his life, the *Prayer of Intercession*. And it is a prayer of oneness, of fulfilled love. This was radical. Can you tell me of any place in the ancient world where they were teaching this?

The prayer contains these beautiful words:

That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us...

John 17:21

I in them, and thou in me...

John 17:23

I invite you to enter a meditation on these things for yourself relative to the people in your world.

Thou in me....

Let the one you are addressing be real for you.

I in them....

Now, let people in your world come to mind.

This is clearly a spiritual exercise. So let this spirit of the One you are addressing come into you.

Thou in me....

And let the spirit of that One, known by you, as you, be available to the people of your world who welcome it.

I in them....

This is the consummation of our love with the Divine. And it is the fulfillment of the highest love with our neighbor. This is the oneness Jesus taught.

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