

YOUR PERSONAL CHANGE

two sides of the same path

By Dorothy Weston Gibbons

The Mary Magdalen Community called me out, touched my soul and forced me to consider a different world, one filled with possibilities.

As our study group crawled through the catacombs of the fragments of her life, we discovered a different history, which could “re-story” our future.

In the Gospel of Mary,* her role in the early Christian church is revealed. Jesus comes to Mary in a vision and says: “How wonderful you are for not wavering at seeing me.” She is the one who understands “all.” The one who evokes discord (or is it jealousy?) among the apostles as they confront her with: “Are we to believe the Lord would have told such secrets to a mere woman?”

A mere woman. Yet, it is her name that appears in all four Canonical Gospels. A mere woman, yet she did not flee or deny the Rabbi. A mere woman, yet she was the first to see, and tell the story of, the empty tomb.

I resonate with her “not wavering.” She is certain and steadfast as are most women moving through life, trusting their intuition and living from the heart.

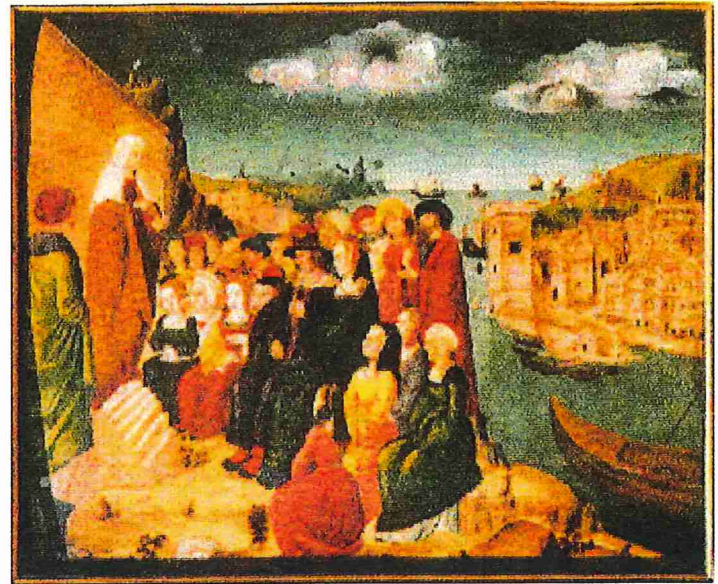
I resonate with her being a “mere” woman who accomplishes much, without fanfare, ignoring ridicule and disbelief. If she weeps, the tears are for those who can’t understand; never for herself.

How odd her name disappears from the scriptures. How strange that it was necessary to minimize her by promulgating the lie of her being a prostitute. How extraordinary that she returns now at this time in history.

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Like many drawn to the Mary Magdalen Community, there came a day when I realized that I could no longer be a part of the traditional church. I could no longer accept the patriarchal influence that relegated women’s roles. Yet, I also knew that being governed by a matriarchal society would be no better. We’ve seen what happens when the world is divided by gender.

If we are to envision a different future, then all of humanity is



required - male and female.

I also know that when we as people fully embrace the feminine and welcome in her fierce beauty, we will restore the missing parts of that which is most holy in ourselves and in the world.

“Restore and Re-storying, Envisioning and Uncovering Truths,” all are part of the Mary Magdalen Community. We gather on Sundays at the Rothko Chapel to dialogue. We speak of possibilities beyond clouded doctrines and traditions. We explore the similarities in religions. We share from the heart.

The small changes in our lives surprise us. Recently, I completed a medical history form. In the space that asked for “religion,” I paused before writing “Mary Magdalen Community” and I smiled.

Mary Magdalen: I believe she is a liminal figure, a threshold to a new belief that is older than time itself. She taught it over 2,000 years ago, a belief inclusive of all peoples and based on love. That belief would be distorted and battered by misguided translations and the quest for power.

If indeed she were a companion to Jesus, how different would be our relationships, male to female? If she were remembered as an authority of the early church, what would leaders value now? If the voices of women had not been silenced throughout the ages, how different would be our earth, and its rivers, and its people?

In Mary’s Gospel, Jesus assures that each of us is a Child of True Humanity and says that we need not look “over here” or “over there” or anywhere...except within...to find God.

So I turn within, marvel at the Child and delight to find a new world awaits.

*The Gospel of Mary was originally written in Greek in the late first or early second century. The Coptic translation, found in 1896 was made public in 1955 and the Greek version unearthed in 1917 was published in 1938.

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