

The Darkness of God

by Rev. Dr. Robin Hawley Gorsline

I grew up with Father God, but over many years of study, ministering, theologizing I came to understand that God has no race or gender. Then, later I realized that for me at least God is all genders (male, female, transgender, gender queer) just as God is all colors. God is not only bigger than all the boxes we use, but actually God lives and works in every box we might create, including ones we have yet to create.

And now I know God is both light and dark.

In some ways, this is the most difficult shift I have made—because it negates the social and religious conditioning that I, and most if not all of us, have experienced and still experience. Claiming that God is as dark as God is light can seem heretical. If Jesus is the light of the world then surely God must be the even bigger light.



So, I have come to accept that Jesus, like all of us born human, is composed of both light and dark. When I was a teenager active in church I came to the realization that the portrayal of Jesus as a white man (anyone remember Tab Hunter?) was inaccurate. He was not a blonde, blue-eyed

savior, but a Palestinian Jew, most likely with a deeper hue to his skin and maybe not Euro-American features. And plenty of writers have shared images of a Black or Native American or Asian or Latino or Gay Jesus. Also, I have seen one or two images of Transgender Jesus.

I am sharing all this because I am acutely aware of how it is too easy to box God or Jesus in so we are not uncomfortable with the possibility that our categories are too limiting. For example, my physical body is male, but the identity I am most comfortable with is Gender Queer. I now list my pronouns as

they/them because I know my heart, my spirit, does not feel complete with only one side of the gender binary.

Similarly, clearly I am a White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) and I hugely benefit from White Privilege (even as I work to end White Supremacy). On various forms I do not see an option for me to be something other than White, and were I to object to being called White I would, understandably, be seen as once again using unearned privilege. So, increasingly I am speaking of myself “as a White-categorized person.” That does not erase my privilege in our world but it is a way for me to say this is not entirely my choice.

I have the option of making choices for myself, and I am grateful to feel I am being led to live with a larger lens, a more capacious world view. And I know it is God of all divine multiplicity, including darkness, who is leading me.