



Divine Life

Christianity is not merely a philosophical theory or a moral code, but involves a direct sharing in divine life and glory, a transforming union with God 'face to face'.

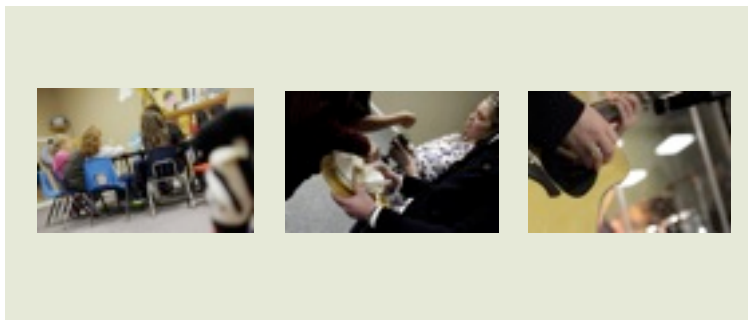
~Metropolitan Kallistos Ware

Living into the Risk

It is in some sense absurd to talk of taking a risk on God's promises; after all, God is God, so any decision we make to trust him is anything but risky, in spite of what we may feel. In truth, the only risk is in not trusting him.

When we do talk about living into the risk, we don't mean that we fear God may fail us; instead, we mean to say that we believe God calls us to put ourselves at risk - to let loose of our ambitions and preferences, our expectations and natural commitments - for Christ's sake. God will not prove unfaithful

whatever we do, but as we live the lives Christ calls us to live, we certainly will find ourselves



losing much of what previously seemed important to us. Of course, we're convinced that it is precisely in losing what we consider important that we discover that we have received

what God considers important for us and essential to our recreation in Christ's image.

In that light, we want to live into the risk this year, allowing God's free Spirit to impel us beyond the borders we define and defend in our own names, trusting that as we transgress those limitations

we will find ourselves ready to embrace the Father's will.

Finding the Kingdom's Awkward Rhythm

To live a life fully ordered to the Kingdom, we know we will have to find a different rhythm from that we're used to living by. The world requires us to live at a certain speed - think of how busy we believe we are - and if we hope to do what God invites us to do, then we will have to change speeds. To dance 'in step with the Spirit' means we will have to find ourselves out of the 'normal' rhythm of life.

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What does this mean in 'real life'? It means that we allow the Spirit to dictate our daily routines, to order how we 'spend' our time. It means we live in moments of opportunity, recognizing what is necessary, as Mary did, without neglecting what is penultimate.

Becoming People of Character

Salvation is the end of the Spirit's work to shape us into Christ's image - to Christify us - to infuse us with God's own character. As people called to salvation, we find ourselves called to be people of patience, generosity, and gratitude. We know God forms us in these ways as we make ourselves available to the Spirit in every situation, especially in those throw-away, everyday moments that seem entirely devoid of grace.

It is impossible for us to become virtuous unless and until we put ourselves in relationship with people who require us to live as Christ and to turn to the Spirit for empowerment and direction. (Of course, everyone requires this of us, but we don't easily recognize that!) As we extend ourselves to make room for strangers - especially scandalous strangers - and estranged neighbors in our lives, we can expect God to do transformative work in us as well as them.

Discerning the Body of Christ

However, we cannot hope to become people of Christ's character if we fail to discern the Body of Christ, if we fail to see how completely we depend upon one another for God's grace. Christ lords our lives through his people, so each person is a portal, a little Christ, through which we encounter God and God encounters us. We have to pray that God will give us eyes to see as we are in Christ, and not to trust in our own 'fleshy' vision. True Christian community and service depend upon the refusal to trust our experience of one another as a final word.

We are praying this year that God will enable us to respond to the call to live as Christ's presence in the world, to announce the good news of the Kingdom with our day-to-day lives.

MEN'S RETREAT

Kent, Ryan, Michael and Dow attended Evangelistic Temple (Tulsa) men's retreat with Chris, who was the featured speaker for the second straight year. Chris spoke about living lives of joy in suffering in faith and hope in this time between what God has already done for Christ and what God has promised to do for all creation.

"This years Evangelistic Temple men's retreat



was highly encouraging for me. It allowed me to see God's progressive work in my life and the lives of other men in Divine Life Church. Chris' teaching and the fellowship with

others were life altering. I am learning more and more to never take those moments for granted. They are established by God and pivotal to my growth and faith in God. Thanks to all the men who went with us from Divine Life and to Evangelistic Temple for hosting us again." - Ryan P.

"I was really expecting God to show me His heart and encourage me on the retreat. Traveling in the car, as we all joked and made conversation, my spirits began to be lifted. As the retreat went on and Chris shared his heart, the Father showed me once again how much He loves and cares for me. I had a conversation with Ryan that confirmed in me what Father God was doing in Misti's and my life. I had a fantastic time and am already thinking about who I can invite to go with me next year." - Dow F.

Taking time to withdrawn myself from family and my familiar routines, to fellowship with other men, was well worth it. God, once again, was able to strengthen my faith and hope in Him and His work in my life. Through each session and studying the Scriptures, God taught me more about how I am to live and be in this present world. The men from ET were very welcoming and showed their appreciation to me for being a part of the refuge. Chris, Dow, Michael, and Ryan made the time away enjoyable and pleasant as well. In summary, God newly refreshed my spirit and helped me to experience His

goodness with others in the Body of Christ. - Kent M.

LIVING EPIPHANY

Epiphany is the season of the church's calendar that follows the journey of the Magi to Christ. Their story is briefly accounted in Matthew 2. Literarily, they function to show that "pagan Gentiles," though without the revelation of Torah, could follow the light to worship the Christ. They were the first Gentiles to acknowledge Jesus as Lord.

The Magi were astrologers. (Ignore, at least for now, the implications of astrology in Scripture, and attend, instead, to what this may have to teach us about how God works.) As astrologers, study of the stars would have been common activity for them. It was in their ordinary occupation that God revealed Godself unto them in a way that they could understand.

The Magi would likely have valued astrological signs (like the star in Matthew) and understood some as indicating the birth of someone important, so it is not surprising that they would take notice of the star. What intrigues me is their willingness to leave home to find "the King of the Jews," a king they do not even claim as their own, and worship him. Their willingness to go on the journey, to be led, should challenge us who do claim Jesus as our King.

We must be willing to follow the light as it is revealed to us in our ordinary occupations if we are to find the Christ. How can we learn to recognize a star that calls for following from all the others that are shining as brightly? Are we willing to embark on the journey and accept where it leads? Are we willing to seek that we might find? Are we willing to knock that the door might be opened? Are we willing to ask that we might receive?

-Jill Nelson

My Story, Our Story

An Interview with Jason McCary

Jason McCary and his wife, Marcia, are long-time friends of DL. Part of the original core group, they have maintained close contact with us since they left for the work in South Carolina. www.realifeministries.org

DL: What are you doing right now?

JM: Currently, we are serving as Lead Pastors at REALife Ministries, a local church in Greenwood, SC. We have been serving in this role at REALife since our move from Oklahoma City seven years ago this month.

DL: How did God use your time at Divine Life to prepare you for your work there?

JM: I think God used our time at Divine Life as "philosophical" ministry training for us. Though Marcia and I were only part of Divine Life for about 6 months or so, in its conception, the impact it had on our lives helped develop our philosophy of ministry. What I mean is that God used that time (and more importantly those people) to force us to re-evaluate "why" we were in ministry to begin with. Now, at the time neither of us, nor did any of Divine Life know that we were going to be leaving in the near future for our work here at REALife, but God knew, and He knew that the short season at Divine Life was going to be necessary for what He had next for us. The Divine Life of which we were a part consisted of a half-dozen or so couples and a few singles who met each week in the living room of a friend's home to fellowship, worship, and then enter into a study of the Scriptures intermingled with passionate discussion regarding everything from "God's Kingdom" to "What it means to be 'the church'" to "What we she call ourselves". At the time, I think it was more of a discovering of who we were not to be rather than who we were suppose to be. But, that's really what God used in my life to test the very motivation behind my being a minister. Having been in ministry, on paid staff somewhere, since I was 18 years old, I had always focussed more in "what" I did rather than "why" I did it. But, there was no way to be around those people without being forced to look at the "why". Of course, that is one of the reasons I was drawn to those relationships already, because they seem to value me because of who I was, no because I what I could or couldn't do. So, this time that we spent together with that small group on Sunday evenings instilled in me this philosophy of

ministry, "What we do is not as important as why we do it." I believe this philosophy runs throughout the very fiber of REALife Ministries, and I think it has helped keep us, thus far, from becoming something other than what God desires for us to be as a local church. At REALife we have learned, and are still learning, much about who we are not to be, but we are also evolving into something very unique and needed in our community, which is laced with a church on every corner in the center of the Bible belt. So, I thank sincerely thank God for the individuals that make up Divine Life who were a part of God's preparation in our lives and ministry, and it is an even greater blessing that a number of those are still part of God's preparing and keeping us for His glory.

DL: As one who maintains close relationship with DL, what do you foresee for DL in the coming months and years?

JM: Well, I don't want to pretend to forecast the future of Divine Life since most of what I know of Divine Life is from the outside looking in. However, sometimes from the outside, one can see what is not so obvious from within. Having said that, I believe Divine Life is going to continue to become a people (and a place) who are committed to true righteousness and to helping others come to know the heart of our Heavenly Father. That come across as being a very broad statement and sound somewhat "generic", but I think it was at the core of why Divine Life exists. Divine Life is peculiar to its surroundings. I don't think there is another local church like it in Oklahoma City, and for that reason, I think Divine Life is a "need" for the community. With the people that I know who are a part of Divine Life there is not a lack of intelligence, or giftings, or zeal to be making an impact right now in OKC. I think that the "why" for Divine Life has been established for several years now. I think the "what" for Divine Life has become clearer and will continue to become clearer. But, I think (as one who is a part of this church from a distance) that this is the time that Divine Life must begin to focus on the "how"...How are we to do (and be) the "what" God has called us to do and be.

Upcoming Events

DL Retreat 2010

The annual retreat will be April 9-11 at Roman Nose state park. At this point cost will be significantly less than last year, at around \$35-\$45/person. Start putting money away and save the date. Stay tuned for more details.

DL University Courses

Feb 2, 9, 16, 23 - History of Reformation (Jill N. & Chris G)

Apr 6, 13, 20, 27 - Gender & Holiness

June - Gospel of John (Ken Y)

Aug - Parenting

Oct - Pentecostal History (Chris G)

Dec - Arts & Faith

For more info, contact Jill.

Femme

Feb 13 - Women gather at McHugh house, 11am for prayer

March -Spring-break outreach for kids in the area

May - Shower for Jessica Parker (date TBA).

For more details, contact Mandy.

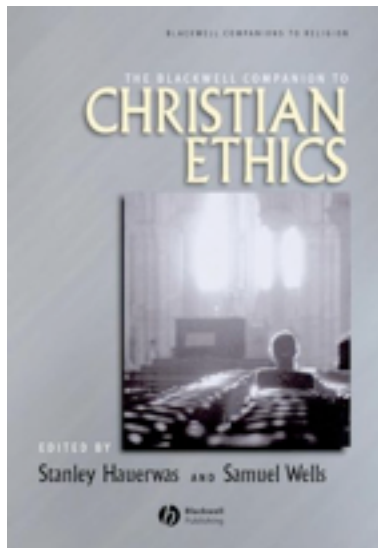
Marriage Conference 2010

Divine Life Church is hosting it's 4th Annual Marriage Conference this May. It will be a day of encouragement, instruction and ministry. Please be watching for details so you and your spouse can attend!

Black History Month

Charlotte laquinta is hosting a celebration of Black History Month at SCU on 2-13-10 at 5 PM in the Patrick Cafetorium. Please contact Mrs I for details.

A Final Word



Eucharistic practice, then, draws believers into the divine life. We are “folded into God” in such a way that we are neither giver nor really receiver. As we are drawn into the life of the triune God, we find that the world is transformed in ways that tend to collapse any straightforward notions of gift, giver, and recipient.

The Lord’s Supper is therefore also the sacrament of human participation in the divine life by sharing life with each other. As a public, open, joyful, hopeful meal, the Lord’s Supper is a foretaste of a new humanity.

