



Purpose-Driven or Spirit-Led: A Spirituality of Work or the Work of the Spirit?

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“**M**ommy, when did Daddy move to New York?” My friend winced as he headed out of the door for his twelfth trip to New York in five months. He had left her birthday party early to catch the six-hour flight that would whisk him to the other side of the country in time for the stock market’s opening bell. My friend always promised himself that he would never “live to work,” as his European clients labeled the American work ethic. Rather he aspired to the more gentle alternative, “work to live.” And he had a great life: a beautiful wife, two lively daughters, and a welcoming home. The problem was that he was never around to enjoy it. Too often his “great life” was on the other side of the country, as he strode the corridors of Wall Street making deals, managing transactions, and building leadership teams for a prominent investment company. As a younger man, he thought that with hard work and shrewd time management he could have it all—life and work, a happy family and a rewarding career—but the hard realities of time and space got in the way. He knew something was wrong: “I was ‘long’ on ambition and ‘short’ on...purpose.”¹

¹John Kerrigan, “What Is a Life Well Led?” in *explore: An Examination of Catholic Identity and Ignatian Character in Jesuit Higher Education* 7/2 (Spring 2004) 18–21. Online: www.scu.edu/bannancenter/publications/explore/spring04/alifewellled.cfm (accessed 12 August 2005).

The Purpose-Driven Life *is the latest version of an American gospel of success. But the discipleship outlined in the gospels is not purpose-driven; it is Spirit-led. The impetus for the journey does not come from behind us or within us, but rather from before us.*

Pulled in one direction by his work and in another by his family, this man was caught in a trap. On average, Americans annually work 240 hours more than their French or German counterparts, a disparity my friend's international colleagues had already identified. American industry and academia increasingly attempt to squeeze greater productivity out of the same finite human resources. Something's got to give.

At least my friend had some choices. He had a wife who could manage the domestic scene while he pulled down the big bucks. Should he decide to downsize professionally, she was poised to move into a high-paying job herself. Not all parents have partners, much less partners able to contribute substantially to the family weal. Not all workers have the luxury of a career; many have dead-end jobs. Nor do they earn six-figure salaries; many find themselves stuck with fixed wages, steadily decreasing benefits, and pension plans under threat. An increasing number of Americans find themselves without work entirely, as unemployment creeps upward in an economy longing for signs of growth.

Americans are worried about work: having it, hanging on to it, balancing it with the responsibilities of family and the need for leisure. I want to probe our anxieties; analyze one popular strategy that is targeted to address them, Rick Warren's "purpose-driven" paradigm; and finally compare it to the alternative voice offered in a spirit-led understanding of vocation.

PROBING OUR ANXIETIES: THE CONTEXT OF OUR CONCERN

Even twenty years ago the existential angst in the story above would have been buried deep in the anxiety closet. At the end of the last millennium, Americans obsessed about the morality of the workplace. A new discipline of "business ethics" emerged on the academic scene, complete with a professional caste of ethicists and a cottage industry of manuals on moral management. What did all this focused moral attention on business produce? A few prominent CEOs made the "perp walk," but bankruptcy still dissolves corporate responsibility to clients, employees, and pension funds. Legal loopholes still allow for assets to be stashed overseas and beyond the reach of the IRS. Corporate welfare continues unchallenged. The trend toward workplace ethics nailed a few "white-collar criminals," but may have only placed a moral imprimatur on the status quo and literally let business go on as usual.

If the last millennium worried about the *morality* of the workplace, this new millennium searches for its *spirituality*. Is my work meaningful? Is it fulfilling or satisfying? Or, as my friend put it, am I long on ambition, short on purpose?

Why do these questions surface now? In part, the feminization of the workplace places such issues front and center. Although still battling wage discrimination and glass ceilings, women have entered the work world in droves. They hold jobs, careers, and professions, often occupying visible positions of power, responsibility, and authority. Many women, however, are now wondering whether the fight

was worth it. Unlike men, they never escaped domestic responsibilities entirely. Women found themselves returning from a day at the office, classroom, or factory only to begin a “second shift” at home, a phenomenon powerfully documented by sociologist Arlie Russell Hochschild.² Hochschild warned that working women, beset with double responsibilities at home and in the workplace, almost qualified as a new class of “urbanized peasants.” The few women who could catch their breath long enough to reflect on their dilemma vented their frustration in books and articles that identified the need for a “work-life balance.”³

Women authors and academics raised the question, but the issue was not gender-specific. Given permission to do more than bring home the bacon, men began to worry about their own parenting and to wonder about the meaning of their own work, to question the wages of ambition, and to long for a life with “purpose.”⁴ No longer at issue was the morality of the workplace; workers began to worry about meaning. What’s the point? A focus on workplace spirituality was the inevitable outcome.

“I suppose it was only a matter of time: ‘spirituality’ is the hottest new management theory”

A quick browse of amazon.com or the religion section of any bookstore confirms this newest trend.⁵ Author Catherine Wallace observes astutely: “I suppose it was only a matter of time: ‘spirituality’ is the hottest new management theory.”⁶ If he could get his hands on just the right spirituality of work in a veritable marketplace of workplace spiritualities, my corporate friend might learn to cope better. Which spirits are invoked in all these workplace spiritualities? The spirit of capitalism that sociologist Max Weber (1864–1920) so trenchantly identified? The Spirit of God in Christ Jesus? Or some other kind of spirit entirely?

In her discernment of the spirits in spiritualities of the workplace, Joanne B. Ciulla discovers seductive blends of religion “lite” and therapy “lite.” These self-help manuals serve up “religion without the work of faith” and “therapy without

²Arlie Russell Hochschild with Anne Machung, *The Second Shift* (New York: Penguin, 1989, 2003). See Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Time Bind* (New York: Metropolitan, 1997).

³See Lisa Belkin, *Life’s Work: Confessions of an Unbalanced Mom* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003); Allison Pearson, *I Don’t Know How She Does It* (New York: Knopf, 2003); Catherine M. Wallace, *Motherhood in the Balance: Children, Career, Me, and God* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse, 2001); Catherine M. Wallace, *Selling Ourselves Short: Why We Struggle to Earn a Living and Have a Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2003); Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, “Family and Work: Can Anyone ‘Have It All?’” in *Religion, Feminism, and the Family*, ed. Anne Carr and Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1996) 275–293.

⁴See David Popenoe, *Life without Father: Compelling New Evidence That Fatherhood and Marriage Are Indispensable for the Good of Children and Society* (New York: Martin Kessler, 1996).

⁵See Marianne LaBarre, *God Knows Your Job Gets Old: 12 Ways to Enliven It* (Notre Dame, IN: Sorin, 2003); Miroslav Volf, *Work in the Spirit: Toward a Theology of Work* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

⁶Catherine M. Wallace, “The ‘Spirituality’ of Work,” *Anglican Theological Review* 83/1 (2001) 183–188. Online: www.catherinemwallace.com/default.asp?id=16&newsaction=newsdetail&articleid=32 (accessed 20 July 2005).

the work of changing.”⁷ I invite theologians and therapists to assess what the “work” of faith and changing might entail. I want to step off the merry-go-round of work and worry and make two observations about our anxiety. First, I have a hunch that we expect too much from our work, whether it be a career, a profession, or “just” a job. In demanding spiritual and psychological health and well-being from something that cannot finally deliver it, we will always be disappointed. In raising the stakes in the workplace, we set the stage for epic conflict and existential angst that simply should not be there. We create tempests by the watercooler. More seriously, we court idolatry. Work is the perfect idol in a consumerist society, making the beatific *homo religiosus* a pretty mask for the predatory, rapacious *homo economicus* underneath. Work becomes an idol, one that has been blessed by church, state, and marketplace.

Second, and even more worrisome, this trend toward spirituality of the workplace threatens to turn spirituality itself into a job, a career, and a profession. It is not surprising that one of the hottest books on the market presents spirituality itself as the perfect job. In this formula, the work-life balance becomes a temporary assignment with potential for a Big Promotion. God enters as the Perfect Employer, and Jesus Christ functions instrumentally to be the Ideal Mentor.

PURPOSE-DRIVEN: THE GOSPEL AS WORK

Rick Warren’s *The Purpose-Driven Life: What on Earth Am I Here For?*⁸ ranked as the best-selling nonfiction book in both 2003 and 2004, and its sheer success suggests that my corporate friend is not alone in finding himself short on purpose. Clearly lots of people find their careers empty, their jobs meaningless, and their workday disconnected from any spiritual center. Warren invites his readers on a forty-day spiritual journey that promises to supply the life purpose they so sorely miss. After inviting the potential pilgrim to sign a contract with him for safe passage, he poses the question: “What on earth am I here for?” Then Warren addresses the question by supplying five affirmations in the purpose-driven life:

1. You were planned for God’s pleasure
2. You were formed for God’s family
3. You were created to become like Christ
4. You were shaped for serving God
5. You were made for a mission.

A chapter a day guides the pilgrim along the way. Pithy and conversational, Warren’s style is peppered with scripture and anecdotes from ordinary life. Each chapter considers a different dimension of the journey, concluding with a point to ponder, a Bible verse to remember, and a question to consider. Alliteration com-

⁷Joanne B. Ciulla, *The Working Life: The Promise and Betrayal of Modern Work* (New York: Times Books, 2000) 222.

⁸Rick Warren, *The Purpose-Driven Life: What on Earth Am I Here For?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002).

mits Warren's points to easy memory so the pilgrim can summon them in the midst of a bad day: "Life is all about love" (129); "Life is a test and a trust" (46); "The world is not my home" (52); "God wants to be my best friend" (91). The pilgrim who has completed this spiritual journey can now face the world with purpose. But what hath Warren wrought? Where do forty days of wandering in this wilderness lead the reader? Who are the spirits invoked on this purpose-driven pilgrimage?

*"the book is less spirituality of work than spirituality
as work"*

While Warren does not present his book as a "spirituality of work," endorsements from the likes of Neil Caputo and *The Wall Street Journal* raise suspicions. In fact, the book is less spirituality of work than spirituality as work. Warren's spirituality reads like the perfect job. You get to write your own job description; Christ mentors you along the way. Finally, while Warren boasts of God as a "best friend," God acts more like an HR officer, whose performance reviews put you in line for the Big Promotion.

Close analysis reveals a text replete with metaphors drawn from the worlds of business and management, and the Bible reads like a stockholders' prospectus. Warren commands the biblical text with the expertise of a motivational speaker. He moves with ease among no less than fifteen different translations of the Bible, picking and choosing the translation that will pack the most punch. Biblical references, so easy to give in parentheses, appear instead in a long, complicated series of endnotes to each one of forty chapters. Warren consistently chooses the translation from his stable that most matches his own voice, and his clear predilection is for passages that deliver the purpose-driven thrust of his own message. Texts are ripped out of context, so that the Apostle Paul can be prompted to speak intimately right to a twenty-first-century audience. Damn the Corinthians—full speed ahead!

The fallout of this use of scripture is threefold. First, Warren's voice and the biblical witness get conflated. Warren winds up speaking with the authority of scripture, and scripture speaks in the idiom of Rick Warren. This conflation of voices is a mixed blessing. On one hand, contemporary readers convinced that an ancient document has nothing to say to the present will be shocked to recognize their own concerns in Warren's translations. These postmodern "cultured despisers of religion" (Schleiermacher) may be persuaded to take a second look—always a good thing! On the other hand, domesticating a dangerous document like the Bible robs us of the shock of alienation, where we understand with a jolt that "God's ways are not our ways" (see Isa 55:8). Sometimes, transformation occurs when we confront a God whose creativity and compassion exceed our wildest imaginings. When God spoke to him from the whirlwind in a torrent of sheer poetry, Job caught a glimpse of the power and beauty of God's ways. In that moment, he was

simultaneously undone and redone—literally, refashioned by the Creator who “commanded the morning...and caused the dawn to know its place” (Job 38:12). When the strangeness of the biblical world has been translated away, texts that once had the power to shock us now march to a different drummer. We need to watch where we’re going.

Second, tailoring a biblical text to fit a contemporary idiom creates a world that is less about God and more about us. For example, Paul reassures his beloved Philippians of his ultimate well-being: “I can do all things through him who strengthens me. In any case, it was kind of you to share my distress” (Phil 4:13–14, NRSV). Paul witnesses to Christ’s power, which he experiences through the prayers of the community. Warren cites the same text, but reference to any community of faith disappears. The translation from *The Amplified Bible* reassures the reader that he or she can handle anything: “I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him who infuses inner strength into me, that is, I am self-sufficient in Christ’s sufficiency.” Where Paul’s intent was to witness to the power of Christ, Warren’s is to empower the reader. Christ becomes merely the vehicle to that empowerment.

The book proposes a strategy of self-empowerment, despite all claims to the contrary. While the first chapter declares that “It’s not about you” (17), in the final analysis it is. The final chapter does not open a window into the divine mystery, but holds up a mirror. Here readers are directed to draft a “life purpose statement” that does five things: summarizes God’s purposes for your life; points to the direction of your life; defines “success” for you; clarifies your roles; and expresses your shape (313). It *is* all about you, after all! The final exercise invites the pilgrim to compose an individually tailored job description delineating what would count for his or her own spiritual, psychological, and material success. Spirituality has been rationalized into a recipe for self-empowerment. Gone is the mystery; bring on the Saddleback mission!

Now we’d all like to write our own job descriptions, and the need to take charge of our lives may indeed drive us. It certainly drives Warren’s selection of biblical texts. The most-cited book of the Bible in his strategy for self-empowerment is the sturdy counsel of Proverbs. This is not surprising, because Proverbs is the Bible’s own self-help manual. Its wise counsel fits the shape-up-or-ship-out, no-nonsense approach that Warren takes to Christian discipleship.

And this is my most serious reservation about Warren’s purpose-driven proposal: his style of Christianity has so little room for Christ. When the figure of Jesus fades into the background, Christian discipleship loses its Master. In the ensuing silence, the voice of the one saying “Follow me” belongs—alas!—to another twenty-first-century self-help guru. With no Jesus to follow, the disciple simply falls in step behind Rick Warren.

The Jesus of the gospels may be kind of an embarrassment to this motivational program. He hung out with all the wrong people: prostitutes and the poor,

tax collectors and sinners, losers and the riff-raff of the ancient world. He took time to consider the lilies. And in the end, he died on a cross, abandoned by his friends and disciples alike, an embarrassment and a failure. A Roman centurion figured out what the disciples missed: Jesus' true identity—"Truly this man was God's Son!" (Mark 15:39). When an outsider gets it so right, while the insiders remain clueless, you have to be humble about your own theological musings.

"we aren't in charge of our lives or our selves; we give them to Jesus"

Warren's confident success-oriented, purpose-driven proposal has little room for the passion of the Christ. When Jesus does surface, he makes a cameo appearance as Sage or Mentor, not Crucified Lord, and he always offers some wise counsel. For example, Warren has Jesus saying "Self-help is no help at all," and he footnotes Matt 16:25, citing a translation from *The Message*. I checked the same passage in the NRSV, and it bore almost no resemblance: "For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it." Jesus is not talking about self-help; he's not even talking about self-sacrifice. We aren't in charge of our lives or our selves; we give them to Jesus. That's what discipleship is all about. In the process of following him, we may lose our lives but find new life in him. We do not live for our own sake, but for Jesus. Yet it is precisely Jesus who is missing from Warren's purpose-driven proposal, and I want to know why.

I have two suspicions about why Jesus goes missing, and each is a theological deal-breaker—to borrow some of the heavily managerial language the book uses. First, Warren comes out of a worldview that emphasizes above all the sovereignty of God. It would be a shame to call this worldview "Calvinist," for Warren misses much of Calvin's nuance, as well as his emphasis on Christ as prophet, priest, and king. Without the christological thrust of Calvin's theology, we are left with a kind of "Calvin-lite," featuring a Creator whose favor is pegged to creaturely performance. From a God's-eye view, life then is a "test," a "trust," and "a temporary assignment," and if we pass the test, prove worthy of the trust, and complete our assignment in a satisfactory manner, we will be given a huge "promotion" (chapter 5). God becomes the Chief Performance Evaluator, and our work is under divine review. It's easy to see why Jesus doesn't fit into Warren's paradigm.

Second, from the purpose-driven point of view, the cross is "a stumbling block...and foolishness" (1 Cor 1:23). It's hard to talk to the powerful about powerlessness—and it's impossible to talk about powerlessness to the "wannabe" powerful, in some ways the true audience for this book.⁹ Warren remains as oblivious of

⁹Candler School of Theology pastoral theologian Thomas G. Long observes that Warren has "perfect pitch" for the aspirations of the "wannabe" powerful: "Warren is writing for suburban middle-class people, who have a little wealth but not too much, who have a little education, but not too much, who speak a little Christian Bible and a little Freud but neither fluently, who are anxious and troubled about many things, who feel driven by forces they

Jesus' true mission as Mark's clueless disciples. I am reminded of Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi. When asked by Jesus, "Who do *you* say that I am?" he called him "Messiah," the name Jewish tradition reserved for the liberator of Israel. With military might, the promised Messiah would end Roman occupation of the promised land and return it to God's chosen people.¹⁰ Shocked by his disciples' ignorance of his real identity, Jesus replied with words that did not mention the title "Messiah" at all: "[T]he Son of man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again" (Mark 8:31). None of Warren's slick translations can soften the impact of that text. Even when Peter heard it, he rebuked Jesus, taking him aside and telling him to zip it. Peter was not so much worried about Jesus, as he feared for his own life purpose. If Jesus was going to suffer, what could that possibly mean for him? I don't think "success"—at least not in terms that either Peter or the world could measure—would be part of it. A purpose-driven paradigm has no room for the cross and resurrection; indeed, it presents a series of slogans for rising up out of suffering, disappointment, and failure. No wonder this journey of discipleship has no Master to lead it.

SPIRIT-LED: THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT

In a very real sense, *The Purpose-Driven Life* is the latest version of a relentlessly American genre: the gospel of success. As such, Rick Warren falls in line behind Robert Schuller, Norman Vincent Peale, and Dale Carnegie. In brief, the bottom line is this: God's favor rests on this country, and that favor will be manifest materially. In a postmodern period that overvalues individuality, national election gives way to personal election. God's favor rests on the true believer. You'll be a visible saint—and at the very least, you'll get your act together. Max Weber described the fusion of theological and economic rationale behind this spirit of capitalism.¹¹ With adjustments made for therapeutic and spiritual health, the paradigm fits this latest proposal. But the spirit of capitalism is very different from the Spirit of God in Jesus Christ. The stakes are high, and the very nature of discipleship is at issue here.

The discipleship outlined in the gospels is not purpose-driven, but Spirit-led. The impetus for the journey did not come from behind, but from before the disciples. They responded to Jesus' invitation, "Follow me." This command frames the journey of discipleship. The words begin the journey of discipleship, as Jesus called

cannot control, who long for something deeper, something more, who have tried a few self-help recalibrations with disappointing results, and who are ready for a confident, wise person to help them mature spiritually. Warren knows these people, speaks their language, and does not condescend to them. Not bad, when you think about it." Thomas G. Long, "Doing Practical Theology at Barnes and Noble: *The Purpose-Driven Life*" (unpublished paper, 7–8).

¹⁰On this passage, which serves as the hinge of Mark's Gospel, see Richard B. Hays's fine discussion in his *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation: A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996).

¹¹Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (London: Routledge, 1930).

disciples from out of their workplaces, whether they were tending nets, collecting taxes, or teaching under the welcome shade of a fig tree. These are the first words Jesus said to the disciples. They were also the final words he spoke to them. In the Gospel of John's final discourse, Jesus posed the same question to Peter three times: "Do you love me?" Three times the disciple responded, each response erasing one of his denials on the night in which his master was betrayed. Jesus concluded his interrogation with the words: "Follow me" (John 21:15–19). If there is a single Bible verse disciples need to remember, it is this one. Simple and profound, no translation can blunt its impact.

"following a person requires ongoing relationship with that person, and like any relationship this one needs tending"

First, Jesus invites us to follow *him*, and following a person is very different from following a set of rules or even a forty-day program. Following a person requires ongoing relationship with that person, and like any relationship this one needs tending. We tend our relationship with Jesus through prayer, the space where the intimate rhythm of speech and silence establishes itself. A friend caught the rhythm in a lifetime of prayer: "At first I talked *at* God, the way you talk to someone on an airplane. Then, as the relationship deepened, I found myself talking *to* God, as if we were sitting face-to-face. Then, I spoke *with* God, as one speaks to a trusted friend." He paused, then continued: "Now I find myself *listening to* God. And more often than not, I am listening *for* God." We tend our relationship by attending to prayer, whether prayer be a matter of words spoken and heard or simply a matter of showing up. We tend our relationship through worship, where we gather with the other scattered members of Christ's body to celebrate in word and sacrament. We tend our relationship with Jesus in service, where we meet him again in a neighbor. As we bear the face of Christ to the neighbor, so the neighbor bears the face of Christ to us. I fear the purpose-driven paradigm misses the other-directedness of discipleship. We do not follow Jesus to better fulfill ourselves but to better serve the neighbor. Warren concludes his forty-day journey with some fine counsel on how the reader should craft a life-purpose statement, and this rings true therapeutically. But it does not ring true to Christian discipleship, because this counsel does not reach beyond the disciple. Like Jesus did himself, disciples always reach out to the neighbor—"that *they* may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10, altered).

If we reach out, we should expect surprises. If those closest to Jesus could not recognize him, how can we expect to do any better? We should be prepared to hear the truth in the most unexpected places: from Samaritan women, chief priests, and the Roman centurions of our time, who may know better than we who Jesus is and what he stands for. There's a lot to like in Warren's program, but sometimes the Person behind it gets lost.

Second, the journey of discipleship is cruciform, patterned on the cross and resurrection. It is a *via crucis*, literally “a way of the cross.” Jesus probably knew in broad strokes what that journey would look like: his passion predictions sketch a journey that ends in suffering, crucifixion, death, and resurrection. But there’s also evidence that the reality exceeded Jesus’ own passion prediction. He cried out his abandonment from the cross: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Mark 15:34). God’s purposes were not always clear to Jesus.

Nor will God’s purposes always be clear to those who follow Jesus. We will often wonder if we got on the wrong bus or opened someone else’s mail. In these moments of doubt and confusion, our only hope is also our greatest comfort: the One who calls us carries us, enabling us to follow him.

In John’s Gospel, Jesus prefaced his final call to Peter with a passion prediction for all disciples: “[W]hen you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go” (John 21:18). These are hard words for take-charge people.

My mother-in-law died of Alzheimer’s disease. In her prime, she was a vital and articulate woman. She presided with consummate grace over a large Irish-Catholic brood of six children, coordinating their swimming lessons, their Scout activities, and their homework. In the last years of her life, this wasting disease drained her vitality drop by drop. People constantly dressed her and took her where she did not wish to go. It was hard watching her protest as we got her ready and spirited her off to meals or Mass. The grace of Alzheimer’s is that she quickly forgot what made her unhappy and settled into the rhythm of eating or prayer.

There is a similar grace in Jesus’ passion prediction for all disciples. He promises that he will bind us to himself and lead us to places we cannot imagine. Even when we feel unproductive and purposeless, Jesus guides us—if only we will let him. Sometimes following Jesus is a matter of stopping everything long enough to be led, a matter of acknowledging we are lost in order that we can be found. I wonder if the purpose-driven paradigm slows down enough to let us follow.

For finally, the Spirit who draws us into the journey of discipleship is not just any spirit, but the Spirit of God in Jesus Christ. Jesus bore the human face of this Spirit, and if we want to discern the work of this Spirit, we need only look for him. Jesus did not turn his face away from even the purpose-driven Peter, who was ready to follow a revolutionary but less sure about a suffering Son of Man. Jesus did not disqualify him from discipleship. Rather, he put Peter behind him—so that Peter could better be led. And when Jesus ascended to his Father, he sent his Spirit to continue leading the rest of us clueless and purpose-seeking disciples. May we wait on this Spirit in all that we are and do. *Veni Creator Spiritus!* ☩

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Your spirit guides are very eager to let you know that they are a part of your life and are always trying to send you information to help you on your journey. How can you get into the habit of receiving those messages better? Angela Appleby.Â So, never be afraid to unwrap your fullest potential. Click to learn more from 2017 Psychic Medium of the Year Michelle Beltran. | In his book Spirited Leading and Learning, Vaill describes many of the economic and cultural stresses he believes have spurred this trend, among them the destabilizing of the corporation as a lifelong employer due to global competition and downsizing; rapid turnover of executives and employees; growing concern about the environment; and the crumbling of institutions such as schools and the family. "We're searching for new ways of grounding to sustain us through very turbulent times," he observes.Â For many people, work and spirituality call for such different -and sometimes contradictory-mindsets that the idea of melding the two seems almost absurd. He then led me around a circle of beaming faces and outstretched hands, who were there to greet me exactly as I am. I felt complete warmth. Every time I go to speak the word "Spirit" my thinking-brain whirs into overdrive: Is it religious? Is it mystical? Is it secular?Â For me personally, it has given a way to connect my inner practice to the work I want to do in the world. It gives me a stepping-stone for speaking about it with more mainstream audiences who don't necessarily identify with having a spiritual side. Practices for grounding together. What exactly happened during the ceremony I described with The New Mentality, above? Jasmine Ali (also a GYC member) summarized the event beautifully in a recent blog post