

## Fall 2022: Bible and Book Study

### *“Freeing Jesus: Rediscovering Jesus as Friend, Teacher, Savior, Lord, Way and Presence”*

November 14, 2022

#### LESSON SIX

### A. Opening Prayer and Lighting the Candle

Maori Lord’s Prayer from Stephen’s musings on Nov.8<sup>th</sup>:

Eternal spirit, earth maker, pain-bearer, life giver,  
source of all that is and that shall be, father and mother of us all,  
loving God in whom is heaven.

The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!

The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!

Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!

Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth.

With the bread we need for today, feed us.

In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.

In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.

From trials too great to endure, spare us.

From the grip of all that is evil, free us.

For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever.

### B. Bible and Book Study: Chapter 6: *Presence*

#### 1. Introduction to our discussion on “Presence”:

**“Seek the Lord and His strength; seek his presence continually.” Psalm 105:4**

- a. In reading this chapter, there are many ways that Diana gives to experience the presence of God. How have you experienced God’s presence? In Worship, In Scripture, In Study, In Community, In Service, In Creation, In Silence? Elsewhere?

- b. Do you experience God's presence differently than you do Jesus's presence? Explain.**
- c. What about the Holy Spirit – how do you experience the Holy Spirit in your life?**
- d. Referring to pages 221-224, how does Diana explain the differences and connections?**

**2. Insights from the Chapter:**

- a. John 3:7 gives us the words, "No one can see the Kingdom of God without being born from above." What is Jesus telling Nicodemus in John 3:1-10. What does this mean to you? What does it mean to have a "born again" experience? Diana explores this with the concept of "Birth" and concludes "Jesus, the birthed one, is also the ever-birthing presence, calling new life from the womb of God into the World. Not once but many times".(p.227) How does this fit into your understanding?**
  
- b. In the rest of the chapter, Diana uses many images to represent places where God does dwell or Jesus is found: In the Heart or the Bowels, in the Body, as Mother, in the Ordinary moments of our lives, as the Rock, in Mystery: Which of these helps you to find the presence of God? Explain.**

### **C. Conclusion: The Universal Jesus (the final chapter)**

**“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.” Revelations 22:13**

- 1. In this final chapter of Freeing Jesus, Diana shares a time when she spoke to women of many cultures and faiths, concluding with “When the women of the world take on words for themselves, when we seize our sacred texts and search them for truth, for wisdom, and for strength . . .” then the “Women with the power of words can change the world.” She saw all the women “*in the circle*”, all inclusive. How do you respond to her experience? Have you had other experiences of this inclusivity?**
- 2. In Colossians 1:19, Jesus is described as the “One in whom all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.” Diana expands on the concept of Jesus being the “all in all”, and on page 260-261, quotes the Catholic theologian Ilia Delio, “The life of Jesus sets the pattern of whole-making, which includes reconciliation, forgiveness, peacemaking and compassion, . . . and this pattern permeates the mass of creation --- humanity and cosmos.” Diana concludes, “The story of Jesus unfolds toward unity, toward making all things one, to the ultimate wholeness of healing, peace, justice and love.” What more do we need!? Each of us experience Jesus in our own way, but I think we all join the circle of this expression.**

**Final Reflections**

**Closing Prayers**