



The Divine Conspiracy Continued: Fulfilling God's Kingdom on Earth

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Dallas Willard, the author of the bestselling spiritual classic, *The Divine Conspiracy*, now fulfills his revolutionary vision of how the kingdom of God is made real on earth in this sequel, the last book he was working on before his recent death.

In *The Divine Conspiracy*, revered Christian philosopher and scholar Dallas Willard critiqued the church's obsession with "sin management" and revolutionized our understanding of true Christian discipleship. Jesus is not a remote savior, waiting to welcome us into heaven after we die, Willard argued. He is a dynamic living force, a leader and teacher to whom we apprentice ourselves to learn the sacred skills God wants us to embrace, and to fulfill His son's vision when Christ declared that the "kingdom of God has come."

In *The Divine Conspiracy Continued*, co-written with theologian Gary Black, Willard lays out the next stage in God's plan as this generation of disciples, including ordained and lay leaders, step into positions of authority across our culture and begin to transform the world from the inside out. To fulfill the Christian calling is not to remove oneself from the outside world and take shelter from its shortcomings, Willard reminds us, but to step into the world to lead and serve as agents of change.

The Divine Conspiracy Continued: Fulfilling God's Kingdom on Earth Details

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Caidyn (SEMI-HIATUS; BW Reviews; he/him/his) says

DNF 50%

If I thought the last book was boring, this was even worse. The narrator is a bit better, but everything is glossing over my mind. I can't even focus. What did, *finally*, catch my notice was the topic of education. (I'm still listening to the chapter because I'm at work and have nothing else to do besides look over some items for ebay.)

And, my hackles rose.

While I'm all for infusing morality into education -- because, let's face it, we need to be taught about ethics and morality, even in abstract theories with criticisms given of all of them -- I do not think that you should only teach Christian morals. If you're doing that, you're teaching things that just don't work. Teach about the Buddha, Confucius, Muhammad, and other religious figures. Show that they all have about the same teachings, then go through the ups and downs of them.

This day and age, Christianity is not it. You have to show all aspects of belief if you're delving into religious morality. It's not promoting relativity, it's showing how even if the religions are vastly different, they all teach around the same things that Jesus did.

Ben Franklin says

Not nearly as good as the first. A little too much gospel as agent of societal change... the gospel should definitely inform our daily lives and transform the environment that we affect and have influence over, but this book takes that too far.

Adam Robinson says

Dallas Willard will be missed. I read The Divine Conspiracy in seminary and it changed me in ways I'm still figuring out. Over a decade later Willard is still challenging me and changing me from glory to glory through this, his last book.

In many ways this is a much different book and you should know that before you start. Whereas the original helped us understand how a call to build the Kingdom of Christ affects us individually this book focuses more on how leaders of all stripes must live this out with our society in mind. Ministers are actually the last group to be discussed so the authors can spend more time talking about how doctors, lawyers, professionals, retailers and the like have an immense calling to live out the Kingdom THROUGH the work they do each day. There's been a wave of late to assume that the only work that is meaningful in life must be directly done in some sort of overseas missions capacity. Or the work has to be directly focused in some ministerial capacity (social work, justice work, etc.) Willard smashes this and brings us back to center. All of that work

is great and necessary. But the Kingdom is built every day as each of us seeks to honor Christ in the daily work that the Lord has given us, right here, right now. If we ignore this fact we will see a bright spark at the edge of society where a few of us can do full time ministry and the rest of society will go to seed as we fail to bring the kind of intentionality and integrity to our workplaces that is necessary if our society is to thrive and the Kingdom is to be built here as well as overseas. This is crucial!

That being said this is a Willard book so it's heavy on the philosophy. If you're looking for devotional reading this is not it. And the payoff comes at the very end, not in the middle so you have to be committed to finishing if you want to truly enjoy it. But this has been true of almost every Willard book so if you've read his past works this will walk in the same vein.

I am deeply saddened that there won't be more books by our brother. But I'm profoundly grateful for what he's left behind. It will continue to do just what he hoped for a long time to come.

Jeff says

How to participate in the "Divine Conspiracy" in which God is overcoming the human kingdoms of this world with love, justice and the knowledge of truth (p.307). This book is an appropriate capstone to the career and life of Dallas Willard. As such it follows on his previous work going on to cover new ground as to how disciples can begin to fill the present void in moral and servant oriented leadership thus serving effectively God's Kingdom purposes

George Carter says

An amazing book on leadership and how we bring the Kingdom to inhabit our worlds. Amazing.

P. Marie Boydston says

I highlighted so many thought-provoking and downright convicting statements in The Divine Conspiracy Continued, some of which I shared either on FB or Amazon. The content of this book is so relevant to contemporary times and to all the multitudes of peoples and cultures alive on the earth right now in the 21st century. Some of the passages are absolutely an indictment (in best sense) of contemporary Christian culture in America and deserves the audience of all religious and spiritual leaders of our time. Dallas' insights and knowledge on spiritual matters are not to be ignored nor discounted but studied and pondered on. Even if it can be said that not one particular culture or religious group has all the answers, Dallas and Mr. Black teach us how it is possible to apply Kingdom principles to our lives now that would result in a harmonious existence with all cultures and that is what is truly pleasing to God ultimately. There is so much to learn here and those of us who read it are increasingly blessed. Dallas has left his God-honoring legacy and thank God for him.

Frank Peters says

Since I read his book “The Divine Conspiracy” shortly after its publication almost 20 years ago, Dallas Willard has been my favourite author. As a result, I could not resist purchasing this book that was published posthumously. While the book contained glimpses of the brilliance that I have come to expect from Willard, the book was overall a disappointment to me. Instead of being challenged personally, I felt as if I was being preached at: “go out and change the world”. The difficulty with the directive was that I felt the book contained little or no concrete advice about what this might look like! Thus, I often found myself feeling more depressed than challenged.

As a European reader, the book was also disappointing due to its unnecessary obsession with the politics and culture of the USA. The basic message could have been written to a larger group and culture, so this seemed sloppy to me. In addition, there were some straight forward scientific mistakes that could be spotted by any undergraduate of science. For example, the author claims the energy required to form a single atom of uranium is far more than we can make or have access to. In fact, the total mass energy of a single uranium atom is not very large at all.

From a scriptural or spiritual level I would agree with all that was written in the book. The focus on knowing and loving God was and is right on. I certainly appreciated the occasional moments of brilliance that shone through. But ultimately I was disappointed with the book, and cannot really recommend it.

Daniel Harris says

While the title for this book is appropriate, it is not only a continuation of Willard’s work in *The Divine Conspiracy*, but it is an extension of all of his works. As one who has read and re-read Willard’s previous books for years, I always found myself fascinated with the summary implications he tended to sketch toward the end of his books. Particularly in the final chapter of *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, titled “The Disciplines and the Power Structures of This World,” Willard intriguingly used broadly descriptive language to portray how disciples of Jesus in all walks of life would affect the entire world for good. Whereas that chapter was the brief, general description of how that would happen, this book is the detail that I and many readers of Willard’s previous work have been longing for.

Some readers who expect another “spiritual formation” book similar to Willard’s previous work may find themselves initially disappointed. Even though it is thoroughly consistent with Dallas’ previous writings, it is also very different. However, the book should be very appropriately be found on the shelves of readers of spiritual formation classics, because it is the most thorough, inspiring, and thought-provoking explanation yet available on how true Christian spiritual formation is always, inevitably for the sake of others. “If there is to be a next stage to the so-called spiritual formation movement, this must be it.” (Kindle loc. 711)

Following Willard’s death, when I first heard that this book was to be released and had been co-authored with Gary Black, Jr., I was initially skeptical. I’m not alone in saying that *The Divine Conspiracy* transformed my understanding and practice of Christianity, so to have a follow-up to such a masterful book to be co-authored by someone I didn’t know of and released after Dallas’ death made me expect a letdown. However, Black proves himself to be up to the task of coauthoring a book whose title will invite such high expectations. Having been a close friend of Willard, as well as having focused on Willard’s theology for the

subject of his PhD studies and first book, *The Theology of Dallas Willard*, there is no one better qualified.

As anyone familiar with Willard would hope and expect, this book will make the reader think and requires willingness to do mental work and be challenged. It is well worth the effort, though, for it is a gift for all of us who long and hope for the day when the kingdoms of this world will conform to the kingdom of our God and Christ.

Iamthird says

pg 216 "Ruskin proceeded to emphasize that the other primary responsibility of merchants is to care for the well-being and success of those in their employ. Merchants have direct governance over their employees. Therefore, it becomes the merchants duty not only to be always considering how to produce what he sells in the purest and cheapest forms, but how to make the various employments involved in the productions or transference of it most beneficial to the men employed. Hence the function of business requires, "the highest intelligence, as well as patient, kindness, and tact, ... all his energy...and to give up, if need be, his life in such a way as it may demand of him." As the captain of a ship is duty-bound to be the last to leave the ship in disaster, "so the manufacturer, in any commercial crisis or distress, is bound to take the suffering of it with his men, and even to take more of it for himself than he allows his men to feel; as a father would in a famine, shipwreck, or battle, sacrifice himself for his son."

David Hardin says

I really wanted to like this book. I love Dallas Willard and the Divine Conspiracy was transformational for my faith.

Maybe I had expectations that were too high, but I struggled greatly with this one. For a long book it says very little. The chapters are big on descriptions, but they don't really say much other than we need people transformed by the Spirit living out their calling in every area of public life.

If you are unfamiliar with Willard read the Divine Conspiracy or any number of his other books to start. Even if you are a Willard fan skip this one. (I hate saying that)

Gretchen says

In comparison to the main body of Dallas Willard's work (Renovation of the Heart, The Divine Conspiracy, The Spirit of the Disciplines, Hearing God), the message of this book falls far short. The gripping, compelling message that Willard hones in his main works emphasizes the fact that the Kingdom of God is with us everywhere, whoever we are, in whatever situation we face. It is the presence of this Kingdom that can change the world, as we look around us to see where God is at work and to join Him in it.

The "continuation" of the Divine Conspiracy, however, emphasizes leadership positions as being roles that are necessary and important to spread God's Kingdom, limiting the spread of the Kingdom to those areas where Christian leaders are at work to follow and listen to God. This argument not only is inconsistent with biblical teachings, but it is inconsistent with the tenants that Willard embraces and promotes so clearly

in all the rest of his teachings.

In the defense of the authors, this book was written in haste, during Willard's last days. I am certain that if he had been able to be part of the editing process that many of the ideas early in the book would have been tightened and clarified. The arguments for moral knowledge are extremely well developed and well executed, and the chapters that address specific professions are insightful.

This book is worth reading if you are a devoted Willard fan, but do note that it is different in tone. If you are interested in learning more about Willard's main teachings (which extend from the teachings of Jesus Christ), begin with his main body of work, not this installment.

Derek Winterburn says

Willard is rarely an easy read. John Ortberg once subtitled one of his books 'Dallas for Dummies' and has since written several more popularising Willard's thought. In this volume Gary Black takes forward Willard's sketches for a sequel to the Divine Conspiracy. Those who have read Black's 'Theology of Dallas Willard' will be confident that he knows his teacher, but cautious about his writing style too.

So we have an ambitious extension of 'private discipleship' to discuss what following Christ would mean in the public sphere. The authors take an unusual approach, thinking through the contributions *professionals* should be making, rather than each and every Christian. They even dare to identify the chief professionals: physician, lawyers and pastors. Such a top-down approach is controversial but intriguing.

There are many good things in this book - but the writing style is laborious. It is extremely hard to see the wood for the trees. Being earthed in the N American context means that a fair amount of the detailed discussion is beside the point in the United Kingdom.

I hope that someone else will come along and rework the material and make it more accessible. 'Dallas for Dummies *continued*'?

Richard says

The follow up to the Divine Conspiracy Willard's masterpiece this volume finished after his death by Gary Black Jr. continues with an examination of what is needed from leaders in all phases of society to overcome the impasse that we are currently mired in. Packed with insightful and useful information and food for thought. Very good.

D.j. Lang says

Finally! I'm finally finished. It was slow going at first (I had similar types of issues with the original Divine Conspiracy when I got to around page 80), but the mid-section of my book is now marked up like crazy with underlining scattered in the front section and the last section. Here's why I so appreciate the book. Typically

in a church, a pastor hopes to get the followers to sign up for church activities. Folks go to church and activities and they've done their Christian duty (plus we're supposed to convert people, too). Along come Willard and Black teaching that following Jesus means following after good (Jesus) and flourishing in whatever we're called to do: janitor, dancer, teacher, businessman, politician, lawyer, doctor, researcher, parent, bricklayer. Do all with the skills of Jesus, the mind of Christ, seek after the good of oneself, one's employees (if you have employees), and your customers/clients. And, just a note: the title is "fulfilling" God's kingdom. No one is saying that any human beings are "bringing about" the kingdom. I highly recommend the book.

James says

I don't see how this was a continuation of the first book.. if anything it should have been an afterward within the first book... not a separate, and fairly massive, continuation. The Divine Conspiracy was a densely-packed, masterful piece of work that was insightful, visionary, and inspiring. I couldn't help but re-read entire sections of the book because it was equally engaging as it was deep. This book, I am sorry to report, was a great let down for me. Long live the power and influence of The Divine Conspiracy; let its "continuation" be reduced to an afterward within the first book.
