**The Birth of RADIANT CHURCH**

Our story is an unusual one, peculiar at best. One that only God himself could have written. But, oh, how delighted we are to be a part of it. Let us do our best to share some of it with you.

About 3 years ago, Michele and I were pastoring a church still in its infancy, only 2 years or so in operation. The name of the church was The LIFE Church of Delaware and had approximately 50 members. We worshipped weekly in a hotel conference room. God spoke to Pastor Mike instructing him to prepare the people for “expansion!” The two founding families joined our pastors in looking for property that would serve as a place of worship. In less than a month of exploring options we located a property in Laurel that provided accommodations for a main sanctuary, our existing children’s ministry and administrative offices. We signed a 3-year lease and renovations began! We were excited! The people had a mind to work and things were moving at a good pace. The LIFE Church seemed to be moving into a new season. Little did we know at the time, that this new season would include tragedy and a total restructuring of our lives.

Just 30 minutes north of our property in Laurel, our parents were pastoring a church in Greenwood, Delaware. The name of that church was Maranatha Holistic Gospel Fellowship. There my parents loved on people and built strong relationships. My mother was a passionate worship leader and my father’s biggest fan! My father was a well-educated, charismatic leader with an unrivaled ability to teach the scriptures. The membership there simply adored their leaders, our parents. With a great feat to their credit, God had blessed them to pay off the church’s mortgage. With vision in mind they too had hopes of expanding their ministry.

I will never forget the day when it all changed. The day God’s plan would be further revealed to me, my family and the dear members of both churches. It was a summer evening in June of 2015. I was working with a client at a local library. It had been a very long day for me which was a norm. Earlier that day I was blessed to have a surprised visit for my father who worked for the same agency. He asked, no directed me to spend a few minutes with him in my office. As we entered “MY” office, he told me to sit in one the guest chairs and he sat at “MY” desk. He went on to ask me how The LIFE Church was doing and the renovation project. As I shared concerns he listened like only he could. He was such a skilled, compassionate listener. He was a natural born wise counselor. As I shared he interjected and began to encourage me. I mean he specifically began to speak good and hope into my life. I now realize and believe he was prophesying a near future that neither us had the ability comprehend. We ended our exchange and he proceeded to leave the building.

**The Birth of RADIANT CHURCH cont.**

I wasn’t quite ready to let him go. I was feasting on his words, his attention, the time was so meaningful to me. I just wanted to spend a little more time with him. So, I darted into the hallway, but he was near the exit and seemed tired in his walk, so I didn’t bother. I had no idea that would be the last time I would see my father here, alive.

Later that evening, as I worked with my last client for the day, my phone was going crazy with calls from a number I didn’t recognize. I was in a library. I was working with a high-needs client. I figured if it was important. They would leave a message and/or call another time. Well they did leave a message. I checked my voicemail. It was the Delaware State Police. No details were left, just a number to call back. Before I could return the call, my younger brother called with the news. He said, “Mike, dad is gone, we lost him.” Oh, the place my soul went in the moment of that news. A car accident had taken the life of our father, my mother’s husband, a church lost its shepherd.

With not much time to mourn, both my mother and I began to hear from the Lord as to how to meet the need of a church without a pastor. Unfortunately, dad had no succession plan in place for his church Our church, The LIFE Church, was in its early years and in the middle of a renovation project. The question that was on the hearts of many was, “what do we do?!?”

About a week after dad’s passing I heard the Holy Spirit speak to me saying, “Continue your father’s work.” Wanting clarity, I replied, “your work father or my dad’s work?” I heard my heart, “both, Pastor these people, feed my sheep and cover them all. I have chosen you to lead this work. You are visionary they need. You are my servant, to serve them all.” After days of prayer and disclosing it all to Michele. It was time to share with the members of TLC, my mother, extended family and the church body of MHGF. When shared in each circle, there was praise and there was spiritual agreement that this was the will of God and so began “The Fusion process” of two churches.

Although excited about this union of two churches, an unprecedented effort for our area, we could not rush the process. Many were still in grief. Questions and concerns loomed but miraculously it did not prevent the love of God from flowing between memberships. Relationships were formed. Great moves of the Holy Spirit took place in our services. Challenges were met by the leadership with focus and faith. Many legal and administrative items were addressed and fulfilled. Yes, shifting happened. Change took place. See, it’s necessary when God is revealing his plan and manifesting his glory. Many came, a few left, but after nearly three years of “navigating a very peculiar place.” It was time. It was time to name and launch a new church. On December 4th, 2017, the new church was incorporated, RADIANT CHURCH was birthed!