

# Magdalene Circle New Member Study Guide

Study Guide produced by Magdalene Circle ([www.magdalene-circle.org](http://www.magdalene-circle.org)) an affiliate of Ecclesia Pistis Sophia in Austin Texas.



## 1.0 Magdalene Circle

Magdalene Study Group was started in 2002 by Mark Williams in Columbus Ohio (where he lived at the time). Mark had studied many different traditions (including being a youth pastor in a traditional Christian denomination) prior to finding the Sophian Tradition. The Circle started as a very small study group (initially only two people) that met to discuss Gospel of Thomas. In 2006 Mark was ordained as a Gnostic Priest by Tau Malachi at which time Mark relocated to Austin, Texas and moved Magdalene Circle with him. The group has gone through many changes, but is currently a very active Circle within the Tradition that meets weekly in Austin, weekly in Dallas, and once a month in San Antonio.

Magdalene Circle is grounded in Sophian Experiential and Mystical Christianity. Our tradition is based on the teachings of Yeshua (Jesus) and Mary Magdalene. We seek enlightenment through spiritual living and practice. Our tools include Scripture (both traditional and Gnostic), Christian Kabbalah, Spiritual Living, and Meditative Practice. The purpose of Magdalene Circle is to provide a forum for discussion and learning.

### 1.1 Leaders

Circle leaders in Magdalene Circle have been studying the Sophian Tradition for years before taking on leadership positions. The goal of a Circle Leader is to understand the teachings, be able to present them to others, and coordinate the circle activities.

#### 1.1.1 Bishop – Austin



Bishop Yonah has had a long standing interest in spirituality, especially within the Christian stream, and has aspired to ordination for many years. His spiritual inclination has taken him on an adventure through many different streams of wisdom, and even lead to acquiring his Master's Degree in Theology, following a Bachelor's in Computer Science. In 2003 Yonah stumbled upon the Sophian Gnostic lineage and began the Magdalene Circle of Ecclesia Pistis Sophia shortly thereafter. After having received his ordination as a Gnostic and Apostolic Priest in 2006, relocated to Austin, Texas and began a new branch of Magdalene Circle there. In 2009 Yonah was consecrated as a Bishop in Ecclesia Pistis Sophia and received his spiritual name, Brother +Yonah. Yonah works as Director of Global Information Solutions for an international computer manufacturer.

#### 1.1.2 Mentor and Technical Coordinator

Adam Schlaegel has been studying Sophian Gnosticism since 2004 when he joined Magdalene Circle in Ohio. He later relocated to Austin and is part of the Austin Circle. Adam coordinates online and technical activities along with doing individual mentoring.

### 1.2 Membership

To become a full member of a Circle, an aspirant must be initiated through the three fold rite of initiation and accepted as a Companion by the Priest/Circle leader through the Rite of Reception. A Companion is a person who wishes to come along side the Priest/Circle leader as a spiritual friend to learn and serve the tradition. A Companion is a student and a co-worker in the spiritual work of the group.

### **1.2.1 Three Fold Rite of Initiation – Becoming a Sophian Initiate**

The Three Fold Rite of Initiation is a beautiful ceremony where the initiate is usually taken into a natural setting and initiated into the tradition. The three fold rite consists of Baptism, Chrism, & Wedding Feast. Baptism is usually performed by immersion in running water such as a stream or river to represent the death and rebirth into the “true self”; Chrism is anointing with oil to symbolize the fiery intelligence of the Holy Spirit coming upon the initiate; and Wedding Feast is a rite with bread and wine that resembles the Orthodox Eucharist, but is used to represent the unity all have with God through the Bridal Chamber.

### **1.2.2 Rite of Reception – Joining a Circle**

Once an initiate has undergone the Three Fold Rite of Initiation, they can ask their teacher to receive them as a Companion of the circle. If the teacher agrees, then a Rite of Reception is performed where the spiritual teacher accepts the initiate and they are formally accepted into the body of the Circle.

### **1.2.3 Sophian Orders – Growing in a Circle**

There are a number of Sophian Orders that an initiate can explore. These orders are sub-groups of teachings that focus on a particular area of study and allows the initiate to go deeper in an area they are drawn to.

The Sophian orders are:

- Order of St. Mary Magdalene – Divine Feminine
- Order of St. Michael – Protection for the Tradition and Spiritual Protection
- Order of St. Raphael – Healing arts
- Order of St. Lazarus – Death & Dying
- Order of St. Gabriel – Prophecy & Dreams
- Order of St. Uriel – Wonder Working (Ritual)
- Order of St. Tzafkiel – Sage (Study)

### **1.2.4 Other Information**

Meetings are open to everyone whether they have been initiated or not. There is no restriction as everyone who attends is considered an Associate Member of the Circle.

There is never a cost for our meetings or to join the circle. We do accept donations which are used to support our meeting space, web space, special speakers, etc. But donating is never a prerequisite for attendance or membership in the Circle.

We do not require that anyone purchase any materials for meetings either. We do study books in some circle meetings and having the book is helpful, but not required. Where possible, we provide handouts and share books so that there does not have to be a cost to the individual.

### **1.3 Meetings**

Magdalene Circle offers many meetings in various locations during the month. Meetings are held in Austin and San Antonio.

#### **1.3.1 Regular Meetings - Austin**

	1st Week	2nd Week	3rd Week	4th Week	5th Week
Sat. 3:30-5:30	Meditation	Study	Ritual	Open Social Event	Time TBD - Community Service
Sun. 11:45-1:15	Invocation Wedding Feast Discourse Gospel Study	Invocation Wedding Feast Discourse Meditation	Invocation Wedding Feast Discourse Kabbalah	Invocation Wedding Feast Discourse Meditation	Invocation Wedding Feast Discourse Gospel Study

#### **1.3.2 Special Events - Austin**

When there is a fifth Saturday of the month, Magdalene Circle performs community service. Recently we have been working at the Round Rock Serving Center.

Eight Fridays a year there are special rituals at our Sanctuary in Pflugerville to celebrate the Sophian Solar Holy Days.

#### **1.3.3 Meeting Locations – Austin**

- **Magdalene Circle Study House**
- Pflugerville, Texas

## 2.0 Ecclesia Pistis Sophia



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The Sophian Tradition's legends state that the tradition comes directly from Saint Mary Magdalene who is considered to be the Apostle of the Apostles, as she was the first to see the risen Christ. Many of the Gnostic texts depict her as a teacher and apostle that was far more advanced than most of her contemporaries. There is obviously no way to prove the descent of the tradition directly from Mary Magdalene, as no such records could be maintained. Whether this is historical fact or part of the Tradition's myth cycle is unclear, but the teachings of the Tradition closely match what fragments of teachings have been found and attributed to the Magdalene.

The Tradition can trace its movement from generation to generation from the US back into England, France, and Germany. Each generation has a "presiding lineage holder" (spiritual teacher that guards the tradition and keeps the tradition alive). This presiding lineage holder can be male or female and is designated by the previous presiding lineage holder to take over upon their death. The current presiding lineage holder in the United States is Tau Malachi.

Ecclesia Pistis Sophia is a non-profit corporation in the state of Texas.

### 2.1 Tau Malachi

Malachi is a modern Christian mystic and Gnostic whose adventure in the spiritual path began in his early youth. At the age of eight he met his beloved Teachers, Tau Elijah ben Miriam and Mother Sarah, who taught and initiated him into the Sophian Tradition of Gnostic Christianity, and who exposed him to diverse lineages of both the Western Mystery Tradition and Eastern Traditions. He became the protégé of Tau Elijah and before his death, in 1978, Tau Elijah imparted to Malachi the traditional



blessing as his successor in the Sophian lineage, and Malachi received the mantle of the lineage-holder at the age of sixteen. In January, 1983, Malachi took up the mantle of the lineage-holder and founded Sophia Fellowship as an expression of the Order (the Sophian lineage, outwardly known as "Ordo Sanctus Gnosis"), and he has actively served as a teacher and guide to others in the Gnostic Path since that time, holding the recognition of an Elder and Tau in the Sophian Tradition.

Along with his work in the Sophian lineage, Tau Malachi is also a Chevalier in the International Order of Chivalric Companions, a Martinist, and has also received ordination and consecration as an Independent Apostolic Bishop.

Tau Malachi has written several books on Gnosticism and the Sophian tradition, including: *Gospel of Saint Thomas*, *Gnosis of the Cosmic Christ*, *Living Gnosis*, and *Saint Mary Magdalene*. More books are forthcoming.

## **2.2 Ecclesia Pistis Sophia Structure**



The church arm of the Sophian Tradition is called Ecclesia Pistis Sophia (Body of Faith Wisdom) and is made up of Circles and study groups through-out the world. Tau Malachi, being the presiding lineage holder, is the presiding Bishop of Ecclesia Pistis Sophia. Each circle or study group has a Gnostic Priest, Bishop, Deacon, or Leader who coordinates and organizes the group. For a group to be recognized in Ecclesia Pistis Sophia, the group leader must be mentored in Sophian teachings and recognized by Tau Malachi. This is to make sure that the circles and study groups are continuing the work of the Sophian tradition and doing the work that the

Mother Spirit has appointed them. Ordination as a Gnostic Priest occurs when a Gnostic Teacher has reached an appropriate level of spiritual awareness, study, and work to where a Bishop in the tradition believes it is time to ordain them for the work ahead.

In general, meetings of most circles and study groups in Ecclesia Pistis Sophia are open to the public so that people can learn more about the tradition and its teachings.

## **3.0 Web Resources**

Magdalene Circle and Ecclesia Pistis Sophia have a wide range of web resources available for study, information, and communication.

### **3.1 Magdalene Circle Web Resources**

- Bishop Yonah (Austin, TX) – [gnosis@magdalene-circle.org](mailto:gnosis@magdalene-circle.org)
- Adam Schlaegel - Online Coordinator – [gold25dog@austin.rr.com](mailto:gold25dog@austin.rr.com)
- [Brother +Yonah's Blog](http://www.magdalene-circle.org/MarkBlog/) - Magdalene Circle's Gnostic Bishop's Blog - <http://www.magdalene-circle.org/MarkBlog/>
- Magdalene Circle Face-book Page - <http://www.new.facebook.com/pages/Round-Rock-TX/Magdalene-Circle/54961247087#/pages/Round-Rock-TX/Magdalene-Circle/54961247087>

### **3.2 Ecclesia Pistis Sophia Web Resources**

- Ecclesia Pistis Sophia Web Site - <http://www.sophian.org>
- Ecclesia Pistis Sophia Face-book Page - [http://www.facebook.com/pages/edit/app\\_settings.php?id=59422041314&aid=2305272732#/pages/Ecclesia-Pistis-Sophia/59422041314](http://www.facebook.com/pages/edit/app_settings.php?id=59422041314&aid=2305272732#/pages/Ecclesia-Pistis-Sophia/59422041314)