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The HOLY ENCOUNTER



JULY / AUGUST 2025

A Miracle Distribution Center Publication

...when you meet anyone, remember
it is a holy encounter.



MacGyver a Miracle

by Beverly McNeff

"The emphasis of this course always remains the same; — it is at this moment that complete salvation is offered you, and it is at this moment that you can accept it." (M-24.6)

This has been a busy time for the Center with our retreat and the many needs of our supporters. And it has been busy with our KidSinger program with concerts and fundraisers. But then, personally, it has been a busy time for our family. Our son Jeff graduated from college in May with a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering. So, all that pomp and circumstance have kept us active, as well! Many of you have been a part of Jeff's life since we brought him home from the hospital in 1998, and you have shared in the many insights he has brought to me with my studies of *A Course in Miracles*. His mind was always active, and we could tell at an early age he would be very inquisitive and creative, and much more mechanical than either

Paul or me.

I remember the first time we put him in an electric swing. He was a few months old, and we thought he would enjoy the ride of going back and forth without any effort. But he quickly wanted to figure out what was going on. He could hear the gears clicking in the hinge in the upper right-hand corner of the swing. I watched as he was fascinated with what was going on as he reached to grab the stationary bar to stop the swing, and then watched as the gears just clicked in place. When he let go of the bar, he watched

the gears continue to click in rotation as the swing continued in its back-and-forth process. I could see his brain working as he repeated the action. Once he figured out how the gear moved the swing, he was

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"His mind was always active, and we could tell at an early age he would be very inquisitive and creative, and much more mechanical than either Paul or me."

Beverly is the co-founder and president of MDC, one of the longest-running organizations based on *A Course in Miracles*. As a student, lecturer and author on the Course since 1977, her streamed weekly commentaries on Course principles have become an inspirational study and spiritual family for many around the world. View her free weekly livestream meetings at miraclecenter.org

"A gentle welcome to release"

Remembering Robert Skutch

Bob Skutch, the last of the original team that published *A Course in Miracles*, passed in his sleep on April 1st, just three months shy of his 100th birthday.

A Purple Heart veteran wounded in World War II, Bob was a writer for television and advertising in New York City before co-founding the Foundation for Inner Peace with his then-wife, Judy. After being introduced to the Course by its scribes, Helen Schucman and Bill Thetford, Bob and Judy felt guided to publish the book under the auspices of their Foundation for Inner Peace. In 1984, Bob wrote *Journey Without Distance*, the first historical account of the Course's genesis.

Many of us at the Center knew Bob and had frequent visits and conversations with him over the years. Center founder, Beverly McNeff, had known Bob, Judy, and the original team since 1977. Center Administrator, Darin Zakich, whom Bob lovingly referred to as "a very smart fellow," had many conversations about the Course and its future.

Bob was a plain-spoken, matter-of-fact person who would rather have a

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What's Happening...with the Course and the Center

For more Information go to
miraclecenter.org or call **714-632-9005**

● 2025 Woman of the Year Award

— MDC founder Beverly McNeff was honored with this award in the category of nonprofit work this past May by California U.S. Congressman Lou Correa for her service to Miracle Distribution Center for the past 47 years and KidSingers for the past 28 years. Congrats, Beverly!



or a way to remember a loved one, making a gift to the Center (and inviting others to do the same) is a way to keep the love and joy flowing. As **Delores Mitchell in New York** shared ... "I want to donate \$77.00 in memory of my brother Benny. Born in 1948, he was a Vietnam Veteran and suffered from mental illness for years. I had the privilege of serving him in his last years here on earth." We appreciate the many who celebrate with us and will acknowledge your MM in **THE HOLY ENCOUNTER!**

● Retreat in June 2026 Made Easy —

Now is the perfect time to reserve your place at our next **Holy Encounter Retreat on June 26-28, 2026**. These retreats provide students with the opportunity to delve deeper into the experience of *A Course in Miracles* while enjoying the serene setting of the stunning ranch property. If you're ready for a transformative experience, we encourage you to join us. See pages 8 & 9 for photos and experiences from our past retreat. Space is limited, and some room types will sell out. Our convenient payment plan allows you to spread your payments over five months.

● Miracle Milestones (MM) —

Celebrate your loved ones or yourself with a gift to the Center! Many have chosen to celebrate MMs with a donation. Whether it's a birthday, anniversary,

● **Summer is here** — for those of us in the Northern Hemisphere, but wherever you live, you know the importance of staying hydrated. Why not carry a reminder of *A Course in Miracles* along with you? This aluminum water bottle helps keep the Course's powerful statement, "**Teach only love, for that is what you are,**" at the forefront of your mind throughout your day. You'll find it in our online store at **miraclecenter.org**



● **Did you miss an issue?** As a subscriber to **THE HOLY ENCOUNTER**, you can access back issues at any time. If you missed an article or want to read earlier issues, simply click on **miraclecenter.org/archive** to find more than 90 editions dating back to 2010. As always, your tax-deductible donations

Robert Skutch

Continued from page 1

tuna sandwich than a fancy meal, and of course, a bowl of ice cream for dessert. We will miss his humor and practical approach.

We feel truly honored to have shared this path of healing with Bob. We know he is free and has earned the right again to look without blinders upon the Christ. We celebrate Bob and his dedication to the Course. ❖

help us continue to publish this valuable magazine and keep it free for everyone.

● **"I am as God created me."** The concept of our "true identity" is mentioned throughout *A Course in Miracles*; the workbook spends three separate lessons on it: Lessons 94, 110, and 162. It does so because at the core of our suffering is the fact that we don't know who we are. We judge ourselves and others by the caricatures of what we have made, not by the truth of God's Will. It's time for a makeover. As MDC continues its 47th year of service to students of the Course worldwide, we invite you to join us in not just doing the curriculum but fully embracing it. One way to join us is through our Miracle Prayer Ministry, to remember our reality by extending it to others. We invite you to join us every day at **4:30 pm (Pacific Time)** for a moment of healing for those in the prayer ministry, our loved ones, ourselves, and the world. Thoughts for:

July: "*The light has come.*" (W-75)

August: "*Forgiveness offers everything I want.*" (W-122)

September: "*Only God's plan for salvation will work.*" (W-71) ❖

Our 2025 Bookmark is Available!

Thoughts in the Miracle Prayer Ministry 2025

Each day at 4:30 pm, (Pacific Time) we stop for a moment of prayer as we join our minds with God for the healing of all His children. We hope these lessons from the Workbook of *A Course in Miracles* will serve as a guide for your prayerful joining.

January: God goes with me wherever I go. (41)
February: Love is the way I walk in gratitude. (119)
March: Into His Presence would I enter now. (157)
April: I could see peace instead of this. (34)
May: I am the light of the world. (51)
June: Forgiveness is my function as the light of the world. (62)

July: The light has come. (75)
August: Forgiveness offers everything I want. (122)
September: Only God's plan for salvation will work. (71)
October: I am one Self, united with my Creator. (95)
November: I share God's Will for happiness for me. (102)
December: God goes with me wherever I go. (41)

Request your full-color bookmark today which lists all the thoughts in the prayer ministry for 2025.

Go to: **miraclecenter.org**

pretty much done with it and moved on to understand the next contraption. At that point, Paul and I knew Jeff would be mechanical and certainly outthink us when it came to mechanics and maybe a few other things as well!

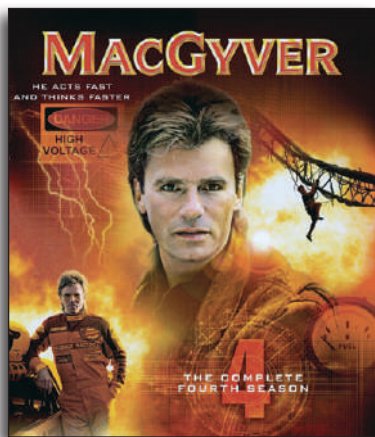
Those with a mechanical bent are skilled at examining and understanding how things work. Mechanically minded people have a hunch about how to figure something out. They bring their problem-solving skills into all sorts of situations, and they're a handy person to have around. But like most of us, and even those with systematic skills, there are things in this ever-changing world that challenge everyone. Luckily, the Voice for God is a gift given to all of us and can be accessed regardless of our worldly skill set.

A *Course in Miracles* says, "Miracles are everyone's right, but purification is necessary first." (T-1.1.1.7) What this means is that we all are entitled to miracles, but for us to know this, we have to release our limitations of this world. Therefore, we must release our judgments about ourselves and others that we bring from the past or future expectations. We have to allow our guilt to be lifted from our minds by the Gift that God has given us. You can call that Gift the Holy Spirit, Jesus, the Christ Mind, or even MacGyver!

So, if you are ready, let's "MacGyver a miracle!" Do you remember the TV show from the mid-80s in which this very clever guy named MacGyver could figure his way out of anything? When I was living through that time, I really didn't pay much attention to the show, but when our son Jeff came along, I knew he would love it.

As luck would have it, when Jeff was

about fifteen years old, the TV show *MacGyver* was being rerun on a local public television station, so we decided to watch the entire seven seasons. Jeff loved it, and I found some real insights. On the show, MacGyver worked for a nonprofit organization whose purpose was to make the world a better place by solving seemingly unsolvable problems, and they had a secret weapon: MacGyver. As always, there is never a problem too big or too complicated for MacGyver — a good lesson for all of us to remember.



"So, if you are ready, let's 'MacGyver a miracle!' Do you remember the TV show from the mid-80s in which this very clever guy named MacGyver could figure his way out of anything?"

Here's MacGyver's approach to problem-solving:

- 1) He knows everything he needs to get out of a problem is right here, now, 2) He never takes anything with him into his problems (except perhaps his Swiss Army knife), and 3) His solutions are based on helping,

not harming. To me, that's similar to what *A Course in Miracles* is asking us to do to experience a miracle.

The Course reminds us that we have all that we need within us now to experience the miracles that are present for our salvation and our healing. We don't need to bring any limiting or preconceived past thoughts with us into the seeming problem, as they can block the answer. All we need is the Holy Spirit — the miracle workers' Swiss Army knife! And, we need to always remember the answer will be one where no one loses, and everyone is blessed. Our goal is that we do not see our interests as apart from someone else's.

"If you want to be like me I will help you, knowing that we are alike. If you want to be different, I will wait until you change your mind. I can teach you,

but only you can choose to listen to my teaching." (T-8.IV.6)

Whenever MacGyver got into a jam (and that was every episode, of course!), he was always able to figure his way out. That's what everyone loved about the show. Everyday items became his "salvation" to a locked door or defusing a ticking time bomb. He knew he had the knowledge. He would always stop, focus within (and we always got to hear what he was thinking in a voice-over), and look for the answers he knew were all around him.

I know most of us think, well, that's a TV show, or we aren't as smart as a MacGyver, but the fact is, we have the infinite knowledge of the universe available to us. That is what we are being told in the above passage. Jesus is reminding us to stop the limited thinking, focus on the power of God within us now, and know that all we need is here right now.

The Voice for God is here to help us through whatever problem faces us today. We are not alone; we only feel alone because we do not acknowledge His Power by choosing to listen. Again, the choice to listen is not a denial of the world where you are sticking your fingers in your ears, closing your eyes, and screaming; it is



a correction from the diminishing thoughts of the ego that say you are lost, hopeless, and incapable.

The ego is *not* you, and no matter how long you have listened to it or how comfortable it has become to you, it will never be you; therefore ...

"Put not your faith in illusions. They will fail you. Put all your faith in the Love of God within

you; eternal, changeless and forever unailing. This is the answer to whatever confronts you today." (W-50.4)



Miracle Musings ...

The Power of Choice

by Paul McNeff

"But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." (Matthew 6:33)

"In this world Heaven is a choice, because here we believe there are alternatives to choose between." (W-138.1)

In the field of acting, "choices" refer to the specific, conscious decisions an actor makes about their character's interpretation, behavior, and relationship with the scene and other characters. These choices can be both big and small, and they help create a unique and believable performance.

A hallmark of a good actor can be measured by the choices they make to help flesh out the specific and defining traits of the character they are playing. When an actor has done this type of preparatory work, we often hear how they fully inhabit their role, which distinguishes their efforts from a lesser-prepared actor who just "phones it in."

The renowned actor Marlon Brando was known for fully inhabiting his roles. Such was the case with his unconventional choices in creating the iconic character of mob boss Don Vito Corleone in the movie *The Godfather*. He stuffed cotton balls in his cheeks to give him the appearance of jowls, and he practiced speaking in a weak, mumbling voice to convey the character's age and the effects of being shot

in the throat. He also reportedly worked on the character's physicality and voice, aiming for a naturalistic, almost improvisational style, rather than memorizing his lines. These were all choices he made that ultimately earned him the Academy Award for Best Actor in a Leading Role.

Shakespeare said, "All the world's a stage and we are merely players." So, what kind of choices are you going to make to discover the true nature of your character?

In 1985, peace activist and actor Harry Belafonte decided to play the role of a philanthropist and make the choice to help millions of

people suffering from a massive famine in Africa. His decision led to tasking pop music stars Lionel Richie and Michael Jackson with writing an original song, "We Are the World." This led to the enlistment of an impressive array of musical artists to create a promotional video of the song, raising money for the non-profit USA for Africa. From their efforts, they raised \$130 million in humanitarian aid.

In celebrating this global phenomenon of 40 years ago, our nonprofit children's

chorus, KidSingers, chose "We Are the World" as the theme and kick-off song for our 2025 Spring Concert. We found the lyrics timeless in that they universally address many of the critical issues facing our world today.

*"We are the world, we are the children,
We are the ones to make a brighter day,
so let's start giving.*

*There's a choice we're making,
we're saving our own lives.
It's true we make a better day,
just you and me."*

As we rehearsed this song with our kids, we made it a point to discuss the lyrics so we could make appropriate "choices" to render an inspiring performance. We found the lyrics "There's a choice we're making, we're saving our own lives" to be a most compelling motivation for our singing. The message is very clear: we have the power to make the choice to see ourselves as one with all humanity. Further, as children of the world, we can make a "brighter day" to inspire our brothers and sisters to do the inner work of healing, and thus project peace, relief, and respect to all those in need.

Let's delve a little deeper into our understanding of the concept of "choice" from the perspective of *A Course in Miracles*.

"In this world Heaven is a choice, because here we believe there are alternatives to choose between. We think that all things have an opposite, and what we want we choose. If Heaven exists there must be hell as well, for contradiction is the way we make what we perceive, and what we think is real." (W-138.1)

So, the Course teaches that in this world, we will always see an opposite, and



Brando's transformation in *The Godfather* in 1972

"The renowned actor Marlon Brando was known for fully inhabiting his roles. Such was the case with his unconventional choices in creating the iconic character of mob boss Don Vito Corleone in the movie The Godfather."

Paul McNeff is married to MDC's founder and has been a student of the Course since 1986. He is a professional singer and conductor and holds a master's degree in vocal performance. In 1997, along with Beverly, he founded KidSingers, an inner-city, afterschool children's chorus. The program has won many awards and been featured on *Good Morning America*. Learn more at: www.kidsingers.org

we need to choose between the two. In Course reality, there are no choices to be made because truth in creation has no opposite. To clarify, creation in the biblical account of Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and earth," teaches that creation refers to something physical. The Course teaches, however, that Creation is spiritual: "Creation is the sum of all God's Thoughts, in number infinite, and everywhere without all limit." (W-p11.11)

Through the lens of the Holy Spirit, the Course extends into the illusory world to teach us that there is another way to understand the concept of choice.

"Creation knows no opposite. But here is opposition part of being 'real' [the illusory world]. It is this strange perception of the truth that makes the choice of Heaven seem to be the same as the relinquishment of hell. It is not really thus. Yet what is true in God's creation cannot enter here until it is reflected in some form the world can understand." (W-138.2)

It's important at this point to make another clarification. When the Course uses quotes around the "real" world, it refers to the illusory world, one we see with our physical eyes, where death of the body is the ultimate victor. The real world, as the Course describes it, bears little resemblance to the "real" world.

"I said before that God so loved the world that He gave it to His only begotten Son. God does love the real world, and those who perceive its reality cannot see the world of death. For death is not of the real world, in which everything reflects the eternal. God gave you the real world in exchange for the one ['real' world] you made out of your split mind, and which is the symbol of death. For if you could really separate yourself from the Mind of

God you would die." (T-12.III.8)

As long as we live in the "real" world and believe it is true with every breath we take, we have the choice to surrender to the vision of Christ, where we can operate on a higher level of consciousness. In so doing, we journey inward to find



1985 "We Are the World" collaboration.

"His [Belafonte's] decision led to tasking pop music stars Lionel Richie and Michael Jackson with writing an original song, 'We Are the World.'"

a bridge to the real world by remembering the truth that has always been within our being. So, how do we change our misplaced vision from

the "real" world — to the real world? If we ask for help, we will receive the answer.

"If you will recognize that all the attack you perceive is in your own mind

and nowhere else, you will at last have placed its source, and where it begins it must end. For in this same place also lies salvation. The altar of God where Christ abideth is there. You have defiled the altar, but not the world. Yet Christ has placed the Atonement on the altar for you. Bring your perceptions of the world to this altar, for it is the altar to truth. There you will see your vision changed, and there you will learn to see truly.

From this place, where God and His Son dwell in peace and where you are welcome, you will look out in peace and behold the world truly. Yet to find the place, you must relinquish your investment in the world as you project it, allowing the Holy Spirit to extend the real world to you from the altar of God." (T-12.III.10)



"So, the Course teaches that in this world, we will always see an opposite, and we need to choose between the two."

So, as a Shakespearian player on the world stage, how do we create an Academy Award performance out of our own lives by finding the specific, defining, and true traits of our character? As the director of *The Godfather*, Francis Ford Coppola helped Marlon Brando make defining character choices about his role in the movie. So too, can we choose to take the directing helm of our very own "life" movie, so we can seek the vision of Christ to bring forth our true character.

In so doing, we will see that one supreme choice is all we need.

"You need to be reminded that you think a thousand choices are confronting you, when there is really only one to make. And even this but seems to be a choice. Do not confuse yourself with all the doubts that myriad decisions would induce. You make but one. And when that one is made, you will perceive it was no choice at all. For truth is true, and nothing else is true. There is no opposite to choose instead. There is no contradiction to the truth." (W-138.4)

Fleshing out our true character is achieved by waking up as the Course describes it,

"Then let the Son of God awaken from his sleep, and opening his holy eyes, return again to bless the world he made. In error it began, but it will end in the reflection of his holiness. And he will sleep no more and dream of death. Then join with me today. Your glory is the light that saves the world ... You are the holy Son of God Himself. Remember this, and all the world is free. Remember this, and

earth and Heaven are one." (W-191.10-11)

Once we have embraced our true character, it will make little difference whether or not we receive an Academy Award for

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Recognizing Spirit

The Gentle Voice Beneath the Noise

by Lee Jampolsky, Ph.D.

We say we want joy — our soul's natural longing, the place where it is most at home. But when given the choice — pain or surrender — the ego mind is cunning. We take pain into our hands as if it were a tool, as if defining it, turning it over, examining every edge, will make it yield something useful. We hold it close, mistaking its weight for our own, as if without it, we might disappear.

We speak of wanting ease, but we barter with life instead, negotiating how much control we can keep while still pretending — even to ourselves — to let go. We do not yield to what life brings; we dictate — drawing maps over unmapped terrain rather than stepping into the unknown. We argue with the ground beneath us as if sheer will alone could redraw the world into what we think it should have been.

There are only two voices. Fear speaks first, loud and insistent, etching its certainty into everything it touches, naming and defining until the world seems smaller, until nothing remains unknown or untouched, and the vastness of what is and will always be is now forgotten. This is the voice of the ego — not whispering but filling the silence before we recognize the inquiry forming within us, weaving conclusions before we've dared to wonder.

And then there is the Voice of Love. It does not push forward, does not strain to be noticed — it does not seek to persuade, only to be remembered. It moves like

the breath between words, like the hush before an unexpected kindness, like the moment just before dawn when the dark has nothing left to cling to. It does not demand recognition — it waits, knowing we will hear it the moment we stop listening to the restless blueprints of fear, the ceaseless construction of barriers, the careful stacking of past wounds we mistake for shelter.

To hear and experience Love's presence is not an effort — it is the undoing of what obscures our awareness

of it. Not reaching or leading with what we think we know about ourselves, others, and the world, but softening into our

essence, into what has always been. Not silencing the noise of the world and the ego mind, but pausing — stepping back from the compulsion to fill the gaps, to prove, to be right, to brace against what simply is, as if it were an enemy. It is the space, the pause, between the notes of a song that makes the melody possible, the stillness beneath a wave that allows the ocean to move as one, the enduring vastness beneath the storm that was never at war with the sky.

Surrendering to Love is not an evaporation of what is truly valuable, not a defeat, not a giving up. It is the moment clenched hands, unaware of their own grasp, simply open — not in loss, but in the relief of no longer mistaking tension for safety, no longer believing that holding on preserves the endless list of what we

think we need in order to be whole.

It is the recognition that transformation does not come from clinging to fear, but from allowing ourselves to be held in Love.

It is the moment we stop bracing against what was never a threat, realizing that the resistance itself was the source of our suffering. The moment we loosen our grip on what was only ever a shadow in our hands, and watch it dissolve without struggle. The moment we set down the weight we carried for so long, we mistook it for part of ourselves — only to find, in letting go, that we were never bound by it at all.

And now, we can ask: What do I remind myself and others of?

Each day, in each moment, am I a presence that invites peace, that opens space for stillness and a deeper awareness of our shared belonging? Or do I, even unknowingly, add to the noise, deepen the conflict, reinforce the illusion of separation?

And if I see another lost in fear, especially someone I love, clinging to suffering as if it were a shield, how do I meet them? It is easy to judge, to want to pull them forward, to insist they release what harms them. But just as my soul is given the space to choose again, so too must I allow another their own unfolding. Love

does not force awakening; it does not rush understanding. It only holds the door open, offering a quiet invitation that can only be accepted in its own time.

This may be one of the hardest lessons to accept — not because we don't



"To hear and experience Love's presence is not an effort – it is the undoing of what obscures our awareness of it."



"This does not mean we do nothing in the face of suffering. Love is not passive ..."

understand it, but because we so deeply feel the suffering of others and long to lift it from them. It is painful to watch someone remain in fear, resisting the peace that is always available. It is tempting to intervene, to try to undo their illusions for them, even to urge them — gently or insistently — to put down what is hurting them. But Love does not work this way. Just as we were given the freedom to turn toward truth in our own time, we can offer that same grace to others. To do otherwise is to overlook the strength of their mind — the same mind that, though choosing fear

now, will one day choose Love.

This does not mean we do nothing in the face of suffering. Love is not passive, nor does it turn away. But Love flourishes in patience, recognizing that healing cannot be rushed and wisdom cannot be forced. When we try to hurry someone's awakening, we are not fully supporting them in what Love offers; instead, we are reacting to our own discomfort in witnessing their pain. Love, in its highest form, trusts the unfolding of each soul's journey. It knows that when the time is right, every mind will remember its way home.

The Dignity of Choice

It is no small thing
 To let another walk their chosen road,
 Even when we see the loose stones beneath their feet,
 Even when we ache to smooth the ground,
 To place a hand on their shoulder,
 To call out — This way, this way.
 But Love does not pull, does not impose.
 It does not reach into another's grasp
 To take what they are not yet ready to lay down.
 It does not strip away what is tightly held,
 But waits, like a lamp left glowing in an open window,
 Steady, unwavering,
 Until the traveler lifts their eyes toward home.
 Even when we see the weight they carry,
 Even when their struggle knots something deep within us,
 To dismiss their right to choose
 Is to forget what we ourselves were given —
 The sacred space to fumble forward,
 To trip, to rise,
 To decide, in our own time,
 To turn toward the guidance that was always there.
 The mind turns toward Love in its own time,
 Not by force,
 But by remembering, at last,
 It was never alone.
 The mountain does not call out to the traveler
 As they wander its slopes — it simply remains,
 Unchanged, unmoved,
 Knowing stillness will do what force never could.
 So we stand beside, not above,
 Holding no judgment for what has not yet softened,
 Trusting that every mind, in its own time,
 Will turn toward what has always been waiting —
 Not a moment before,
 Not a moment too late,
 But in the present moment,
 Where an open door is always near.

Get Your WEEKLY Miracles in 2025

Miracle Distribution Center
A Course In Miracles Resource Center

"God is with me. I live and move in Him"



by Beverly McNeff

Workbook lesson 222 from *A Course In Miracles* is truly a release from the prison of guilt that our minds seem to hold us in. It is an affirmation of the fact that there is no time, place, or experience in our lives where God Answer is absent. He is a part of all our daily activities, our very being. As the lesson states, "He is my Source of life, the life within, the air I breathe, the food by which I am sustained, the water which renews and cleanses me. He is my home, wherein I..."

[Continue Reading →](#)

ACIM Livestream Tonight



www.miraclecenter.org
 Beverly Hutchinson McNeff
 Miracle Distribution Center

Join Beverly tonight at 7:00 pm PT as she explores the healing power of *A Course in Miracles*. If you miss the live broadcast, consider becoming a subscriber to access the [video archives](#) and view meetings at your convenience.

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 to speak to a live person

Holy Encounter Retreat

A Recap of MDC's 2025 Retreat

These powerful encounters allow attendees to deeply soak in the words, inspiration, and practical application of *A Course in Miracles* within an atmosphere of love, support, and beauty. We hope you enjoy the photos and comments, and will plan to join us next year, June 26-28, 2026. People are already making reservations! Details are available on our website: miraclecenter.org

The Miracle of Coming Home *by Deb Rahalski from Oregon*

When I walked into my room at this year's Miracle Distribution Center's **Holy Encounter Retreat**, a wave of emotion washed over me. Left in its wake was a familiar feeling I now recognize as the simple peace of coming home. It is a feeling that has welcomed me every time I've attended.

That first time in 2018, I thought I was simply relieved to arrive after heavy traffic tripled the time it took to drive there from the airport. In fact, as I sat for a few moments on the luxuriously comfortable bed, I was tempted to dive under the crisp white linens and call it a night.

Fortunately, my grumbling tummy reminded me of the enticing aromas coming from the kitchen next to the meeting hall where I had checked in. That meal was the first of many that nourished both body and spirit through all the miracles of healing that each retreat would bring to me.

Over the years, I've come to realize that the comforting sense of peace that greets me upon arrival stays with me throughout the weekend. It is there in the joy of reuniting with friends and in the blessing of making new friends each year. It is there in the powerful connections formed through shared stories in our small group activities. It is there in the experience of being immersed in the Course, with Beverly's guidance supported by Paul's wonderful music, Darin's expert technical support,

tour of the beautiful grounds.

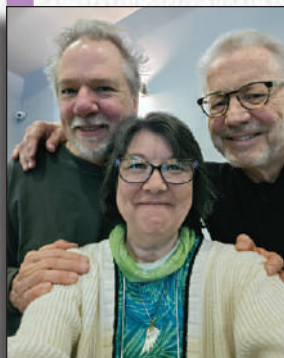
When I thought of being at a ranch in the high desert, I did not imagine walking paths that wound through thriving gardens and delightful pools of water with quiet spots to relax and reflect. Now, my favorite morning ritual is having my morning coffee with Buddha in the Zen Garden before breakfast.

I am convinced that the love and care the kitchen staff puts into preparing our meals makes all the healthy options taste so good, right down to the constant supply of freshly baked cookies. No wonder we linger around the dining tables, sharing stories and forging friendships.

I now realize that the peace I experience comes from the feeling of belonging. It is an inner knowing that I am accepted exactly as I am. The safe and sacred space of being surrounded by my Course family allows me to work through the lessons and exercises Beverly creates for us. Every retreat brings

the mindful reset and healing I most need at that time. There are wonderful moments of laughter and fun, of song and movement, which bring lightness and balance to the process of going deeper with the Course. All of these elements combine to create an experience of coming home to the peace

within that is unique to this retreat, and that is the reason I return each year with gratitude and joy. Well, that, and those heavenly cookies.



and Tess's patient, good-humored coordination of additional activities, such as the walking



The Next Holy Encounter Retreat

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All in This Together! *by Karen Scopetski from Massachusetts*

My favorite quote from *A Course in Miracles* is "Love will enter immediately into any mind that truly wants it, but it must want it truly." (T-4.III.4) This past April, I had the joy of attending



Miracle Distribution Center's 2025 **Holy Encounter Retreat**. This was my second time at the retreat, and it felt like I was returning home. My heart opened when I entered this sacred space, and I felt my mind wanting love, truly. With so much going on in the world, I needed this retreat

more than ever. Thanks, MDC team, for planning all the details and offering us this wonderful opportunity to join with others!



The Course has guided me through every trial and happy moment in my life for over 30 years. It came to me during the worst crisis and lifted me out of that, setting me on a path of lifelong learning and spiritual awakening. The Course continues to guide me daily, bringing

awareness and truth to my mind.

At the retreat, it was interesting to hear from Course students about their experiences with the Course and how they have used this path. This year, I am realizing how much I need community and self-care. The retreat



was both, and I embraced the experience fully. The jacuzzi was a great place for conversation and relaxation. The meditation spots gave me time for reflection. Hiking to Healing Hill to watch the sunrise by myself was a mystical experience. Most of all,



I loved connecting with the people at the retreat: gathering with others on walks, in the dining hall, and for small group discussions.

We enjoyed music by Paul McNeff and Joe Miller. And I could feel the collective energy as we sat together and took in



each daily session. I've known the retreat moderator, Beverly McNeff, for many years through weekly study group meetings and our friendship. Beverly consistently teaches the Course principles with grace, humor, and wisdom. She is relatable! On Saturday night, we watched a movie about how the Course came into the world. And I especially enjoyed hearing Beverly's personal stories about her involvement during the early days of the Course.



On my flight back to Boston, I picked up the May/June issue of **THE HOLY ENCOUNTER** magazine to pass the time.

I noticed that every article echoed what we talked about at the retreat. So

this issue became a capstone for the entire retreat. What a "coincidence"!





Egg-aggerated Status

by Joseph Miller

"You may wonder why it is important to say, for example, 'Above all else I want to see this table differently.' In itself it is not important at all. Yet what is by itself? And what does 'in itself' mean? You see a lot of separate things about you, which really means you are not seeing at all." (W-28.2)

"Ignorance, by relying on appearances, superimposes onto persons and things a sense of concreteness that, in fact, is not there. ... Through ignorance what we see around us seems to exist independently, without depending on other factors for its existence, but this is not the case. By giving people and things around us this exaggerated status, we are drawn into all sorts of overblown and ultimately hurtful emotions." (HH XIV Dalai Lama, How to See Yourself as You Really Are)

It's Sunday morning, and I'm fumbling through my dictionary looking up, yet again, the word "inherent." The translation of H.H. the Dalai Lama's wisdom that I am reading makes frequent reference to the perceptual error of "imputing inherent existence" onto objects and persons. I turn a few pages, but then put away the dictionary and attend to my breakfast instead. Which leads to the following musing.

My omelet (yes, a masterpiece) is on a plate before me. Is it *my* omelet? My wife exchanged our money for the ingredients at the market yesterday. Before that, it must have been *Von's* omelet. Isn't that how we think of it? This kind of proprietary thinking keeps the economy intelligible and orderly, I suppose.

But isn't it all only a game, a convention, a matter of labels and customs? Just a bunch of thoughts, a way of perceiving? The omelet belongs to the universe. No one wrested it out of the great cosmic flux and put it under another jurisdiction. There is no other jurisdiction. And when

I eat the omelet, am I then taking it from the universe and putting it into *my* body? Have I removed it from the universe? Not if my body is *also* part of the universe. My body is not *my* body, because no one ever removed it from the keeping of the universe. I do not "give my body back" to the earth at the end of this life, because

"I" never removed it from the earth in the first place.

There are rituals or prayers in various traditions (perhaps all traditions) for making offerings of one's being and property to the divine. In Catholic school, we were taught "The Daily Offering" prayer, which dedicated all of one's thoughts, feelings, and actions of that day to God. Krishna

in the *Bhagavad-Gita* (Ch. IX) says, "Whatever thou doest, O son of Kunti, whatever thou eatest, whatever thou sacrificest, whatever thou givest, whatever mortification thou performest, commit each unto me."

And then the great Teacher of yoga adds, "Thus thou shalt be delivered from the good and evil experiences which are the bonds of action." That is a big promise.



"Imprisoned by the ego, our minds weave illusions. These illusions ultimately have no bearing on our true Identity ..."

Can the act of internal offering really make such a difference? Why would it? Because, teaches the *Gita*, all action performed *other* than as an offering to the divine only inflames and enhances the false self. I'm reminded of the passage from *A Course in Miracles* about the power of the mind. The mind never sleeps; it is never inactive. And all thought produces form at some level. Guided by the Holy Spirit, our minds participate in universal divine creativity. Imprisoned by the ego, our minds weave illusions. These illusions ultimately have no bearing on our true Identity, but they exercise tremendous power over our perceptions now. And it is those perceptions that delude and imprison us.

As the Dalai Lama teaches, we superimpose onto persons and things a sense of concreteness that, in fact, is not there. According to Lesson 28, we see a lot of separate things around us, which means we are not seeing at all. Because true seeing would reveal one great web of interdependence. And we would know how vacuous and vain is all our grasping for concrete particulars. It is like grabbing at smoke. Our ignorance leads to expectation, attachment, and possessiveness. These passions are driven by what the Course calls "the scarcity principle." All of this is a recipe for "seek but do not find." Like *The Invisible Man*, we desperately wrap our self-concept in bandages to make it visible, objective, and stable, yet the wrapping keeps caving in on nothingness.

So, here I sit, looking at *my* omelet, *my* plate, *my* cup of tea, *my* little teapot, and *my* toast. What do they all have in common? They are "mine," or *were* — before I started doubting all of this. So I beg forgiveness of each item, and I ask for the truth. Each answers, kindly, that it knows nothing about my proprietary pretenses.

The toast assures me the whole thing is all in my head. The tea speaks about the sunny slopes of Darjeeling, the beleaguered tea workers, the drying, fermentation, transportation, the packaging, the shipping, the hot water, and the ceramic



Claude Rains in *The Invisible Man*, 1933

“Like The Invisible Man, we desperately wrap our self-concept in bandages to make it visible, objective, and stable, yet the wrapping keeps caving in on nothingness.”

vessels — but the tea insists it sees no evidence for the reality of “me” or “mine” anywhere. The tea is entirely immersed in a vast nexus of action and reaction, and has never been removed or influenced by anything else. It is nothing else.

“To be alone is to be separated from infinity, but how can this be if infinity has no end? No one can be beyond the limitless, because what has no limits must be everywhere. There are no beginnings and no endings in God, Whose universe is Himself. Can you exclude yourself from the universe, or from God Who is the universe?” (T-11.I.2)

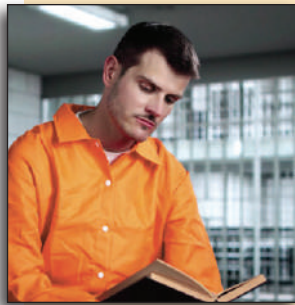
Even in the Course, we are instructed to recommit everything that is ours to the divine. Recall Lesson 353, “My eyes, my tongue, my hands, my feet today have but one purpose; to be given Christ to use to bless the world with miracles.” The act of offering is an antidote to wrong thinking — hardened thought, and feeling based on the false premise of a separate self. When we make an offering to Christ, he is not standing there collecting what was once loaned out. It was never loaned; there is no deed of transfer. But my cher-

Update: Prison Project

The Prison Project of Miracle Distribution Center sends *A Course in Miracles* and other Course-based items to prison inmates. Through your generous donations, we have been able to supply many newly-started spiritual libraries in prisons. In some cases, we have provided multiple copies of books, so more inmates can read about the love that is their essence. These principles genuinely make a difference and quench a thirst for truth that those in prison have found no other place.



The following letter indicates the importance of our Prison Project in many inmates' lives. We are grateful that we are here to bring the truth and inspiration that *A Course in Miracles* so beautifully offers.



My name is Cody,

I enjoyed the book you sent to me. It's actually the first book I've been able to read all the way through. I have recommended it to the weekly Friday class that teaches people how to deal with trauma. I'm going to send it to other pods in the jail so they can read it in hopes that it can help others.

Love is Letting Go of Fear by Gerald Jampolsky, Ph.D., is a highly recommended book for anyone who could use some help. Thank you so much for sending it. It came at the perfect time. I love this book. Please send another book.

Cody in Scott County Jail, Tennessee

We are honored to meet Cody's request and each request! Thanks to your generous support of the Prison Project and the Center, we can ensure these appeals are answered. Contact us if you know of an inmate who would like to receive books related to the Course or **THE HOLY ENCOUNTER** magazine.

Rules are strict for sending items into prisons and secured facilities, so please check with the institution before requesting items to be sent.

Together, we can experience healing by demonstrating healing through our willingness to be truly helpful to others. We invite your tax-deductible donations to support this project and in support of the Center so we may continue to pursue new ways of healing our world.

To read more click on “Prison Project” under “Services” at miraclecenter.org

ishing of a separate “me,” who projects a whole lot of separate “this,” “that,” and the “other,” can be gradually neutralized in just this way.

With this in mind, I can begin to sense the presence of something cosmic and eternal even in the most common object. Each is a conditioned symbol of the cosmos, an expression of Cosmic Helpfulness which has not left its Source. None, not the smallest, is “by itself” or “in itself.” Not even

my omelet.

“You could, in fact, gain vision from just that table, if you would withdraw all your own ideas from it, and look upon it with a completely open mind. It has something to show you; something beautiful and clean and of infinite value, full of happiness and hope. Hidden under all your ideas about it is its real purpose, the purpose it shares with all the universe.” (W-28.5)



“Our choice for Heaven, whether it be a thousand decisions in illusory time, or one supreme choice in spiritual truth, the eternal rewards will more than dwarf any award we can receive in this world.”

our performance. Our choice for Heaven, whether it be a thousand decisions in illusory time, or one supreme choice in spiritual truth, the eternal rewards will more than dwarf any award we can receive in this world.

Finally, let's join together in making this power-inducing choice:

“Before we close our eyes in sleep tonight, we reaffirm the choice that we have made each hour in between. And now we give the last five minutes of our waking day to the decision with which we awoke. As every hour passed, we have declared our choice again, in a brief quiet time devoted to maintaining sanity. And finally, we close the day with this, acknowledging we chose but what we want:

*Heaven is the decision I must make.
I make it now, and will not
change my mind,
because it is the only thing I want.”*

(W-138.12)

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Please join us for the
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Beverly McNeff



Wednesday Evenings @ 7pm PT / 10pm ET

These free livestreams tackle real world challenges and view them through the healing power of *A Course in Miracles*. Each week we explore a workbook lesson and text section in the Course.

Sections are explained for their theory as well as their application into our daily lives. Bev brings knowledge, humor, and down-to-earth practicality to the Course's principles. Watch free or become a subscriber.

LESSON 125
In quiet I receive God's Word today.
1. Let this day be a day of stillness and of quiet listening. Your Father wills you hear His Word today. And so He calls from deep within your mind where He abides. Hear Him today. No peace is possible until His Word is heard around the world; until your mind, in quiet listening, accepts the message that the world must hear to usher in the quiet time of peace.



MDC

“Bev's knowledge of the Course and all of her explanations are wonderful. I'm so glad you have the archives available of the classes, as seeing her when she teaches is so much more effective and enjoyable for me. And I can watch the class when it's convenient for me, too.”

“I have been so inspired by Beverly's weekly meetings. I am so grateful to be able to watch her online.”

“I love the livestreams. I understand the Course so much better, and Beverly is so darn fun! I love her sense of humor and great insights! I find myself thinking about what she says all the time.”

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It's time to stop listening to the limited thinking of the ego and open our minds and hearts to the miracles that are here to transform your life right now.

"Hold onto nothing. Do not bring with you one thought the past has taught, nor one belief you ever learned before from anything. Forget this world, forget this course, and come with wholly empty hands unto your God." (W-189.7)

When MacGyver went on a mission, he never took anything with him because he knew he had the knowledge to handle any problem that arose. He did, however, carry a Swiss Army knife. Now, if you're familiar with these knives, they can contain every tool necessary for any emergency, conveniently tucked into a compact size that fits into a pocket. They're like a survival tool for most any situation — much like we are told the Holy Spirit is for us. MacGyver felt he only needed his Swiss Army knife, and we only need the Holy Spirit.

The emphasis of the Course is to get us comfortable with God's Answer through the Holy Spirit. He will not necessarily change the world as you see it, but as Workbook lesson 151 says,

"He gives you vision which can look beyond these grim appearances, and can behold the gentle face of Christ in all of them."

First, however, the Holy Spirit can only offer this vision if you are willing to bring Him into your thinking. MacGyver knew he needed his trusty knife, and we need our trusty Helper. Therefore, once we realize the importance of the Holy Spirit's vision in our lives, we have to get out of the way and bring our thoughts to Him for healing.

Here's how Lesson 151 explains the Holy Spirit's three-step plan ...

Once we value the Holy Spirit's help over our own, He sorts through our minds and selects the elements that represent the truth, "and disregards those aspects which reflect but idle dreams."



"That's what everyone loved about the show. Everyday items became his 'salvation' to a locked door or defusing a ticking time bomb. He knew he had the knowledge."

In a MacGyver episode, if he were locked in a basement, he would look for only the necessary items to facilitate his escape. He didn't sit around looking at all the items that made him feel small and powerless, or bemoan the fact that he was in the mess in the first place. Therefore, here's a "MacGyver a miracle" tip: Don't

hold onto the thoughts that don't serve you. Stop dwelling in them. Let the Holy Spirit sort them out for you.

Next, the Holy Spirit will "reinterpret all you see, and all occurrences, each circumstance, and every happening that seems to touch on you in any way from His one frame of reference, wholly unified and sure." (ibid)

MacGyver saw everything as helpful. He wasn't happy he was in the problem, but once he was in it, he didn't whine; he went to work. So, let's get to work and let the Holy Spirit reinterpret all you see. It is not that we are thankful for the problems in our lives, but we are grateful we have the available Answer in the Holy Spirit that can create miracles out of our messes.

Finally, the Holy Spirit's frame of reference is love, so He will focus on "the love

beyond the hate, the constancy in change, the pure in sin, and only Heaven's blessing on the world." (ibid)

Like the Holy Spirit, MacGyver always had a single frame of reference: Finding a solution to any problem put before him. From the Course's perspective, our solution is love, and that is what the Holy Spirit's laser focus is here to help us experience. As the Course would say, the Holy Spirit is here to help us experience everything as an extension of love or a call for love. This type of awareness enables us to transcend the distractions of the ego and focus on the miracle that is being offered in the moment.

Imagine that type of attention centered on our healing. The Holy Spirit is not distracted by the ego's thoughts about your past mistakes or failures, or anyone else's. He knows that the important thing is not blame or guilt, but awakening; that's what He's here to help us do. We just need to accept His Help, and we have ourselves a miracle!

"As you come closer to a brother you approach me, and as you withdraw from him I become distant to you. Salvation is a collaborative venture. It cannot be undertaken successfully by those who disengage themselves from the Sonship, because they are disengaging themselves from me." (T-4.VI.8)



"MacGyver saw everything as helpful. He wasn't happy he was in the problem, but once he was in it, he didn't whine; he went to work."

In the series, MacGyver worked for a non-profit organization called the Phoenix Foundation, whose mission was to improve the lives of people and communities world-

wide by devising solutions to their problems. Of course, no one was better at helping than MacGyver. Part of his strength was his motivation to help

others. He always recognized that when he helped another, it made everyone's life better.

Continued on page 14

Every great perennial truth offers this same emphasis. That's what the Golden Rule is all about. When we help others, we really help ourselves. From the Course's perspective, this is not only true, but it is the Source of our existence. As the Course reminds us,

"Our function is to work together, because apart from each other we cannot function at all. The whole power of God's Son lies in all of us, but not in any of us alone." (T-8.VI.8)

Let's return to the passage from chapter four in the Course's text, as it highlights a crucial point. When we distance ourselves from others by not seeing their interests as the same as ours, we are distancing ourselves from our *real* power and strength. When we hate, fear, or attack, we do not become stronger; instead, we are weakened and feel separated from our Source. It is not that God is distant from us, but we have distanced ourselves from Him by denying the truth of His Creation (each and every one of us). We cannot hear or know His Answer for us because we are refusing to tune into His consistent call to love.

Think of it this way: when you plug a lamp into an electrical socket, it is connected to a lot of power. But, unless you turn on the lamp's switch, the power is unrealized. In much the same way, you are connected to a mighty source of miracles, but when you hate or value separation, this real power is unrealized to you, although it is all around you.

Recognizing that our salvation is found in our relationships with each other does not mean we have to agree with or condone harmful actions. We can and will disagree in this world, but we do not have

to be disagreeable, make others wrong, or hate others to make our points.

In her book *Team of Rivals*, historian Doris Kearns Goodwin tells how, during Abraham Lincoln's presidency, he intentionally brought into his administration knowledgeable people who had disagreed with him. He did not see those with differing views as enemies, but as people who held deeply felt opinions that were simply different from his own, and he thought he could learn from them for the betterment of the country. It did not mean he acted upon everything they thought or said, but by listening and discussing, both sides were able to move past the barriers that separated them to find a collaborative approach.

This is what we need to do in our own lives now. Just

because our skin color, sexuality, religion, nationality, or political party may be different, we all seem to inhabit this planet at this moment. Learning how to get along with each other is key to our survival. If we want the knowledge, the miracle to transcend our challenges and find our unity, then we need to make our salvation "a collaborative venture."

"Leave foolish thoughts ... behind today, and turn your mind to true ideas instead. No one can fail who seeks to reach the truth, and it is truth we seek to reach today." (W-131.10)

At the end of a one-hour MacGyver television show, our hero always prevailed. The script was written for him to succeed, and so is our script. It may feel like our solutions are far off, but as we are always assured, we will prevail. As the Course teaches us, in so many places throughout its pages,

"Heaven is here. There is nowhere else. Heaven is now. There is no other time." (M-24.6)



"In her book Team of Rivals, historian Doris Kearns Goodwin tells how, during Abraham Lincoln's presidency, he intentionally brought into his administration knowledgeable people who had disagreed with him."

The Course assures us we *will* awaken to the truth of our divine nature as God's Holy Child, with all the support, healing, and joy this awareness brings us. Just like MacGyver, we need to know we can handle whatever situation comes our way today. Let us be willing to look at the problem, step back from all past perceptions of right or wrong, good or bad, and come with an open mind to the situation so that we might share vision with the Holy Spirit and see the miracle that is standing here now.

Finally, let us remember we cannot awaken to our full power and knowledge without each other. You may not know how to heal your relationships, but that was never your job anyway. Your job is to be willing and to "let all your relationships be made holy for you." (T-15.XI.10)

Okay, you have everything you need already given you to handle any problem that you may face. Your salvation is now. It's time to "MacGyver a miracle" for your life and the world! ❖

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*"Salvation is a collaborative venture," and so
"We go together, you and I."*

"It's about time I became a Holy Helper. With the way things are in the country and the world, right now, my daily lessons and Beverly's weekly Wednesday posts are the two things that truly help to keep me grounded!!!"

—Harvey in Maine

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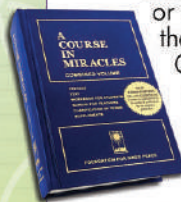
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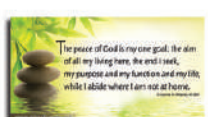
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The HOLY ENCOUNTER

JULY / AUGUST 2025

In This Issue ...

- MacGyver a Miracle
- "A gentle welcome to release"
- The Power of Choice
- The Gentle Voice Beneath the Noise
- 2025 Retreat Recap
- Egg-aggrated Status

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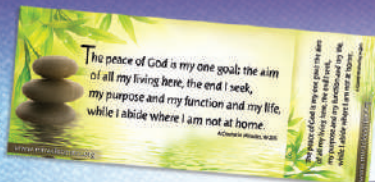
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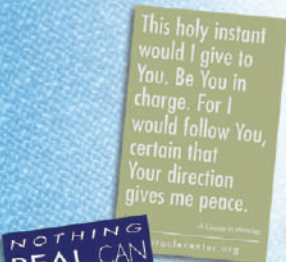
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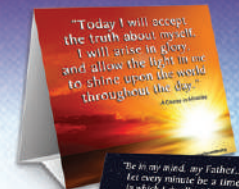
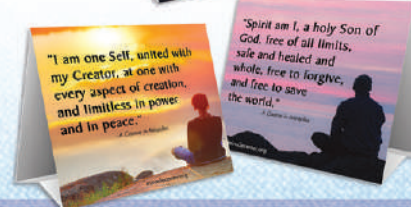
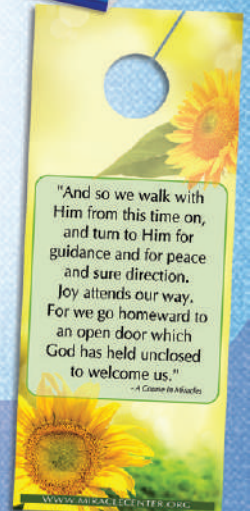


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