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The HOLY ENCOUNTER



September / October 2022
A Miracle Distribution Center Publication

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



Lost but Now Found

by Beverly Hutchinson McNeff

I grabbed a pair of scissors off a shelf, causing a pen to fall onto the mess that is known as my desk. From the side of my desk where I was standing, I could not see the pen. It had disappeared from my sight. Of course, it had to be there. I had just knocked it off the shelf! But it was not visible from my perspective. As I shifted my angle, moved a few stacks of books and papers away, and looked again, I saw the pen. What had seemed lost was found.

It made me realize that nothing is ever lost. Things may go

But, perhaps the most interesting angle is the perspective it offers us on our relationship with God.

This gospel is just one of many such writings that have surfaced, shedding a deeper perspective on the message of Christianity. Significant discoveries such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Nag Hammadi Library, and gospels like Thomas and Mary Magdalene seem to indicate that all is not as clear-cut as what we have been told in the literal interpretations of the New Testament.

Dr. Elaine Pagels, a professor of religion

at Princeton who specializes in studies of the Gnostics, said "These discoveries are exploding the myth of a monolithic religion and demonstrating how diverse – and fascinating – the early Christian movement really was."

Judas' gospel tells us of a secret conversation that Jesus had with Judas just days before he celebrated Passover. According to the gospel, Jesus tells Judas that he will "exceed all of them [the other

"After 1,700 years, this text surfaced to shed a new angle on the relationship between Jesus and Judas. But, perhaps the most interesting angle is the perspective it offers us on our relationship with God."



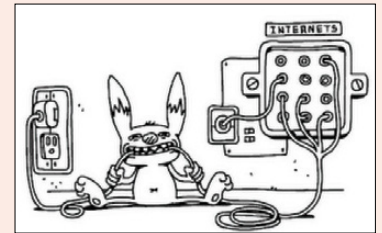
missing for a while, but they eventually show up. And so it was with the discovery of the Gospel of Judas a few years back. After 1,700 years, this text surfaced to shed a new angle on the relationship between Jesus and Judas.

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

Continued on page 3

Don't Lose Your Connection

Are you getting your weekly dose of miracles? Perhaps you already receive our weekly ACIM email or maybe it's being diverted to your spam folder or perhaps you just need to make sure the



internet gremlins have not marked it as "unsubscribed"! Regardless, you don't want to miss a moment of inspiration. As Greg in Washington and Mary in Florida wrote...

"I just wanted to let you know how much I appreciate and enjoy your weekly emails and other materials. I love Beverly's articles and her clarity and ability to distill complex concepts down to their simple essence. For 'over-complexifiers' like me, this is a truly invaluable service."

"This email is just what I need this morning as I wake up with my family dramas lurking in my mind and the other part of me searching for another way. Beverly's words and voice always connect me Home to my True Self - thank you so much! You are one of my main bridges back to the Course where I always find peace, love, and happiness. Keep up the great work. I need you in my life."

Sign up at the bottom of any page on our website by clicking "Join Our Email List" to receive these weekly emails.

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

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



● Carry this refreshing truth with you wherever you go.

Now, when you become a new **Holy Helper** with an ongoing commitment of \$20 or more each month, you not only assure that the work of the Center continues, but we will send you an eco-friendly, reusable aluminum water bottle with this quote from *A Course in Miracles*: "Teach only love, for that is what you are." This water bottle was exclusively designed and created by your Miracle Distribution Center family.

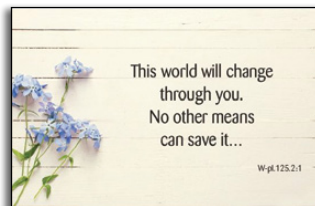
● Closed captioning! We are pleased to announce a new benefit for our weekly livestream subscribers: closed captioning.



Now, each week's archived meeting features captions — as a service for those who watch with the sound off — perhaps because they're hard of hearing or in a public place. View our free weekly livestream each Wednesday and, if the captioning feature is appealing to you, consider becoming a subscriber to enjoy this new benefit.

● Inspiration at your fingertips! It's as

close as a click away. Simply go to the Center's website and get the Course's inspired wisdom on our **Choose-A-Quote** page under "Services." Now with nearly 450 quotes, you can receive a thought from the Course selected just for you, and then you can choose a new quote over and over again!

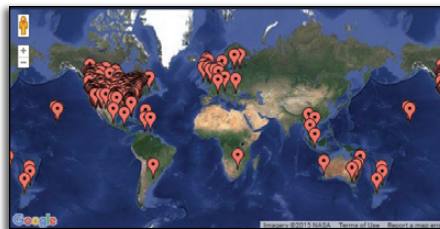


Drew in San Diego, California, said that his study group now meets online, and they use the Center's look-up for text and lesson sections for their group

and use the **Choose-A-Quote** service. Each group participant selects a **Choose-A-Quote** card at the beginning and end of each online meeting. They love it! We thank you for your generous tax-deductible support to help us to create and keep these inspiring free services going.

● Oh, how things have changed — We began keeping track of *A Course in Miracles* study groups back in 1980 with a handful of people participating. From there, it grew into over 2,000 in-person meetings worldwide.

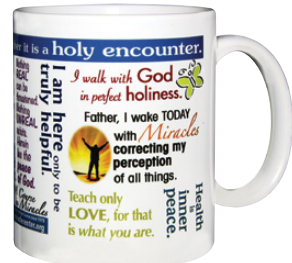
Several years ago, Course publisher Judith Skutch Whitson asked if we would begin keeping



track of online study groups. To begin with, we had very few. Greatly due to the pandem-

ic, the number of groups has grown to over 350 online, and in-person groups have been starting to open back up again. Check it out on our website under our "Services" tab.

● Encircled by Miracles! This high-quality Miracle Mug, encircled with fifteen of our favorite inspirational quotes from *A Course in Miracles*, was exclusively designed and created by your Miracle Distribution Center family. Our hope is that each quote will bless you as you pour your first cup of coffee into the mug in the morning until you



sip your last cup of tea at night. The quotes were chosen to encourage and remind you of the joy and support you are entitled to every day, every night, and every moment of the day. Find it in our online store or give us a call.

● "This world is full of miracles. They stand in shining silence next to every dream of pain and suffering, of sin and guilt." (T-28.II.12)

We are entitled to miracles, but we will never experience them as long as we are distracted by our frenetic world and lives. God does not ask us to give much, just an instant — a holy instant — to allow truth to reign in our life. We invite you to take that holy instant with us in prayerful thought for yourself, loved ones, and those in the Miracle Prayer Ministry daily at 4:30pm (Pacific Time). We invite you to stop and join us. Together, we can experience the miracles we are entitled to.

Thoughts for:

September: *I will step back and let Him lead the way.* (Lesson 155)

October: *Forgiveness is the key to happiness.* (Lesson 121)

November: *The peace of God is shining in me now.* (Lesson 188)

Our 2022 Bookmark is Available!

Thoughts in the Miracle Prayer Ministry 2022

Each day at 4:30 p.m. (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: I am spirit. (97)	July: Your grace is given me. I claim it now. (168)
February: I am entitled to miracles. (77)	August: I am not a body. I am free. (199)
March: Into His Presence would I enter now. (157)	September: I will step back and let Him lead the way. (155)
April: God is the strength in which I trust. (47)	October: Forgiveness is the key to happiness. (121)
May: There is no will but God's. (74)	November: The peace of God is shining in me now. (188)
June: The light has come. (75)	December: I am spirit. (97)

Please send your prayer requests to: prayer@miraclecenter.org - Include a postal address for a personal response.

Request your **FREE** full-color bookmark today which lists all the thoughts in the prayer ministry for 2022.

call **714-632-9005** or at **miraclecenter.org**

disciples]. For you will sacrifice the man that clothes me.” Scholars of Gnosticism (sometimes considered a pre-Christian religion) say, “Jesus meant that by helping him get rid of his physical flesh, Judas will act to liberate the true spiritual self or divine being within Jesus.”

This gospel paints Judas as the only one of the twelve disciples who understood the meaning of Jesus’ teachings. Then was his act a betrayal or an act of love? The Gnostics, to which most of these newly discovered texts are being attributed, believed in a secret knowledge of how people could escape the prison of their material bodies and return to the spiritual realm from which they came.

Gnostics were viewed by the early church leaders as unorthodox and often denounced as heretics. It is speculated that many of the seeming Gnostic-like texts such as the gospels of Judas, Mary, and Thomas were probably suppressed. During those times, if you wanted to eliminate a text, you simply didn’t have it recopied and let nature take its course. But in this case, those seemingly lost writings have been found.

What’s it to me?

So what does all this mean for us and our lives? Perhaps not much to those of us who are a little more “Gnostic” than we realized. Even though the Gnostics were fanatical in their denial of the world, they weren’t all wrong.

As *A Course in Miracles* tells us, this world of form is not our reality. It also tells us that we cannot escape this world through death but rather through life. As the truth of who we all are (the Christ) begins to dawn on our minds, we will wipe away the sleep of dreams (our judgments and fears that limit and separate us) and see the love that connects us. It is not by denying the world or cherishing it but by walking a path between the two that we will

awaken to our salvation.

“If truth demanded they give up the world, it would appear to them as if it asked the sacrifice of something that is real. Many have chosen to renounce the world while still believing its reality. And they have suffered from a sense of loss, and have not been released accordingly. Others have chosen nothing but the world, and they have suffered from a sense of loss still deeper, which they did not understand.”

“This gospel paints Judas as the only one of the twelve disciples who understood the meaning of Jesus’ teachings.”

Between these paths there is another road that leads away from loss of every kind, for sacrifice and deprivation both are quickly left behind. This is the way appointed for you now.” (W-155.4-5)

From this passage, we see that the message of the Gnostics (the unreality of form and the need to shed its bonds) becomes a realistic and achievable path, but not through denial or what we call death.



to than the peace and presence of God and decide whether or not that is where we want to dwell. If we want to dwell in peace, then we are asked to spend time each day with the

Holy Spirit, allowing Him to show us the love that is always present in every situation as we step back and let Him lead the way.

Finding constancy in change

The discovery of the Gospel of Judas simply becomes another example that the world of illusions is constantly changing – things are lost and then found; the absolute authority of religious doctrine is canonized and then questioned. If we look to the world for answers, we will be confused and frustrated. But when we turn within and feel the peace of God, when we take a moment to dwell with Him, we are freed.

This Gospel of Judas gives us another look at Jesus. For many, it will cause fear and go against the status quo. For others, it will make little or no difference. For Course students, perhaps it will just be another opportunity to heal our perceptions. Judas is the only disciple mentioned in the Course, and the passage is really more of a commentary about the entire New Testament. It says that there are many examples of upside-down thinking in the New Testament, and confusion as to how Jesus responded to Judas is just one such thought.

“Nor could they [the disciples] have described my reactions to Judas as they did, if they had really understood me. I could not have said, ‘Betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?’ unless I believed in betrayal. The whole message of the crucifixion [teach only love, for that is what you are] was simply that I did not.”

(T-6.I.15.4)

But even with all the corrections of New Testament teachings found in the Course, Jesus says, “its gospel [the New Testament’s] is really only the message of love.” (T-6.I.15.1) And that is what we all need to remember, the message of love. For that message of love is all there really is.



“As the truth of who we all are (the Christ) begins to dawn on our minds, we will wipe away the sleep of dreams (our judgments and fears that limit and separate us) and see the love that connects us.”

This workbook lesson in the Course asks us to look clearly at the things we have given more value



Miracle Musings...

George Washington – Course Student?

by Paul McNeff

“Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.” (Matthew 4:43-44)

“The plan is not of you, nor need you be concerned with anything except the part that has been given you to learn. For He Who knows the rest will see to it without your help. But think not that He does not need your part to help Him with the rest. For in your part lies all of it, without which is no part complete, nor is the whole completed without your part. The ark of peace is entered two by two, yet the beginning of another world goes with them.” (T-20.IV.6)

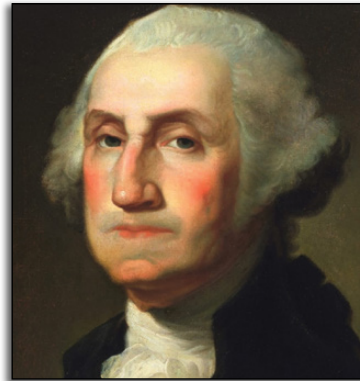
I’ve always loved reading biographies of great people. It’s even more fun when I can trace how *A Course in Miracles*’ teachings intersect with the lives of the biographical subject. Several years ago, I made the reading journey through *Washington, A Life*. In this captivating book about our nation’s first president, George Washington, noted biographer Ron Chernow sheds light upon our nation’s founding father, giving us a fresh look into his mind and spirit.

Just for the fun of it, I’d like to pose a rhetorical question. Was George Washington, the Father of our country, a student of *A Course in Miracles*? My fundamentalist Christian friends would say, “No way! Everyone knows that George Washington and most of our nation’s founding fathers were devout, evangelical Christians.” Well, not quite so fast. They did refer to themselves as Christians but not of the evangelical type. Historians have recorded that Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Hamilton, and most of the other “names” of the day held to the belief of the “common good,” or the act of treating other human beings with love and respect. In the 1796 Treaty of Tripoli, the U.S. position, which Washington endorsed, said, “...the Government of the United States of America is not, in any sense, founded on the

Christian religion.”

From this writer’s perspective, in the nascent days of our country, the concept of being a Christian was more commonly utilized in a verb sense – a loving action towards another. Unfortunately, the

“Just for the fun of it, I’d like to pose a rhetorical question. Was George Washington, the Father of our country, a student of A Course in Miracles?”



connotation of the term Christian in our

modern understanding has morphed into a noun – an exclusive status, a ticket to heaven for a few who are born again by believing in Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross. The founding fathers’ broader beliefs could more likely be found in the religious philosophy of Deism, a belief that reason and observation of the natural world, without the need for organized religion, determines that the universe is the product of an all-powerful creator.

I’m always interested in observing how Course principles have played themselves out throughout history. Back to the question: Was Washington a Course student? *A Course in Miracles* was not published in our world (the “illusion” to Course students) until 1976.

Washington was born in 1732 and died in 1799. Of course, having lived hundreds of years before the Course was published, we can eliminate him as an actual Course student. But as the Course clearly teaches, the principles of love, forgiveness, and oneness are not limited by linear time, and the experience of them cannot be gained through any thought system per se but only by applying those principles in one’s life. This process can take place only in the now. Past and future do not qualify.

So, with that as our criterion, I suppose we could state that Washington truly was a

Course student, in content, if not in form. Without a doubt, he practiced many of the Course principles. And as the Course so often states, though we are not always aware of it, we all have the potential to become “teachers of God.” Washington had great respect for the element of human dignity within every person he encountered. And without overtly knowing it, I think he was devoted to the higher principle of the Course when it says, “a universal theology is impossible,

but a universal experience is not only possible but necessary.”

One of the most admirable characteristics of Washington was how he respectfully treated others, even his enemies. Under his command, after the Continental Army won a military victory, Washington would issue strict orders to treat the prisoners of war with honor, respect, and care. He was repulsed at the idea of unnecessary torture, gloating over a victory, or plundering a man’s property. In his mind, participating in vile action toward another was beneath one’s humanity. Therefore, he did not want himself or his troops to be associated with those actions. The ennobling and foundational ideals of our nation – “that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalien-

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: kidsingers.org

able Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness” — seemed to have already been imbued into the very warp and woof of Washington’s consciousness.

So, where did Washington get his spiritual savvy? From the same place you and I get it: Practice. Chernow documents how Washington, though he made many mistakes, had a great capacity to learn from them and tried with great vigilance not to repeat them. Undoubtedly, he was a follower of the “golden rule” and used it as a general overarching guide for his life. But it takes practice not to boast over our successes or to see the innocence in our brother. As the Course says, “But think not that He does not need your part [your willingness] to help Him with the rest. For in your part lies all of it, without which is no part complete, nor is the whole [the experience of heaven] completed without your part.” (T-20.IV.6) Our part is to simply have the willingness to be used as an agent for healing and good.

Just as Washington learned from his challenges, we can learn from ours. As a Course student for more than 36 years now, one might expect that I’m well on my way to enlightenment. Sorry to disappoint you, but I haven’t ascended yet. I will claim, however, that I am on the path of being more aware of the voice of the ego and the Voice of the Holy Spirit. As the Course says, “The ego always speaks first.” (T-6.IV.1) You may think this is a little thing, but I can assure you it is a giant step on our path to wholeness. We cannot allow the problem to be fixed until we are aware of it. Once we are aware, then we have the choice, either to give it over to the Holy Spirit and allow the healing to occur, or to project our ego thoughts into the situation and continue in chaos, like a dog chasing his tail in circles.

Since coming out of Christian fundamentalism, my ego relentlessly encourages me to believe that this judgmental Christian thought system is my enemy. As Washington had the British Army as his enemies, I have created fundamentalist evangelicals as mine. As a church choral director by profession, when I first became a student of *A Course in*

Miracles, I thought I could never serve a church that held to a repressive theology. Listening to the same tired old sermons about God’s wrath and retribution was abhorrent. The only way to escape God’s wrath was through accepting Jesus’ gift of having died on the cross for my sins and accepting him as my personal savior. This

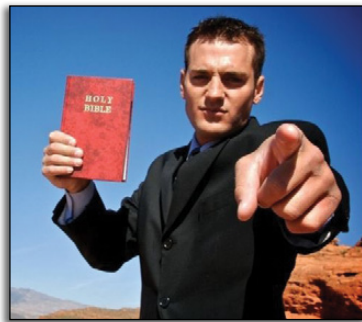
“We cannot allow the problem to be fixed until we are aware of it. Once we are aware, then we have the choice...”



exclusive way to God no longer resonated with my spirit. Staying

away from these mainline churches worked for a while as I carefully sought employment in churches that were fairly “liberal” in their theology and, therefore, to my ego, did not qualify as “the enemy.”

About twenty-seven years ago, this all changed. Little did I know, but a spiritual graduate school was awaiting me just around the corner. The church I had been serving for six years hired a new, youthful pastor who, in their hope, was going to infuse new life back into the church and save it from its declining membership. The only problem: he was a devout evangelical! The entire content of his sermons was pretty much



limited to sharing Jesus with your brothers and bringing them to Christ through his blood sacrifice on the cross to atone for your sins. As you might expect, this was a challenging situation for my ego, as it kept seeing this pastor and his recipe for salvation outside the realm of the gentler, more inclusive teaching of *A Course in Miracles*. Even though I knew the Course taught about entering the ark of

peace “two by two” and seeing the innocence in my brother, to my ego that was definitely not the way to go with this pastor. He needed to be saved from his wayward thinking. Do you see how subtly the ego works? I wanted to be right and make him wrong. We would talk about our differences — how if he could just bend a little on his rigid theology, he might even attract more people to the church — but to no avail. The ego likes us to think we must join on the level of form, but so often, that is not the answer.

I must confess that seeing my pastor in his true innocence, as the Course teaches, has been difficult for me and a real challenge to my spirituality. But over the past twenty-seven years, step by step, little by little, I have learned how to forgive as I allow the Holy Spirit within me to see the pastor through Christ’s eyes. It’s not just a one-time event, however. It is a moment-by-moment consciousness of holding him in truth. As the Course says, I must be vigilant about my peace. And to the extent that I allow healing and oneness to reign, then joy and peace abound. We can once again work together in peace and creativity; in turn, my music is not stifled because of my judgments. As a side note, I retired from my church music ministry four years ago, but I maintain a loving relationship with this pastor.

Through these types of challenges, through these problematic blocks, envision-

ing the Christ in every person we meet is where our salvation lies.

“This is the day when vain imaginings part like a curtain, to reveal what lies beyond them. Now is what is really there made visible, while all

the shadows which appeared to hide it merely sink away. Now is the balance righted, and the scale of judgment left to Him Who judges true. And in His judgment will a world unfold in perfect

“As you might expect, this was a challenging situation for my ego, as it kept seeing this pastor and his recipe for salvation outside the realm of the gentler, more inclusive teaching of A Course in Miracles.”

Continued on page 15

Recognizing Spirit

Love-Based Living During Challenging Times: Developing Compassion, Generosity, and Kindness - Part 2

by Lee Jampolsky, Ph.D.



In the last issue of **THE HOLY ENCOUNTER**, I offered the first 15 of 30 *Daily Contemplations for Love-Based Living During Challenging Times*. This issue continues with the remaining 15. This approach embraces the idea that we can benefit from a few minutes each day to focus and direct our thoughts when confusion, despair, and fear are often at their height during emotionally charged and unprecedented challenging times. Based on *A Course in Miracles*, Inspirational Psychology, and Attitudinal Healing, daily contemplations include a practical application (in blue) that can bring purpose, healing, and meaning.

There are no rules or time directives to follow. You can practice sequentially or randomly. You may want to spend more than one day on a particular thought or idea that you find particularly helpful or unusually challenging. Please share this material with whomever you wish; there is power in our collective Love-Based Living.

Daily Contemplations for Love-Based Living During Challenging Times

16. Love is patient and content with the smallest of efforts on our part. Even the dimmest light in a dark room transforms the darkness. Be this light during difficult times.

Today I look for the spark of love in each of us, waiting to illuminate our path forward.

17. Healing is most potent when a collective effort. It is challenging to find eloquent solutions if we see separate interests or waste our time and energy solely on blame and fault-finding.

Today I dedicate myself to being part of healing and being constructive. I focus on finding opportunities to bring kindness rather than join the bandwagon of blame.

18. Remember, no circumstances have any control over your ability to choose a response that will make this moment a better place.

Today I will focus on one act or thought of kindness each hour.

19. For many throughout history, the challenges faced expanded the awareness of love. What we fill our minds with significantly impacts our stress levels and our experience of what is happening.

I will be at my best today by being aware of what I am allowing into my mind.

“Even the dimmest light in a dark room transforms the darkness. Be this light during difficult times.”

I ask myself, do I have a balance of media, conversations, and reading material that is helping me be well informed, centered, and calm or only increasing my fear and anxiety?

20. If you want to do your part for healing, do not exclusively focus much on the body. Instead, work with your thoughts and beliefs about what is possible.

Beyond everything that I think, beyond suffering, is the light of love. It is this I look for today and trust I will find.

21. Even when individuals have no control over their circumstances, that person

can still determine what will become of themselves, both mentally and spiritually. When we approach each day as offering lessons in how to love fully, we set the course in the right direction.

Today I devote myself to learning a valuable lesson about love. Every hour I will ask the simple question: What is here for me to know about love?

22. When compassion and looking for an opportunity to be kind is your goal, all interactions and thoughts during your day become a means of reaching this outcome.

Today I look with compassion into what is happening rather than only wishing for something that is not happening.

23. Let us look into our thoughts and beliefs and how we treat ourselves and each other. Then, devote today to the ability to see our interconnectedness better, know what is most important, live unhurried and with greater awareness, and do acts of kindness.

Today, I am a student of kindness.

24. Though love and kindness are always available to give, it is not easy to access if we are distracted by an overload of media input. Yet, the invitation within you to act from love and calmness is there, quiet and patient. Turn in its direction and choose to listen.

Today, I keep informed but also spend adequate time focusing on how I want to live and what I have to give.

25. The beauty of who we are – ordinary people capable of great acts of kindness – always remains unharmed.

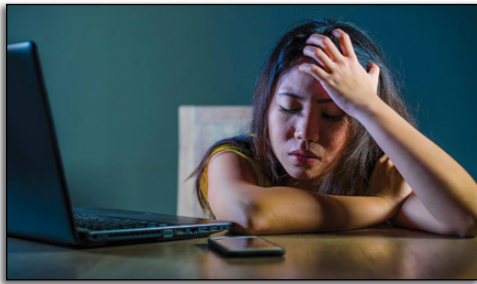
It would be a waste to face a challenge and learn nothing about myself and my



capabilities.

26. Be aware of the mindset of continually searching for past, current, and future information to reinforce a fearful or helpless perspective. Extending compassion in our actions and thoughts rather than expending undue energy on worry will make a positive difference. Fear may give you short-term motivation, but it robs you of energy and the ability to help others in the long run.

Now is a time to discover the gentleness within my heart. Now is the time to hear the call for tenderness from those around me. Now is the time to see my common interest with all humanity.



“Though love and kindness are always available to give, it is not easy to access if we are distracted by an overload of media input.”

27. There are countless “what if” questions swirling around a fearful mind with so much unknown. “What if things get worse? What if someone I love dies?” Although some of these questions are important to consider, there is only one truly useful “what if” question to ask yourself each day:

What if I focus today on listening for calls for love and extending love?

28. Accountability and responsibility are essential during a crisis. But, contrary to widespread behavior, being defensive, angry, attacking, and blaming does not solve problems and never will create safety. Blame limits our available energy to find solutions to immediate problems.

Continued on page 15

Update: Prison Project

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



We were so impressed by these letters from those incarcerated in various institutions around our country, who shared how *A Course in Miracles* and the Center's work have positively impacted their lives. It reinforces once again how vital the Prison Project of the Center is in the lives of inmates. Miracles occur when those in these institutions know they are loved and valued. We hope you will be inspired by their heartfelt expressions.

“I have been receiving THE HOLY ENCOUNTER for some time now, and I really appreciate the paper version. As the world becomes more web-based, I see resources for us in prison dwindle. Thank you so much for all you do.”

— Matthew in a California State Prison

“Thank you SO MUCH for sending me THE HOLY ENCOUNTER; I appreciate it; obviously, many of us require the ‘hard copy’ version because we have no computer access. Thank you for your decision to continue to print it. Please continue to send them to me.”

— Jeff in a Washington State Prison

“I was moved from county jail and will spend some time at another facility. I am receiving THE HOLY ENCOUNTER magazine, which I enjoy very much. Please, I would like to receive it at my new location. I greatly appreciate it.”

— Kyle in a Texas State Prison

“Dear MDC, someone passed along an old copy of THE HOLY ENCOUNTER, and it filled my heart with joy. Can you please send me a new one and add me to your list to continue receiving my own? God bless you and thank you VERY much.”

— David in a Virginia State Prison

“Dear MDC, I have received many miracles since I last wrote you. The greatest is my FREEDOM from behind bars! May I please continue to receive THE HOLY ENCOUNTER? Please keep me in your prayers and love. Thank you to MDC for all you have done for me.”

— Ralph now living free in Virginia



We are honored to meet these and each request! Thanks to your generous support of the Prison Project and the Center, we can ensure that 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.

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



It's About Time...45 years in the life of MDC

by Beverly Hutchinson McNeff

My, how time flies!" Remember that old saying? Of course, time doesn't really fly and how quickly it passes is more a commentary on the mind of the perceiver. For me, the day is always racing, but for a child sitting in front of a computer screen viewing a class during the Covid lock-down, the minutes can tick by like hours. Time is a relative experience.

A *Course in Miracles* tells us, like anything in this physical world, time is an illusion. It has no power over us and is a construct of our ego collective consciousness. But just like the body, time is a very persistent illusion. The point the Course is making is: How will you experience this illusion? We cannot deny where we find ourselves at this moment, but we can view it differently with the help of our Internal Guide, the Holy Spirit. As we read in the Course...

"Each day should be devoted to miracles. The purpose of time is to enable you to learn how to use time constructively. It is thus a teaching device and a means to an end. Time will cease when it is no longer useful in facilitating learning." (T-1.1.15)

Therefore, we cannot deny time because it is an illusion; we need to allow it to be used constructively by the One who will show us how to make this a helpful tool to facilitate learning. This has been our goal for the last 44 years of Miracle Distribution Center's life.

The Center will turn 45 years old next year. That is 540 months, 2,348 weeks, 16,436 days, 394,464 hours, 23,667,840 minutes, and

1,420,070,400 seconds! Okay, if I wasn't tired before I wrote this, I am now! 😊

But seriously, when I look at the Center's life with these numbers of time, I am inspired, not exhausted. I see those hundreds of months and those billions of seconds as the many opportunities we have had "to be truly helpful." The stories of healing, connection, and inspiration we have had the honor to be a part of are gifts. The chances we have had to lessen someone's guilt or fear or bring a new way of viewing some of the most challenging and intimate life experiences have truly humbled us. We are not tired by this work but invigorated!

"The Center will turn 45 years old next year. That is 540 months, 2,348 weeks, 16,436 days, 394,464 hours, 23,667,840 minutes, and 1,420,070,400 seconds!"



As we approach the 45th anniversary of Miracle Distribution Center in 2023, I hope you will join me in celebration. If the work of the Center has blessed you in any way, I invite you to reach out to us and send us your story by email or video. Please don't think you have nothing to say, I know you do. Below is a beautiful

sentiment we recently received from a supporter.

Dear Beverly,

You asked us to send you what MDC has meant to us for the upcoming 45th anniversary. I read your article entitled *The Power of Grace*, which helped inspire me to tell you what you and MDC have meant to me for the past several years (I don't know how many years - but think it's around 10). The power of grace is what all of you at MDC give to the world 365 days a year. The sense of peace, joy, hopefulness, and even downright bliss are the gifts you and the Center give so freely to the world. Thankful doesn't even scratch the surface for describing what the Center means to me. I mean, there is just no way to adequately thank someone who gives so freely of oneself and gives such awesome gifts to anyone willing to walk with you on our time on Earth.

We all have had so many challenges in the past few years: COVID, political and socioeconomic unrest and division, health

concerns, racial injustice, SCOTUS decisions, war, gun violence, etc. Anger and fear can seem to abound and even take over the world. But with a shift in perception, we can also see people in a different light. You shared with us the wisdom of Albert Einstein when he said, "You can live as if nothing is a miracle, or you can live as if everything is a miracle."

The January 6th Hearings give us reason to be mad, sad, or thankful, depending on your focus. I am so grateful for the parade of brave people willing to tell their truth and shed light on the darkness, and I thank each and every one of them for their bravery.

When I garden, I often face the challenge weeds provide. I can choose to look at the beautiful garden or only see the onslaught of weeds seemingly taking over - or I can accept the weeds for their role in life and focus instead on the beauty which surrounds them. I can also thank the weeds for providing

snacks and meals for the rabbits who call this place home and for providing nesting materials for the birds that build nests and become our cherished singing neighbors.

As you stated in your article, "By its very nature, grace can surmount any challenge, for it is a gift from the Infinite that leads beyond the world entirely. Grace can light the darkest areas of our world with love and possibility."

That's what MDC does for me and, indeed, the world! Trip the light fantastic, Beverly! Thank you and Paul, Tess, Darin, and Bill for shining your light and showing us there is a better way! Keep the light on! Here's to the next 45 years of MDC!

With (((Air Hugs))) and Much Love,
Molly in Vista, CA



Lost but Now Found

Continued from page 3

Amid the controversy on both sides of the religious debates or any honest debates that occur, our focus must be on love. As we read in the Course, "The best defense, as always, is not to attack another's position, but rather to protect the truth." (T-3.1.2)



"Amid the controversy on both sides of the religious debates or any honest debates that occur, our focus must be on love."

Within the illusions of the world, we are given yet another opportunity to remember the truth. Lost gospel, political debate, war, or a pen. What is lost for a moment in the illusions of the world can become the doorway to the truth that will lift us out of this world of separation so that who we truly are may be found at last.



45 Years in the Life of MDC

➤ 1978 - 2023 ◀

Submit a comment
or upload a video at:
[miraclecenter.org/
45years](http://miraclecenter.org/45years)

We'd be honored to
hear how the Center
has blessed you over
the past 45 years.
Submit a comment
or video to us.

*We look forward
to hearing from you!*

We are here



to be truly helpful...

I have been receiving your offerings for a decade now, and I wanted to say that Beverly is the BEST ACIM teacher I've EVER come across! She breaks it down so well, and her meditations are beautiful. I want the world to know about Miracle Distribution Center! Thank You ALL for all your hard work!

– Christy in Plymouth, Wisconsin



FREE Livestream Wednesdays

Wednesday Evenings @ 7pm PT / 10pm ET

Please join us for the broadcast of our weekly *A Course in Miracles* meetings with Beverly Hutchinson McNeff

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 from the Course and learn how to apply them to your daily life. Watch free or become a subscriber.

LESSON 125
In quiet receive God's Word today
1. Let this day be a day of stillness
and of quiet listening. Your Father
with you here this 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, across
the message that the world must
hear to enter in the quiet time of
peace.



MDC

"Bev's knowledge of the Course and her explanations are wonderful. I'm glad there are class archives available, so I can watch when it's convenient for me."

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Change Your Mind Change Your Life

Who am I? What Do I Want?

by Diane Cirincione-Jampolsky, Ph.D.



We are in the throes of a collective transformation on the planet for all humanity. Quantified global science assures us that the next 30 to 50 years will determine how we will manage drastic planetary climate changes and if we will actually survive as a species to endure those changes.

While the planet will change, it is more than likely still going to be here. Us? Not so sure. So every day, in every way, the decisions we make affect the outcome. I have never seen survival as my goal, but rather sustainability. For those that follow me, I want to leave behind a world that sustains them.

We, you, me, and others who are either awakening or still asleep hold the circuitry for transformation. As we think, as we fear, as we overcome, we create a reality in which we experience “the now” within. Our state of mind, and state of consciousness, determines our experiences – not so much as “what we experience” because so much in life is beyond our control – but “how we choose to experience it” – for that is very much in our control.

One of the greatest illusions we experience is that others have the power to determine our happiness, the power which in reality is ours and ours alone. Our ego personalities want us to believe that the outside world, how others treat us, think, or behave, makes a difference in how we experience our lives. Yes, these can affect us, but ultimately, it is only our own thoughts about what others do, think, or how they behave that causes us distress. And we can change those thoughts and heal our own minds.

Today, at this moment, we can choose

to dispel the illusions we may hold about ourselves and others. Today, we can “give ourselves permission” to no longer look to either society or individuals for confirmation of who or what we are, what we choose to believe, what we want to do, or how “good” or “not good enough” we feel we are. Today, we can choose to no longer give away parts of our True Selves in order to get what we think we

“We, you, me, and others who are either awakening or still asleep hold the circuitry for transformation.”



need to be safe, which in turn reinforces our false selves.

Transformation can occur in big, life-changing experiences, but it is more often and sometimes only, the smaller everyday “Aha” moments that facilitate the evolution of our consciousness. If we “choose” and “ask” to become more aware, they occur more frequently and become our intuitive ways of knowing exactly what we need to know.

A *Course in Miracles* reminds us that we do not even know the right questions to ask. If I ask specific questions like “Should I do this or should I do that?” I set myself up for an answer from my ego, ultimately damned if I do or damned if I don’t! Instead, what has been helpful to me over the years is to ask the simple question, “What is it I need to know?” I ask this question every night before going to sleep. This leaves my mind open to learning what I need to know, either in dreams or upon waking. What I hear is often mundane and not what I expect!

For example, I was having challenges with back pain a few months ago. Much to my surprise and annoyance, after asking

one night while in bed, “What is it I need to know?” I heard a distinct “voice” in my head. It said simply, “Remove your pillow.” I quickly reached for my pillow and held it firmly in place with both hands. I proclaimed very loudly and in a somewhat defiant voice, “I LOVE my pillow, and I don’t want to remove it.” A moment later, I heard the same voice in

a quieter tone repeat, “Remove your pillow.” I very grumpily flung my pillow to the side and laid my head down flat proclaiming out loud, “One night. That’s all!”

The next morning when I arose from bed, I experienced the first pain-free day in a very long time. Needless to say, I have forfeited my pillow for a small fabric roll under my neck and no longer have that pain.

Over the last 40 years, Jerry and I have always responded to requests from others by asking for Guidance. We never asked, “Should we go here or there or not?” Instead, it was always “What is it I need to know?” This simple and consistent practice was our Celestial Scheduler, as we called it. I can truly say that we never had conflicting answers, nor were we ever steered into a wrong or negative situation. To this day, I access my Celestial Scheduler to assist me in what I think, say and do.

I continue this practice to this day and find that it leaves my eyes open to see and experience miracles every day. It seems very simple, and it is. However, “simplicity is often difficult for a confused mind to understand.” So if you do not already use this simple practice to guide you to “who you are” and “what you want,” I highly recommend it. It can also guide each of us to our best responses in coping with and addressing the climate changes we face as well as our part in healing the planet by healing our own minds. ❖

Diane Cirincione-Jampolsky, Ph.D., is the Founder and Executive Director of Attitudinal Healing International. She is also a therapist in private practice, a businesswoman, author, and international lecturer.



Spiritual Boot Camp: Where's the Fruit?

by Jacob Glass

"The message of the crucifixion is perfectly clear: *Teach only love, for that is what you are.* If you interpret the crucifixion in any other way, you are using it as a weapon for assault rather than as the call for peace for which it was intended." (T-6.I.13)

Dr. Bernie Siegel, best-selling author of *Love, Medicine, and Miracles*, does not teach that watching and reading the news is a path to healing. And more than a decade ago, I began giving out something I called "the Happiness Boot Camp" to those in my ministry, which included, as step one, a 30-day "news fast" from ALL news – even gossip and celebrity news. This was very difficult for those who were self-proclaimed "news junkies" – though they also admitted they were quite depressed and finally willing to try ANYTHING. I am often thrilled when I receive reports from these happy people many years later that they never went back to taking in the daily poison of news. They found that anything they needed to know about found its way to them, and the rest of it was mostly things they could not do anything about. They were free at last from eating the daily poison.

I also know this kind of thing outrages many people (I should say many very stressed-out people.) They think that it's not enough that *they* take in the daily news; they insist that EVERYONE take it in. They think the only way to help is to be hyper-aware of everything in the world that is going wrong and needs to be fixed through what I call "works of the flesh." ACTION! ACTION! ACTION! DO, DO, DO your way to world peace by tracking the daily world crucifixions and railing against them! Many people think it is "irresponsible" to be happy and carefree when so much of the world is suffering. By this reasoning, no one alive should have ever been or be happy, for the world has been a place of profound suffering and fighting since Cane killed Abel. And that's

all the ego wants, to take a crap on today so that no one is ever joyful. I am not in any way against taking action in the world, but there are two ways to do it. We can pick up the litter off the street and put it in the trash while cursing those who dropped it there, or we can just throw it away without a story at all. We do not have to be



upset or angry to do a loving thing. We do not have to have an "enemy" to fight against.

"You make what you defend against, and by your own defense against it is real and inescapable. Lay down your arms, and only then do you perceive it false." (W-170.2:6)

As I often say, at least once a year or so, it is very good to check in with ourselves and say, "I either believe this spiritual stuff, or I don't." It seems like studying a 1,200 or so page book is such a huge waste of time, money, and effort to put into something we are ambivalent about. We either believe that, "in my defenselessness my safety lies" and, "seek not to change the world but choose to change your mind about the world," or we start to INTERPRET that so that we can retain our stress and upset by mixing conflicting thought systems. The Spiritual Truth is that the more we push against the perceived "evils" of the world, the stronger they grow for US. We create for ourselves the very things we defend against. The more we track

and study worldly crucifixion, the more we become experts on it.

"The world you see must be denied, for sight of it is costing you a different kind of vision. You cannot see both worlds, for each of them involves a different kind of seeing, and depends on what you cherish. The sight of one is possible because you have denied the other. Both are not true, yet either one will seem as real to you as the amount to which you hold it dear. And yet their power is not the same, because their real attraction to you is unequal."

(T-13.VII.2)

"Many people think it is 'irresponsible' to be happy and carefree when so much of the world is suffering."

Dr. Siegel DOES teach that indeed, laughter is the best medicine. Watching comedies, telling funny stories and so on, have profound positive effects on

healing. He doesn't say that we should deny our pain or push it down in any way but rather that we can let it come up and OUT to be healed, rather than forever dwelling on it. In other words, in whatever way works for you, give it to the Holy Spirit and then shift the focus back to peace and joy – pet the dog, smell the flower, kiss the baby, watch the sunset. Keep it as simple as possible for complexity is of the ego.

"Into eternity, where all is one, there crept a tiny, mad idea, at which the Son of God remembered not to laugh. In his forgetting did the thought become a serious idea, and possible of both accomplishment and real effects. Together, we can laugh them both away, and understand that time cannot intrude upon eternity." (T-27.VIII.6:2)

Many Course students have surely heard of *Science and Health with Key to the*

Continued on page 13



A Savior Remains

by Joseph Miller

There is an old story from India. At the end of his life, King Yudhishthira set out on a pilgrimage to the Himalayas accompanied by his aged brothers and wife, and a stray dog. The King had lived and ruled virtuously, for he was in fact the son of Dharma, the god of duty. But now came that stage of life intended for renunciation, a time to loosen hold from the dream of life and seek spiritual clarity. The trek was arduous, and one by one, as they climbed, his brothers and his wife died, but Yudhishthira continued forward, releasing the past, planting his staff with every step, followed by the dog.

Suddenly, the magnificent chariot of Indra, ruler of heaven, appeared alongside the King. “Good King Yudhishthira,” declared Indra, “you have lived well and wisely. Enter my chariot and I will take you to paradise.” The dog wagged its tail as Yudhishthira stepped back to allow it to enter the chariot ahead of him. But Indra barred the way and rebuked the King.

“Heaven is not for dogs! Discard this unholy creature!”

“All creatures are holy to me,” explained the King. “This dog depends on me.” He looked about at the vast desolate mountains. “How can I desert it now?”

“Look,” said Indra, “Don’t cloud the issue with sentiment. It’s like this: your brothers and your wife, whose bodies have fallen during this journey, are now radiant, happy, and awaiting your arrival. You are old, worn by long trial, and fully deserving rest. It is time. Enter my chariot and leave this dog.”

“But” said the King thoughtfully, “Deserting a dependent is not dharma.” He stepped away from the chariot and bent low to scratch

the dog’s head. “I shall forsake heaven and my celestial family to remain here with this dog.” He was resolute and unflinching. Indra just crossed his arms and shook his head.

Suddenly there was a light, the dog underwent a transformation, and appeared as Dharma, the King’s divine father. It had all been a disguise and a test. “I am proud of you, my son. Your compassion is impartial and infinite. Go with Indra to the heaven of your merit.”



“Yudhishthira continued forward, releasing the past, planting his staff with every step, followed by the dog.”

While this story may be fantastic, the truth it tells is real. “Such ever was love’s way,” wrote the poet Robert Browning, “To rise, it stoops.” Love remains where there is a

need. The world, blind to all but selfish gain, calls this “sacrifice.” But in truth, viewed from the standpoint of the inner, this “stooping” fulfills our universal nature. King Yudhishthira was so transparent, like an alabaster vessel, that he simply identified the dog’s need as his own. He knew no difference.

Remember the Frank Capra Christmas film, *It’s a Wonderful Life*? Look at the lead character, George Bailey (played by Jimmy Stewart). As a young man, he dreams of adventure. He yearns impatiently for the day when he can shake the crummy dust of Bedford Falls from his feet and make his mark on the world. He plans to travel, then go to college. Yet, at the last minute, every plan is sidelined by the call of duty to family and

community. Even his honeymoon is canceled, as he feels compelled to bail out his family’s small building and loan business with his personal savings. George remains in Bedford Falls, occasionally bristling at his mundane life. Until, during a crisis, he is given a vision of the miserable lot his family and community would have endured had he never been born. George Bailey had, indeed, through his brave but quiet life, been the savior of Bedford Falls.

What felt at times like the galling sacrifice of personal ambition was, in reality, the loss of nothing truly valuable. He had been living, all along, a wonderful life guided by his spiritual nature.

It has been suggested that the tragedy of Jesus was not the blood and the wounds, but the ignorance and self-limitation of the disciples. “Some bitter idols have been made,” teaches *A Course on Miracles*, “of him who would be only brother to the world. Forgive him your illusions, and behold how dear a brother he would be to you.” (C-5.5) It is moving to consider how great teachers endure the mischaracterization and incomprehension of those they come to help. They do not insist on appreciation or adulation as a precondition for their aid. This is true, in fact, for teachers at all levels.

My wife, a veteran junior high teacher, recalls a memorable spectacle. A visiting science education researcher held a temporary teaching position in a seventh-grade class of troubled, low-achieving students. This young woman was an advanced astrophysics student who had the honor of co-naming the Chandra X-ray orbiting telescope. Impeccably attired in an Oxford blouse and plaid wool skirt, her diction was proper, attitude earnest, and brown leather briefcase well-organized. She was also an accomplished Bharata Natyam

Joseph Miller is a writer and business owner. He has practiced the Course for over 30 years, and facilitates a weekly study circle in Santa Barbara. He may be reached at jwm@thewritejoe.com

dancer. But, of course, none of this mattered to these troubled students. The meltdown occurred during a “fun” review of science terms, an activity modeled on the video game, “Frogger.” Magnetic frogs for each team were advanced on the chalkboard behind the teacher’s desk. But the class soon descended into rowdy chaos, with students sneaking to the scoreboard at opportune moments.

The petite scientist snapped. Leaping atop her desk, she stomped and shouted, “Only *I* move the frogs! Only *I* move the frogs!” An absurd waste of a resource, don’t you think? Stooping may ever be love’s way, but it is not always easy.

There are many places in the Course that teach a savior remains. The foremost passage to my mind is the introduction to Review V in the Workbook.



“What felt at times like the galling sacrifice of personal ambition was, in reality, the loss of nothing truly valuable. He had been living, all along, a wonderful life guided by his spiritual nature.”

“I take the journey with you. For I share your doubts and fears a little while, that you may come to me who recognize the road by which all fears and doubts are overcome. We walk together. I must understand uncertainty and pain, although I know they have no meaning. Yet a savior must remain with those he teaches, seeing what they see, but still retaining in his mind the way that led him out, and now will lead you out with him. God’s Son is crucified until you walk along the road with me.”

(W-r.V.in.6)

Just before that passage come these

memorable words, “...this course was sent to open up the path of light to us, and teach us, step by step, how to return to the eternal Self we thought we lost.” Can we imagine our condition if saviors had not remained to bear witness to the path of light? Can you imagine your life without *A Course in Miracles*? It did not arise on its own. It did not come from nowhere. Its wisdom was deliberately made available by a Realized Being. The Author did not blow past this world, never to look back on his trajectory to “the right hand of the Father.” He remained, and he teaches us to remain.

“The purpose of your learning is to enable you to bring the quiet with you, and to heal distress and turmoil. This is not done by avoiding them and seeking a haven of isolation for yourself.”

(W-r.I.in.4)

Where’s the Fruit?

Continued from page 11

Scriptures by Mary Baker Eddy who founded Christian Science. Much of that book reads like the Course. And at the end of the book is a chapter titled, “Fruitage” which are the testimonies of those who were healed by Christian Science. I love reading those letters of “miraculous” healings, so in my ministry I provide a space on my private blog called “Fruitage Friday.” There, people post the fruitage of their spiritual practice in order to glorify God and to uplift and inspire others. Very few respond. If I made it “Fu**ed Up Friday” it might be FILLED with posts because often people feel weird about sharing good news because it might be seen as bragging or bring on the “wrath of God,” but they feel very verbose in describing what went wrong this week or what they DESPERATELY NEED a miracle to “fix” for them. Also, people seem to think that “fruitage” means some amazing, spectacular thing that transcends all physical laws or is a BIG DEAL!

Actually, the most consistent posting is from a woman named Jill who mostly writes that her fruitage of the week has been enjoying her husband and six children who

“You walk this path as others walk, nor do you seem to be distinct from them, although you are indeed. Thus can you serve them while you serve yourself, and set their footsteps on the way that God has opened up to you, and them through you.” (W-155.5)

“What is the face of Christ but his who went a moment into timelessness, and brought a clear reflection of the unity he felt an instant back to bless the world? How could you finally attain to it forever, while a part of you remains outside, unknowing, unawakened, and in need of you as witness to the truth?” (W-169.13)

“Choose once again if you would take your place among the saviors of the world ...” (T-31.VIII.1)

all live under one roof. Often, she includes photos of them making cupcakes, playing in the yard, hugging each other and so on. YES, that is fruitage baby! And in general, that is the fruitage that people report – going on a wonderful bike ride, walking along the beach, taking a nap nestled with their critters, a relaxing dinner with friends, and basically enjoying everyday life. There are not a lot of stories of healing tumors and such but rather of that shift in consciousness from fear and anger to peace and joy, even if nothing in their physical world has changed at all.



“I love reading those letters of ‘miraculous’ healings, so in my ministry I provide a space on my private blog called ‘Fruitage Friday.’”

Please understand, I don’t think everyone (or anyone) should not watch or read the news. I don’t care what other people do. That is none of my business. I’m simply saying

that no one HAS to and that there are other options – particularly if you are not merely saying you want the peace of God but rather MEAN it.



Share a Miracle

How A Course in Miracles Influenced my Peace Journey

by Nere Laritegui, Ph.D.

This column shares the everyday “miracles” or, as *A Course in Miracles* says, the “shifts in our perception” that are constantly taking place in our lives to remind us of our unity and love. We invite readers to share their “miracles” with us. Article submissions may be sent to: info@miraclecenter.org

In my late thirties living in Venezuela, I felt unfulfilled. My 20 years as an economist hadn’t given me the satisfaction I wanted, and my religion was no longer providing me the responses I sought. I embraced my need to change careers to something meaningful to me that also improved the life quality of the people I encountered. Then, after turning 41, I had a rude awakening when I found that my husband of 16 years and father of my five children had been unfaithful. I couldn’t trust him anymore.

The day after signing my divorce papers, I moved temporarily to San Diego, California, with my kids, externally pursuing a Ph.D. in human behavior and leadership, but deep inside, desperately looking for healing and a new beginning. The following seven years in San Diego were transformational, looking for and finding my real self.

That is when *A Course in Miracles* showed up. It was instrumental in turning my life around at that conflictual time where I found myself going from rage to blame to hopelessness to desperation all in the span of one day. The Course became my guiding force in looking for and finding who I really was, way beyond the roles of wife, mother, and professor I was playing. My divorce, which looked like my big curse, became the door to open and embrace my real self. With patience and persistence, I learned powerful lessons in small doses. I became a life student of *A Course in Miracles*, healing myself one day at a time.

“God’s Will for me is perfect happiness” from Lesson 101 profoundly resounded in me, unlearning old religious conditioning that postpones happiness for the afterlife. The Course taught me of a benevolent God who wanted happiness for me in *this* lifetime — “perfect happiness,” as the lesson emphasizes.

Embittered by my husband’s betrayal, I needed to learn the power of forgiveness to become the calm and happy person I wanted to be, though it looked like an out-of-reach

“I began to see that it was my own obsessive blaming thoughts that kept me suffering, not Enrique’s behavior. The process of my forgiveness took years. I had to disentangle my real self from the ego that held onto the grudges that kept me bound to the past. This was the beginning of my journey in replacing old beliefs, learning to listen to myself, and taking responsibility for my own happiness.”

I faced a long and complex forgiveness process with ups and downs. Here are some of the many wins of following the forgiveness path:

- My children kept both parents because I engaged with this path soon after my divorce. The five of them developed their unique direct relationships with their dad, and now, almost 20 years after his death, they lovingly remember him.

“My divorce, which looked like my big curse, became the door to open and embrace my real self.”



goal at the time. “Forgiveness is the key to happiness. Here is the answer to your search for peace” from lesson 121 began to sink in for me. Instead of seeing my ex as an evil person who purposely hurt me, I needed to change my perception and see him as a person who made a mistake, maybe a big one to me, but nevertheless, a mistake; and mistakes call for correction, not punishment. The Course says sin is an invention of the ego to make us feel guilty and undeserving. Mistakes, on the other hand, are errors all humans commit; I certainly do. Little by little, I eradicated the word sin from my vocabulary and changed it to *mistake*.

In my book, *The Missing Peace*, I wrote:

- I found peace of mind and made it my priority, beyond the good and not-so-good times, inter-personal, financial, and any kind of life challenges. I learned how to return to inner peace when I stumbled.
- I stopped blaming and assumed total responsibility for my happiness. I let go of victimhood. If I couldn’t change what was going on, I could always change the way I perceived it.
- I began to see everyone as innocent beings, no matter their appearances. Seeing my ex as innocent was quite difficult. Extending that view to the whole

Nere Laritegui, Ph.D., is an 85-year-old psychologist and peace advocate. She has been a student of the Course for over 40 years, finding it at a crucial point in her life and applying its teachings to pursue inner peace. Her book *The Missing Peace* is available by contacting the author. She can be reached at: nerelart@gmail.com



“Embittered by my husband’s betrayal, I needed to learn the power of forgiveness to become the calm and happy person I wanted to be, though it looked like an out-of-reach goal at the time.”

human family became easier when I accomplished it.

As *A Course in Miracles* student, I have learned all of this and more in the second half of my life. The result is living a fulfilled, joyful, and peaceful life at 85. I am grateful for the teachings and will continue being a student until my last breath. ❖

Love-Based Living

Continued from page 7

Today I focus on being my best during the worst of times by being responsible for my thoughts and actions and doing all I can to live from love.

29. You undoubtedly want to better yourself and increase your peace of mind. To this end, ask yourself:

Is my time today best spent being upset with people or on seeing what is most important in my life and letting go of grievances that are holding me back?

30. Imagine amidst all that is happening today – all the fear, anxiety, and uncertainty you may feel – there is a quieter voice in you that says with certainty:

None of this can stop me from giving and receiving love. ❖

George Washington...

Continued from page 5

innocence before your eyes. Now will you see it with the eyes of Christ. Now is its transformation clear to you.”
(W-164.5)



“Through these types of challenges, through these problematic blocks, envisioning the Christ in every person we meet is where our salvation lies.”

As the Course teaches, it is but one of many paths to God. I am sure the Jesus of the Course probably couldn’t care less whether George Washington was a Course student or not. But whether it is George Washington in 1776 or Paul McNeff in 2022, I’m confident that Spirit was/is there, by his/my side, encouraging us to follow the light that is already within us. So may we all enter the ark of peace “two by two,” for, in that consciousness, we will be at one with our brothers and restored to our spiritual freedom. It is but our choice. ❖

Did You Know??

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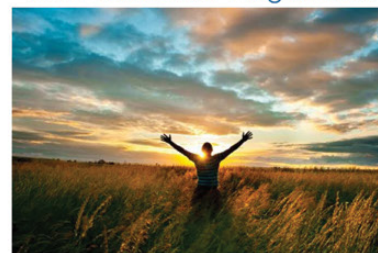
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The Freedom of Forgiveness



by Beverly Hutchinson McNeff

As summer rolls around, we often feel a sense of freedom. Schools are out, vacations from work are planned, the cold winter weather turns warmer, and summer for those of us who live in the United States brings to mind our country's birthday and its struggle for freedom. Freedom is not something we can just assume will be given to us in this world. We must nurture and support that truth. We are still seeking freedom, for freedom represents release from bonds that seem to confine us...

[Continue Reading →](#)

A Course in Miracles Retreat September 9-11



We are delighted to announce the scheduling of our **2022 Holy Encounter Retreat** for September 9th-11th. After two cancellations during the pandemic, we feel we are all overdue for the experiential recharge these retreats provide. We look forward to gathering together again in our high desert paradise as we explore *A Course in Miracles* together. Make your plans soon, as we expect this event to sell out!

[Retreat Details →](#)

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The HOLY ENCOUNTER

SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2022

In This Issue...

- Lost but Now Found
- Don't Lose Your Connection
- George Washington – Course Student?
- Love-Based Living During Challenging Times
- It's About Time
- Who am I? What Do I Want?
- Where's the Fruit?
- A Savior Remains
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A Course in Miracles 2023 Wall Calendar

Each time that you take your rest today,
a tired mind is suddenly made glad,
a bird with broken wings begins to sing,
a stream long dry begins to flow again.
With each moment that you rest today,
the world is nearer waking.

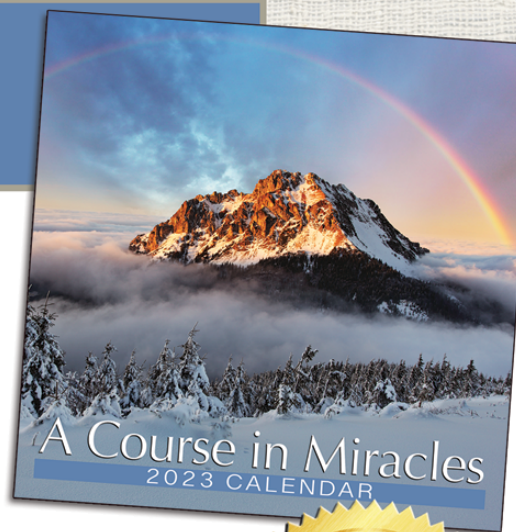


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unite with the beauty of
nature to create a year
of peace and healing.



Through every opened door
God's Love shines outward from
its home within, and lightens up
the world in innocence.

August

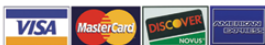


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