



A Better Way

A NEWSLETTER FOR STUDENTS OF A COURSE IN MIRACLES®

Summer 2003

The Circle of Atonement

Issue #42

Above the Battleground

APPLYING THE COURSE TO THE WAR IN IRAQ

by Greg Mackie

This article was originally written and posted onto the Circle's website the week the war in Iraq began. The "Addendum" part that follows the main article was written for this newsletter.

Along with many people around the world, we at the Circle have been saddened by the recent beginning of the U.S.-led war against Iraq. As Course students who are committed to a path of peace, what can we do to deal with this situation? How can we respond to this war in a way that is in harmony with our spiritual path?

In a nutshell, the Course would have us respond to the current war the same way it would have us respond to any situation in our lives: with forgiveness. We are called to forgive Saddam Hussein, George W. Bush, and anyone or anything in this situation that arouses thoughts of anger and attack in us. Our model for forgiveness is Jesus himself, who forgave without limit, even to the point of forgiving those who crucified him. Of course, forgiveness can be challenging, especially in situations that arouse strong emotions in us. Forgiveness is usually a gradual process that takes real effort and deep commitment. Fortunately, though, we have a course that offers countless practices to help us forgive. For starters, I recommend six lessons in the Workbook that are especially designed to help us forgive specific people: Lessons 46, 68, 78, 121, 134, and 161.

Forgiveness entails looking upon all of the conflict in our world from a higher vantage point: a place above the battleground. With the Holy Spirit's help, we can look upon the Iraq war with Christ's vision. From our perspective, the war feels deeply, tragically real, but from His perspective, "God did not create that war, and so it is not real" (W-pI.14.4:5). Its unreality means that no matter how horrible the carnage may seem to be, the true Self of everyone involved is totally unharmed. Everyone is thus perfectly innocent in truth; seeing this in a deep way is forgiveness.

The Course implores us to bring the light of God's Love to all who suffer.

If the war is not real and we should forgive everyone involved, does it follow that we as Course students should do nothing to speak out against the war and the decisions that have brought it about? I have heard some Course students speak less than charitably of the peace activists who sought through political action to prevent the war (and are still seeking to end it). Some claim that such activism does more harm than good, because all it does is make the error real. Is this true? Does the Course's way forbid us to act? Does it call us to refrain from standing up actively and publicly for peace?

I don't think so. Yes, the Course tells us the world is an illusion, but it also calls us to be bringers of healing within the illusion. The pain of this illusion feels terribly real, however unreal it may be in truth, and so the Course implores us to bring the light of God's Love to all who suffer. This is how the illusion and all the pain that comes with it are undone. I believe the Course intends to produce people who are positive, active catalysts for peace and love in this world—true miracle workers. Our miracle working can take many forms, and one form for some of us may be taking a strong public stand for peace. Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. were miracle workers of this sort, as are Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Jimmy Carter. They and others like them have demonstrated time and again that the fruit of true forgiveness is not inaction, but compassionate action grounded in love for all beings.

I myself have felt called to stand up publicly for peace in my own small way, and so I have participated in several peace marches. (I carried a sign that said, "Forgiveness sets us free," which I hope had some effect on those carrying the more virulent anti-Bush signs.) Of course, others may be called to express peace in different ways—the Holy Spirit is our guide in this. The key is that whatever we feel called to do, our action

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Mission Statement

To discern the author’s vision of *A Course in Miracles* and manifest that in our lives, in the lives of students, and in the world.

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Robert Perry, Allen Watson, Mary Anne Buchowski, Nicola Harvey, Greg Mackie.

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**The Circle of Atonement
Teaching and Healing Center
P.O. Box 4238 • West Sedona, AZ 86340
(928) 282-0790 • Fax: (928) 282-0523
In the U.S. toll-free (888) 357-7520 (orders only)
E-mail: info@circleofa.com
Website: www.circleofa.com**

To subscribe to the free, electronic version of the newsletter, please send a blank e-mail to:

betterway-subscribe@circleofa.com

Financial Policy

Our financial policy is based on a line in *Psychotherapy*, a supplement to *A Course in Miracles*: “One rule should always be observed: No one should be turned away because he cannot pay” (P-3.III.6:1). Therefore, if you would like any of our materials or services and cannot afford them, simply let us know, and give what you are able.

The Circle is supported entirely by your purchases and gifts. Therefore, we ask you to look within to see if you might be led to support the Circle’s vision financially with a donation above the list price of materials. We encourage you to give, not in payment for goods received, but in support of our present and future outreach. Please note that only amounts given over the list price are considered tax-deductible.

Mailing List Policy

The Circle will share its mailing list upon request with other *A Course in Miracles* organizations, using our discretion and being as sensitive as we can to the Holy Spirit’s guidance. If you do not want your name shared in this way, please let us know and we will make sure it is not.

The title of our newsletter comes from Bill Thetford’s comment to Helen Schucman that “There must be another way” and from Jesus’ comment in the Course that “Everyone eventually begins to recognize, however dimly, that there *must* be a better way” (T-2.111.3:6). We hope that this newsletter will be helpful to you on your journey to this “better way.”

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Articles

Above the Battleground: Applying the Course to the War in Iraq

by Greg Mackie

As Course students, how do we respond to the phenomenon of war in the world? Greg offers his thoughts, along with an exercise on rising above the battleground. Originally posted on the Internet, this article elicited a number of responses to Greg’s mention that he had participated in peace marches. In response to those, Greg has written an addendum: **To march or not to march?**1

Should There Be Course Churches?

by Robert Perry

There has long been a debate about whether or not there should be Course churches. What has been missing from the debate, however, is evidence from the Course itself. In this article, Robert looks at a series of passages in the Course which he believes answers this question.6

A Simple Healing Prayer

by Nicola Harvey

We all feel drawn to praying for others at one time or another. Yet how can we do so in a way that is in keeping with the Course? Nicola offers step-by-step instructions in how to pray for another as an expression of Course principles.9

Helping Others in the World Makes the Error Real: Does the Course Really Say This?

by Greg Mackie

The Circle has long claimed that helping others in the world is part of the Course’s path. Many students, however, believe that doing so “makes the error real”—by helping others out there we simply reinforce the illusion that there *is* an “out there.” Is this really true? What does the Course actually say about “making the error real”?10

What Is a Holy Instant? Part I

by Allen Watson

The holy instant is such an important concept in *A Course in Miracles*, there being over 140 references to it. Yet there is considerable confusion about exactly what a holy instant is. Allen attempts to clear up that confusion in this article, the first of two parts.14

How Does A Course in Miracles Regard the Lord's Prayer? *by Robert Perry*

Many of us grew up praying the Lord's Prayer in church. Yet as Course students, what do we do with it now? Robert sifts through the Course's many references to the Lord's Prayer and ends up offering two Course-based versions that students can use.16

The Weird Disease *by Robert Perry*

What if you contracted a disease in which you went blind and deaf and became paralyzed, and that was only the beginning? In this transcript from a workshop in Sedona, Robert uses this weird disease to illustrate just how subjective our picture of reality is.18

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CIRCLE EVENTS

Regular Classes in Sedona, Arizona

Daily Morning Workbook Class

With Mary Anne Buchowski

The focus for 2003 is "Walking with the Holy Spirit"

Weekday mornings, 8:30 – 9:30 am

Weekly Class

With Robert Perry

This class covers a variety of topics on the Course

Tuesday evenings, 7:00 - 8:30 pm

Call our office for details



Regular Classes in Portland, Oregon

Topical and Text Classes

With Allen Watson

Text study classes, plus a monthly topical class

Tuesday evenings, 7:00 - 9:00 pm

Contact Allen Watson

(allen@circleofa.com; (503) 284-3619)

Summer 2003

For Your Consideration

In recent years, we have been blessed with bequests from people remembering us in their wills, and this has benefited us tremendously. We had no idea how helpful it could be until we started receiving these bequests.

As you plan for your estate, we invite you to consider naming the Circle of Atonement as a beneficiary. If you do decide to do this, please know that you have our deepest gratitude. If you have questions, don't hesitate to contact us (by phone: 928-282-0790; via e-mail: info@circleofa.com; or through regular mail: The Circle of Atonement, P.O. Box 4238, West Sedona, AZ 86340).

CIRCLE SERVICES

Support to Course Students

In Sedona, Mary Anne Buchowski is available to work with individual Course students in a teacher-pupil relationship designed to help them along the path of the Course. We are also pleased to offer informal support and assistance, through correspondence or by phone, to both individuals and study groups. Contact Mary Anne at maryanne@circleofa.com, or call our office.

Course-Based Spiritual Healing

For the time being, the Circle's healing work is based in England where Nicola Harvey offers healing sessions and is available for workshops and speaking engagements. Contact Nicola at nicola@circleofa.com, or call (01425) 656441.

Internet Services

Our website is a useful tool for accessing Circle resources, programs, and services. The Workbook Commentaries by Allen Watson are available online. You will also find a huge variety of articles by other Circle teachers, including the popular "Course Q & A" page. New articles are added every week. There is also a shopping cart for simple online ordering of books and tapes. Visit the website at www.circleofa.com.

Service to People in Prison

The Circle provides complimentary materials, as well as individual support through correspondence, to Course students in prison.

Above the Battleground *(continued from page 1)*

must flow from that place in us above the battleground, that place of eternal love and peace that is our true nature. As Gandhi said, “We must be the change we wish to see in the world.”

In that spirit, I would like to present a visualization by Robert Perry, which he created for his workshop on ACIM conflict resolution. This visualization was designed to be applied to a situation in which you are having a conflict with another person. For that reason, some of the lines only make sense in a situation in which you have had an actual interaction with the other person. However, this visualization can easily be adapted to apply to Saddam Hussein, George W. Bush, or anyone involved with the war who arouses thoughts of anger and unforgiveness in you. Please feel free to change the wording as needed.

I hope you will find this visualization helpful in your efforts to look upon the Iraq war from a Course perspective. May we all find the peace of God above the battleground, and extend it to all of our brothers and sisters who are suffering in our war-torn world.



RISING ABOVE THE BATTLEGROUND

A visualization based on T-23.IV

Call to mind your conflict and watch your behavior in this situation.

See how reasonable you have been,
or at least how justified and necessary your harshness has been.
You had good reasons for everything you did, no matter what it was.
You really had no choice.

You’ve tried to be considerate of the other person.
You’ve refrained from striking back so many times.
You’ve held your tongue.
You’ve tried so hard to be good.

Now be willing to consider that beneath this considerate and reasonable facade there has been attack in your mind, in your unloving perception of the other person, in your drive to get your needs met even if it meant sacrifice for them.
Most of the time you probably don’t even notice this attack, yet its signs were there.
Do you recall feeling any of the following things:
“a stab of pain,
a twinge of guilt,
and above all, a loss of peace”? (6:3).

These are the signs that your justified exterior was concealing the intent of murder.
The Course says, “What is not love is murder.
What is not loving must be an attack” (1:10-11).
These are the signs that you have been on the battleground.
Can you see yourself on the battleground?
Maybe you’ve been on the offensive.
Maybe you’ve been hiding in your trench.

Perhaps you’ve been trying to lure the enemy into an ambush.
Perhaps you’ve been waving a white flag while you held a gun behind your back.
One thing is for sure: you’ve been going after the spoils of war.
What exactly have you been trying to win on this battleground?

Now ask yourself:

*“Can it be anything that offers me a perfect calmness,
and a sense of love so deep and quiet that no touch of doubt
can ever mar my certainty?
And that will last forever?”* (adapted from 8:8-9).

These blessings can only be found *above* the battleground.
“When the temptation to attack arises to make your mind darkened and murderous,
remember you *can* see the battle from above” (6:1).

“This is your part; to realize that murder in any form is not your will.
The overlooking of the battleground is now your purpose” (4:6-7).

“Be lifted up, and from a higher place look down upon it” (5:1).
Imagine yourself rising up—physically,
but also mentally and emotionally.
“From there will your perspective be quite different” (5:2).
From this higher perspective, you see the battle as inconsequential and trivial.

Its forms are small, its sounds remote.
“The senselessness of conquest is quite apparent from the quiet sphere above the battleground” (9:5).
In this quiet sphere you realize that this battle cannot touch you,
that your brother’s body and personality cannot harm you in any way.
In this quiet sphere you realize that the battle is not real, and easily escaped.
And in this place you say to yourself:
“I choose a miracle instead of murder” (adapted from 6:5).

This quiet sphere is more than just an absence of battle, it is a place of peace.
Repeat these words to yourself:
*“In this place I want for nothing.
Sorrow of any kind is inconceivable.
Only the light I love is in awareness,
and only love shines upon me forever.
It is my past, my present, and my future;
always the same, eternally complete, and wholly shared.
I know it is impossible my happiness could ever suffer change of any kind”* (adapted from 8:2-7).

Do you feel tempted to return to the battleground, because you still think there is something you can win there?
If so, ask yourself again,
*“Can it be anything that offers me a perfect calmness,
and a sense of love so deep and quiet that no touch of doubt
can ever mar my certainty?
And that will last forever?”*

And so repeat, *“I choose to remain above the battleground.
And God Himself and all the lights of Heaven
will gently lean to me, and hold me up.
I choose a miracle instead of murder”* (adapted from 6:5-6).

ADDENDUM: TO MARCH OR NOT TO MARCH?

A number of people responded to the Iraq war article when it was posted onto the Circle's website. The responses varied, but one thing that seemed to strike a nerve was my decision to participate in peace marches. Several people objected to that because they felt it was contrary to the Course. Since the question of what to do in response to world events like the Iraq war is one that many Course students ponder, I would like to briefly respond to those objections.

The objections seemed to center around the issue of judgment. One person asked, "Is it possible to take up any cause, even the cause of peace, without casting judgment for the one [person] and against the other?" Another said, "As soon as you march for peace, you say that someone is right and someone is wrong. Now we are stuck in the world." The basic idea behind the objections was that we should not participate in peace marches, because whenever we take a stand in the world for or against anything, we are automatically passing judgment on other people, and thus making the error of separation real (for more about the idea of making the error real, see my article elsewhere in this newsletter, entitled "Helping Others in the World Makes the Error Real: Does the Course Really Say This?").

However, I do not believe this is the Course's view. When the Course asks us to give up judgment, it does not mean that we should give up judgment in the sense of making decisions about things, including decisions about what we are for or against. As the *Song of Prayer* supplement says, "There are decisions to make here, and they must be made whether they be illusions or not" (S-1.I.2:4). Instead, the Course asks us to give up *our own* judgment, and let the Holy Spirit judge *through* us. It is His job to tell us what to think, say, and do, and so we are to leave all of our decisions to Him. If we let the Holy Spirit judge through us, then all of our decisions—even if they involve the form of expressing disagreement with the ideas and actions of other people—will express the content of healing, not separation.

Indeed, it is literally impossible not to take a stand in this world. Everything we think, say, or do asserts—explicitly or implicitly—that some idea is right, and the opposite idea is wrong. If I choose to eat Cheerios instead of Corn Flakes for breakfast, I am saying that eating Cheerios is right and eating Corn Flakes is wrong, at least for me at that particular time. Those who wrote to object to my participation in peace marches were themselves implicitly saying that not participating in peace marches is right and participating in peace marches is wrong. Taking stands is simply unavoidable, but fortunately, there is no need to avoid it. From the Course's perspective, the key issue isn't whether or not we take stands, but whether or not those stands are motivated by true love and guided by the Holy Spirit. If they are, then they are stands the Course wants us to take.

For a good example of someone taking a firm stand in a truly loving way, we need look no further than Jesus himself, our

"model for decision" (T-5.II.9:6). He seems to have no qualms about declaring that some ideas are right and others wrong. In his earthly life, he confronted the rich and powerful of his time, to the point that they crucified him. In the Course, he expresses strong disagreement with traditional Christianity, conventional psychotherapy, and all sorts of other things, including the idea of war. He unabashedly tells us numerous times that we are wrong. There's nothing wishy-washy about him.

Given Jesus' own example, I think it is clearly possible to take up a cause, express disagreement, or take a stand for something without passing judgment on other people. Disagreeing with another person's ideas or actions does not require us to condemn that person as a guilty sinner. We can take a stand with love, just as Jesus has done. If it is really true that the Course forbids us from doing this, I think we have to admit that the author of the Course does not practice what he preaches.

With this in mind, I'd like to share a little about my own stand for peace. While I have no way of knowing for certain if my decision to attend some peace marches has truly been guided by the Holy Spirit, I suspect that it has been. This has come as a surprise to me, because I have never been much of a political activist. The fact that this runs so counter to my normal personal inclinations is one reason I suspect that the guidance I've gotten is the real thing.

I've attended these marches because I believe that George W. Bush's doctrine of pre-emptive war is wrong, and I feel called to express that view publicly, especially in a political climate where dissent is branded as unpatriotic. But I am first and foremost a Course student, and so my aim has been to bring my Course perspective to this endeavor as much as possible. So, during these marches, I've been doing Course practices, asking for the Holy Spirit's guidance about

what to say and do, and trying my best to have truly holy encounters with everyone involved in the marches. This desire to bring my Course perspective with me is also the motivation for the sign I've carried, which reads, "Forgiveness sets us free." In making this sign, I wanted to express succinctly the Course's way to true peace.


The results of this have been interesting and rewarding. People have looked at my sign and done a doubletake, as if surprised by it. It certainly has stood out among the many angry anti-Bush signs. (I must say, though, that I've seen plenty of more positive signs as well, from "Love your neighbor" to "Blessed are the peacemakers" to "Hate is only overcome by love." The Quakers, Catholic nuns, and Buddhists at the marches have been a welcome counterpoint to the angry revolutionary types.) My sign has led to conversations about forgiveness. People have told me how hard it has been for them to forgive President Bush and company, but that they know they need to do it.

I remember in particular an encounter with a woman named Sally. She asked to see my sign as we were marching, and when she saw it, she told me that she hated Bush and wasn't willing to

Disagreeing with another person's ideas or actions does not require us to condemn that person as a guilty sinner.

forgive him. But she wanted to talk, and so we talked for a while about what forgiveness is, and how important it is to forgive if we want to find real peace. As our conversation went on, she became more and more willing to give forgiveness a try, and so I shared with her a few of the techniques I use. It was a wonderful encounter—a holy encounter, it seemed to me—and based on her positive response, I really felt like I helped her to some degree. That encounter alone made going to that march worth it.

There are, of course, many ways to stand up for peace. Peace marches aren't for everyone. I'm not even sure myself

how many more I will attend (of course, with the war over, there probably won't be any more for a while). What I do from here on out is up to the Holy Spirit. But the main point I want to make here is this: As Course students, we need not shy away from speaking out for what we believe in. In my opinion, there is nothing in the Course that tells us not to do this. On the contrary, if our speaking out is indeed a calling from the Holy Spirit, we *must* follow that calling if we want to fulfill our part in God's plan for salvation. Let's be willing to answer the Holy Spirit's call, whatever it may be. Let's be willing to "take [our] rightful place among the saviors of the world" (W-p1.65.2:1). 

SHOULD THERE BE COURSE CHURCHES?

by Robert Perry

For many years now I have heard both sides of this debate. One side says that there should not be Course churches, or at the very least that the Course itself should not become a church. This position seems to have come down to us from some of the earliest people associated with the Course. I get the impression—whether it is true or false—that during those misty early years of the Course, everyone just knew that “Course” and “church” should not be put together. The other side says that a church fold is probably the most natural and supportive environment within which to practice the Course. People need support on this path, and a church is an excellent way of providing that support. In our culture, when you want to study and practice a spiritual path, you often gather with others in a church. What could be more natural, then, than gathering in a church to study and practice *A Course in Miracles*?

I've had my own opinion on this matter for many years. For the moment, however, I want to step back and address how such issues should be decided. In my mind, it's not good enough that the early Course family just “knew” that there should not be Course churches (if in fact they did). It's also not good enough that churches are a popular and time-honored form in our culture. For myself, I would like to know what the author of the Course himself thought about this matter. After all, he is the author of this path; he gets to call the shots. If what he thought confirms what the early Course family thought, then fine. If it confirms what others have thought, that's fine, too.

Therefore, I think the place to start in discussing this issue is to step back from the issue itself and look into what the Course itself says. The Course doesn't directly address the question, “Should there be Course churches?” But it does talk about

churches, temples and religion—all topics closely related to the matter at hand. So I spent some time looking into the eight references to “church” or “churches,” the seventeen references to “religion” or “religions,” and the forty-two references to “temple” or “temples.” A remarkably clear and consistent pattern emerges from these various references, one which intuitively rings true for me, and one which I think truly resolves this matter.

True versus false religion

This pattern, I think, is best described by discussing the issue of religion. How does the Course view religion? Students of the Course are accustomed to the notion that spirituality is good but religion is bad. Yet this is actually not the Course's attitude. “Religion” is a positive word in the Course, yet what the Course means by it is a kind of pure ideal that only rarely fits religion as we know it. The Course's view of religion as it manifests in this world can perhaps be likened to a house, a house that can have very different things under one roof. Under this roof may be elements of “true religion” (P-2.II.7:1), which the Course usually simply calls “religion,” and which, as I said, the Course sees as an extremely positive thing. And under this same roof may be anti-religious

elements, elements of false religion masquerading as true religion.

Let's look, therefore, on how the Course characterizes true versus false religion. From the Course's standpoint, the real purpose of religion is to lead us to an inner awakening to God. True religion is there to facilitate the inward journey, to bring us to an experience of truth. The *Psychotherapy* supplement states plainly: “Religion is experience” (P-2.II.2:4). Its job is to peel

The real purpose of religion is to lead us to an inner awakening to God.

the scales off our eyes, to “remove the seeming obstacles to true awareness” (P-2.II.2:7). And to do that, it must instill in us not just love of God, but also love of our brother and a willingness to roll up our sleeves and help him. We see this in Jesus’ comment to Helen Schucman at the conclusion of her Mayo Clinic experience: “And this is my true church...helping another; not the edifice you saw before” (*Journey Without Distance*, p. 50). And we see it in a passage from *Psychotherapy* which says that religion is “but an aid in helping” someone to “recognize his brother’s need is his own” and “then meet his brother’s need as his and see that they are met as one” (P-2.II.9:4-6).

As this passage says, religion is meant to be merely “an aid,” something that assists us in moving along the path to our own awakening. It is all about facilitating that inner change that propels us to the end of the journey.

As we all know, of course, religion as it manifests in the world is not always about this. Twice the Course points out that many religions teach content that actually leads away from God, not toward Him. In the Course’s terminology, they teach “anti-religious concepts” (T-3.I.1:7). One such concept is that God sent His Son down here to be punished, ironically, “because he was good” (T-3.I.1:5). Another is that what God has and what you have are totally separate and never the twain shall meet (see W-pI.76.8:4). To the extent that such anti-religious concepts are the very foundation of a religion, the Course will only grant that it is a “religion,” using quote marks to brand it a *so-called* religion; in short, an *anti-religious religion*.

Another major characteristic of false religion is an emphasis on form, based on an underlying belief that you can find salvation merely by participating in the right physical forms. The *Psychotherapy* supplement has some strong words about this. “Formal religion,” it says, “has no real place in religion” (P-2.II.2:1). It goes on to call formal religion an oxymoron, suggesting that by their very nature, the words “formal” and “religion” do not belong together. To appreciate the import of this, we need to know what formal religion is. My Merriam-Webster dictionary defines formal as “relating to or involving the outward form...rather than content...characterized by punctilious respect for form...rigidly ceremonious.” It then lists “ceremonial” as a synonym. Given these definitions, I don’t think it’s any mystery what “formal religion” means. It is religion that places great emphasis on adherence to strictly prescribed forms. Formal religion, in fact, is a great deal of what we *mean* by religion.

In this same vein, the Course strongly criticizes the value we put on beautiful church buildings. In speaking of temples, it reminds us that “Atonement in physical terms is impossible” (T-2.III.1:6); in other words, you can’t reach salvation just by getting close to the right forms. Thinking that you can is more than just misplaced devotion; it actually diverts your attention from the real source of salvation. In fact, says the Course, “The emphasis on beautiful structures is a sign of the fear of

Atonement, and an unwillingness to reach the [true, inner] altar itself” (T-2.III.1:9). Seeing spiritual power in those beautiful walls is a subtle distraction from doing the real inner work of spirituality—a distraction that we secretly want. We are afraid of coming face-to-face with that holy altar inside of us, and so we pour our energy into the magnificent building on the outside. In essence, we are saying, “I don’t have to do the work of reaching the altar within. I am already building (or paying for, or kneeling before) such a beautiful altar without.”

Note that the Course is not against church buildings, just “the emphasis on beautiful” ones. Indeed, it tells us that a church or temple can become the temple of the Holy Spirit if at its heart is a true devotion to God’s purpose. “Its true holiness lies at the inner altar around which the structure is built” (T-2.III.1:8; see also T-6.I.8:4). This implies that any structure can be made holy, no matter how plain. Even a therapist’s office “becomes a temple” (P-2.VII.8:4) when it is the setting for a holy encounter between patient and therapist.

Seeing the church building as made holy by the holy purpose within it, however, is only an interim step. “The next step...is to realize that a temple is not a structure at all” (T-2.III.1:7). If a temple is not a structure, what is it? Again and again the Course tells us that the real temple of the Holy Spirit is a holy relationship, a joining between minds in a holy purpose. This theme crops up repeatedly:

**We are afraid
of coming
face-to-face
with that holy
altar inside
of us.**

The Holy Spirit’s temple is not a body, but a relationship. (T-20.VI.5:1)

Your relationship is now a temple of healing; a place where all the weary ones can come and rest. (T-19.III.11:3)

Relationships are still the temple of the Holy Spirit, and they will be made perfect in time and restored to eternity. (P-2.II.1:5)

Relationships are...always His potential temple. (P-3.III.6:3-4)

The third passage above comes from a section that makes this point particularly strongly. It is the section that tells us that formal religion is not religion at all. What, then, according to this section, is true religion? The above passage says that “relationships are...the temple of the Holy Spirit,” but the section goes on to discuss a particular one it has in mind: the relationship between a spiritual teacher and his pupil. That is this section’s idea of the true temple of the Holy Spirit, the house of true religion. In this view, then, just two people, meeting without a formal sanctuary, can constitute a truer temple than a magnificent cathedral filled with a thousand believers.

Now that we have explored true versus false religion, let’s take what we have learned and try to answer a further question: What defines a church as practicing true religion and what defines it as practicing false religion? A church practices true religion when it sees its whole purpose as merely helping its members along the path to the inner awakening to God. At the heart of this church, then, is a genuine devotion to the goal of God. This devotion is the real altar around which the church is

built. It is what turns the church building into an actual temple of the Holy Spirit. And yet the building is a temple only in an indirect or derivative sense. The real temple is the joining of the members in the goal of God. The real temple of the Holy Spirit is their collective holy relationship.

When does a church practice false religion? When it teaches anti-religious content, concepts that lead away from God, because they depict Him as threatening and make one want to run the other way. And when its emphasis is on form, on the beautiful building, on ritual and ceremony; when its overt or covert message is: "Take part in these holy forms and you will be saved." Both the anti-religious content and the emphasis on salvation through form get in the way of the inner awakening which is the whole goal of true religion.

Should there be Course churches?

The above discussion, I believe, automatically answers our question. Should there be Course churches? The answer is both "yes" and "no."

No, there should not be Course churches that teach anti-religious content, concepts that lead away from God by depicting Him as threatening or unloving. No, there should not be Course churches that put their emphasis on form, on edifices and ceremony; that implicitly send the message, "If you just belong to this church, come to this service, sit within these walls, and engage in these activities, you will find salvation."


Yes, there should be Course churches that see their whole purpose as helping their members along the path of awakening the Course sets forth. At the heart of these churches should be a genuine devotion to the goal of the Course. That devotion should be the glue that knits the members together. That devotion should be the real altar around which the church is built, for that is what turns the church into a true temple of the Holy Spirit. It does this

in two ways. First, it turns the church's meeting place into a temple. Second, it turns the relationships between its members into a holy temple. This group holy relationship, in fact, is the real temple of the Holy Spirit. It is the invisible house in which the Presence of Holiness can dwell on earth.

One nice effect of this picture, I think, is to take the focus off the form of church. The position that there should be no Course churches implies, it seems to me, that church is an unholy form, at least when coupled with the Course. Yet, of course, there are no unholy forms, just as there are no holy ones. Thinking there are is an emphasis on form—one of the marks of false religion.

Instead, the emphasis needs to be on the content. What is the church really about? What does it really facilitate in those who attend?

And while we are emphasizing content rather than form, shouldn't we define "church" in terms of content? In this sense, to be a church, something need not have the outer trappings of sanctuary, Sunday services and pastor or priest. Any group of believers getting together to practice their religion or spiritual path is a church. Indeed, one of the definitions for "church" in my dictionary is "a body or organization of religious believers." Under that definition, a Course study group is a church, a Course teaching center is a church. Even a teacher-pupil relationship between a Course mentor and his

student is a church. Thus, if you attend a study group or go to a Course center or meet privately with a Course mentor, you are *already* attending a Course church. The question then becomes not "Should there be Course churches?"—as if they are somehow fundamentally different than study groups or centers—but, "What *kind* of church is this?" Is it practicing true religion or false religion? Is it helping people walk the path of the Course or is it somehow diverting them? 

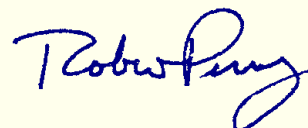
**It is the
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From the Editor

By now you will have received my letter, in which I explain a little about the new focus that we at the Circle are embarking upon, which is the broad dissemination of my newest book, *Path of Light*. Our board met recently to discuss some major decisions about the project, and we are all both excited and daunted at what lies ahead. We are already hearing back from some of you in relation to our plea for financial support at this time, and we are amazed and touched at the generosity which is being shown to us.

On a related issue, I also mentioned that we have been streamlining what we do, and one of the results

of this is that the Friends' Program has been completely overhauled. The Circle has changed so much since the program was set up, and so Mary Anne has worked on bringing this aspect of our work up to date. The biggest change is that instead of running a credit system, we are now offering Friends a straightforward 20% discount off of all the Circle's books, tapes, and events. For full details about the program, see the back page of this newsletter, or go to our website (www.circleofa.com - "About the Circle").



A Simple Healing Prayer

by Nicola Harvey

Who of us has not, at some time, been drawn to pray for someone—a sick relative, a friend in difficult circumstances, or even a stranger whose heart-touching story we hear about on the news? As a Course student, how do you respond to such a natural and compassionate impulse? In Course circles, wanting to help others, even through prayer, often gets bad press—we're trying to "fix the illusion" and in doing so we're actually "making the error real," locking ourselves into our mistaken perceptions of others and the world.

However, the Course itself teaches us to reach out with loving thoughts to others (see, for instance, Workbook Lessons 46 and 108). It sees the power of one person's healed mind, through the Holy Spirit, reaching out to many others: "A miracle...may touch many people you have not even met, and produce undreamed-of changes in situations of which you are not even aware" (T-1.I.45:1-2).

A crucial element, though, in Course-based prayer and

healing, is that the healer or the pray-er opens her *own* mind for healing. She turns within and seeks the truth, finding a quiet center of peace and stillness, and then she shares that healed perception with others. It is this inner transformation that is the key, and that lifts both the healer/pray-er, and the one being prayed for, into a new and more healed state of mind in which there is at least a degree of release from illusions.

With that clarification in mind, I'd like to offer this simple healing prayer, based on the Course. It is written as a prayer for a person, but it would be very easy to adapt it as a prayer for a situation. It is not a prayer that you read or say, as such; each step is an instruction for something to happen within your own mind. I suggest that you have this prayer on your lap, and glance down at the instructions every so often. Alternatively, you could put the instructions on tape, leaving pauses between each step; or use this in a group, with one person reading the instructions aloud for everyone.

- A Simple Healing Prayer -

- ✿ Invite Jesus or the Holy Spirit to be with you in your awareness.
- ✿ Bring the person you are praying for to mind. Spend a moment reviewing the way you usually see him, which includes bringing to mind any specific sickness you think he has.
- ✿ Realize that the Holy Spirit does not see your brother this way at all. He sees him only as the perfect child of a perfect Father. Your role is to let His perception replace yours, to whatever degree you can.
- ✿ Take a minute or so to focus on your intention. You need to desire your brother's healing, and you need to be as sincere as you can about letting your mind be changed from the way you currently see him. You may want to repeat a simple sentence such as, "Holy Spirit, I desire _____'s healing, and I am willing to see him (or her) the way You do."
- ✿ Now open your mind and let it be healed. You may want to try this visualization from Workbook Lesson 121:

See him in your mind, and look at him a while....Try to find some little spark of brightness shining through the [sick] picture that you hold of him. Look at this picture until you see a light somewhere within it, and then try to let this light extend until it covers him, and makes the picture beautiful and good.
(W-pl.121.11:1,3-4)
- ✿ As you see the little spark of light expand to cover all of him, feel your mind expanding to encompass the Holy Spirit's perception of your brother. His body fades in importance; any temptation to perceive him as sick fades away; you are even able to overlook his sick mind which made the choice to experience a sick body. Instead, you just see him as the Holy Spirit does—a perfect child of a perfect Father.
- ✿ You realize that in truth, nothing separates the two of you. While you were seeing your brother as sick, you sensed a gulf between you. Now that you are seeing him with Christ's vision, all you see is the light of truth in him, which you realize is exactly the same light as that within you.
- ✿ Let the love which comes from your new perception fill your mind and heart, flowing out towards your brother, and feel that love being returned from him to you. You may want to repeat to yourself, "You stand with me in light, [name]" (W-pl.87.2:3).

Helping Others in the World Makes the Error Real

Does the Course Really Say This?

by Greg Mackie

At the Circle, we have long stressed that actively helping other people in the world is an essential part of the Course's path. We believe that the Course intends to produce "graduates" along the lines of Gandhi, Mother Teresa, and above all the historical Jesus: true miracle workers who devote their lives to selflessly serving their brothers, in order to bring about their salvation and the salvation of the world.

Over the years, a number of Course students have expressed misgivings about our approach. While these misgivings have been expressed in many ways, one common way has been to claim that placing an emphasis on helping other people in the world "makes the error real." In other words, according to this view, an emphasis on being of service to people "out there" makes the error of separation real in our minds—it reinforces the apparent reality of the separation.

The idea that the Course warns against making the error real is widespread. Ken Wapnick says that not making the error real is the Course's "prime directive," which means that in his eyes, it is the most important principle in the entire Course. Many seem to agree with him. Indeed, this idea seems to be a basic pillar of Course community lore.

But is it really a basic pillar of the Course? Does the Course really instruct us not to do things to help others in the world, because helping others would make the error real? I'm sure you can already guess my answer. In this article, I will present that answer briefly, and then address the issue in more depth.

The Course never says that helping others in the world will automatically make the error real.

Far from being a basic pillar of the Course, this idea is not in the Course at all. At least I have never found it. Not only does the Course never say that helping others in the world will automatically make the error real, it never uses the phrase "make the error real" (or "makes the error real" or "making the error real") at all. Thus, amazingly, this phrase that is so often repeated in Course circles, a phrase that many regard as a bedrock principle of its teachings, is one that cannot be found anywhere in the Course's pages.

To "make error real" means to see our brothers' errors as sins, which leads us to "help" our brothers in ego-driven ways.

While the Course never uses the phrase "make the error real," there is one occurrence of the phrase "make error real": "You have been told not to make error real" (T-12.I.1:1). The concept conveyed by this phrase also appears elsewhere in the Course, including T-9.III.6:7, T-9.IV.4:4-6, T-11.V.14:2-6, T-12.III.2:1-4, and S-2.I.3:3-4. However, none of these passages says that doing things in the world to help others reinforces the separation.

We believe that the Course intends to produce "graduates" along the lines of Gandhi, Mother Teresa, and the historical Jesus.

What, then, does the phrase "make error real" and its variants mean? Perhaps the most succinct statement of what it means is in Chapter 9 of the Text: "To perceive errors in anyone, and to react to them as if they were real, is to make them real to you" (T-9.III.6:7). In other words, to make error real is to believe in the reality of the errors our brothers make, a belief that is reinforced by our reactions to those errors. The phrase refers to our persistent habit of focusing on all the things other people do wrong in our eyes, and seeing those things as weighty sins rather than innocent mistakes. When we chew out our co-worker for forgetting the meeting, or lecture our children about their lousy grades, or grudgingly overlook our spouse's annoying habits, we are making error real. By focusing on other people's errors, we see them as guilty sinners who deserve our condemnation rather than innocent Sons of God who deserve our love.

Our perception of our brothers is inextricably tied to our reactions to them. Once we've decided that Joe Blow is a dirty rotten sinner, we will react to his "sins" accordingly. The specific examples I used above are illustrations of some of the reactions the Course mentions. One popular option is to get angry at him (as in T-12.III.2). Another option is to try to "help" him in various ego-driven ways. We might do this by giving him what we call "constructive criticism" (as in T-9.III.2:1), or by taking the high road of reluctantly "forgiving" his transgressions (as in T-9.IV.4). But all of these options are really useless. Once we've made a brother's errors real by seeing them as sins, any response we choose will just make those sins

look blacker and more intractable, both in our mind and in his.

This is quite different from what Course students generally mean by “making the error real.” Perhaps the best way to highlight that difference is to note that none of the Course’s references to the idea of making error real speak of making *the* error real. The absence of “the” may seem trivial, but in fact it makes a huge difference. When Course students speak of making *the* error real, they are referring to the ultimate error: the separation. But the Course’s idea of making error real refers not to the error of the separation, but to the specific errors we see our brothers making. It is describing a particular phenomenon *within* the separation: our unfortunate habit of seeing our brothers’ illusory errors as real sins and reacting to them accordingly.

Of course, it is perfectly true that seeing our brothers’ errors as sins is one way in which we reinforce the separation in our minds. One could say that making error real is one way in which we make *the* error real. The concept of making the error of the separation real definitely exists in the Course; we do that whenever we listen to the ego. The Course’s discussions of making error real, however, refer to a more specific phenomenon, and do not in any way suggest that doing things to help others in the world is always an ego ploy that reinforces the separation.

The solution to this problem is not to stop helping our brothers, but to stop making their errors real, which enables us to help them in Holy Spirit-inspired ways.

The Course never says that the way to avoid making error real is to refrain from helping our brothers. If we believe that the Course’s author is Jesus, this should hardly be surprising. Why would Jesus, who in his earthly life actively helped and healed others through working miracles, now counsel us to avoid doing what he did? Far from discouraging us from helping our brothers, the Course implores us to do so. Indeed, the section that most directly tells us not to make error real (T-12.I) is the same section that says everything our brothers do is either an expression of love or a call for help—a call we should answer *with* help.

True, we are told to stop our ego-based ways of helping: “Do not attempt to ‘help’ a brother in your way” (T-12.I.6:10). We are to abandon our futile project of reforming our brothers through chastising them or desperately trying to overlook their grievous sins. We are to abort our forgiveness-to-destroy mission. However, letting go of helping our brothers in our way is not an end in itself, but a prerequisite for helping them in the Holy Spirit’s way. If we want to find the Help of God ourselves, we must offer help to any brother who needs it, “for only by answering his appeal *can* you be helped” (T-12.I.5:6).

As the Course says many times in many ways, helping our brothers is the only way to awaken to God.

How are we to help our brothers? Above all, we are to stop making their errors real, and let the Holy Spirit give us a new perception of our brothers as holy Sons of God. Under His tutelage, we are to help them through true forgiveness, true correction—in short, through offering them miracles. And though miracles are at heart a mental extension of healed perception, they can often take the form of behavioral extension as well. So, to bring back my earlier examples of making error real, we might express our healed perception by taking our co-worker to lunch, or hugging our children, or truly overlooking our spouse’s formerly annoying habits. I believe that in some instances, we may even express our healed perception in the form of genuinely loving confrontation, as Jesus does with us so often in the Course. But whatever the form, physically responding to our brothers is often part of the miracle. After all, communicating healed perception is the body’s only function in the eyes of the Holy Spirit.

Notice that the response to our brothers described here is quite different than the response suggested by those who warn against making the error real. The Course’s idea is that we should take a charitable attitude toward our brothers by not focusing on the errors they make. This is an act of kindness toward them. But the idea prevalent in the Course community is that we must avoid behaviors that appear to reinforce the erroneous idea that there really is a separate world “out there.” The particular behaviors that are usually warned against are acts of kindness stemming from a desire to help. The two ideas, then, lead to strikingly different responses to others. The

Course’s idea of not making error real results in kindness to others; the Course community’s idea of not making *the* error real warns *against* kindness to others. The addition of that little “the” changes how we see the entire ethos of the Course.

Now, no Course student I’ve encountered has ever objected to kindness per se. The sticking point seems to be the idea that the Course really wants us to help other people in the world as part of its path. Yet the Course material gives us many examples of the value of helping others in concrete, external ways. The Course itself was Jesus’ response to Helen and Bill’s call for help. In his personal guidance to them, Jesus constantly instructed them to help each other and other people in tangible ways. *Journey Without Distance* describes how they were guided to help a young woman in need; during their encounter with this young woman, Jesus said to them, “This is my true church...helping another” (*Journey Without Distance*, by Robert Skutch, p. 50). The famous “truly helpful” prayer (T-2.V(A).18:2-6) was originally given to Bill so that he could be truly helpful to others as he attended a conference on rehabilitation. The Course itself describes

Making error real refers to the specific errors we see our brothers making.

active helping roles: teacher of God, healer of patients, psychotherapist. And in the *Psychotherapy* supplement, an instruction manual for Course-based psychotherapy, Jesus says that helping others is nothing less than the holiest thing in the world:

Healing is holy. Nothing in the world is holier than helping one who asks for help. And two come very close to God in this attempt, however limited, however lacking in sincerity. Where two have joined for healing, God is there.

(P-2.V.4:1-4)

This passage is a plain and unequivocal statement of Jesus' attitude toward helping others in the world. It is definitely talking about such outward help, since it is specifically referring to psychotherapists helping patients. And it clearly refutes the idea that helping others in the world is nothing but an ego ploy to make the error real. On the contrary, Jesus says here that even when our helping *is* tainted to some degree with ego elements (when it is "limited" and "lacking in sincerity"), it is still the holiest thing in the world. The very attempt to help another is an act of joining that invites the Presence of God to dwell with us.

Why is helping others in concrete, external ways valuable? One reason the Course gives, a reason that is especially relevant to our topic here, is that doing so can actually demonstrate the unreality of the separation. We find this idea in the Text section "Changeless Reality" (T-30.VIII). The second paragraph of that section discusses what happens when a miracle worker performs a miracle for a brother. The miracle described here is not just an internal healing of his mind, but one that also produces an external healing: "the appearance of his perfect health, his perfect freedom from all forms of lack, and safety from disaster of all kinds" (T-30.VIII.2:5). Thus, this is a description of the very thing Course students are concerned about when they warn against making the error real: helping someone in the world by changing an external condition.

In this paragraph, however, the Course itself expresses a very different attitude. Far from condemning this helping act as something that reinforces the apparent reality of the separation, the Course claims that it proves the *unreality* of the separation. The helping miracle does so by proving that the external condition—which arose from the belief in separation, and seemed so immutably real before the miracle came—was nothing more than an ephemeral appearance. "The miracle attests salvation from appearances by showing they can change" (T-30.VIII.2:2).

The miracle worker's healing of his brother's external condition "demonstrates that [the condition] was never real, and could not stem from his reality" (T-30.VIII.2:7). It shows, in a way that is impossible to miss, that the condition had no effect whatsoever on changeless, eternal reality.

All of this leads to a punchline that turns the conventional notion of making the error real on its ear: Helping our brothers in the world doesn't automatically make the error of the separation real; instead, helping our brothers in the world in a Holy Spirit-inspired way proves that the error of the separation is *unreal*.


Conclusion

I can find no Course evidence at all to support the idea that helping others in the world automatically makes the error real. We have seen that the Course never says this, nor does it even use the phrase "make the error real" at all. How, then, can it be a pillar of the Course's teaching? How can something the Course never says be the "prime directive" of the Course?

We have also seen that the phrase "make error real," which the Course does use, does not refer to the idea of making the error of separation real through helping others. Instead, it refers to the idea of making our brothers' specific errors real through focusing on those errors. Making our brothers' errors real is certainly one way in which we make the error of separation real. However, it does not follow that helping others in the world

is always an ego-based attempt to reinforce our belief in separation.

Finally, we have seen that the Course's discussions of the idea of making error real actually encourage us to help our brothers. Giving up our ego-based ways of helping them allows us to truly help them in Holy Spirit-inspired ways. Helping others, both mentally and behaviorally, is so central to the Course's path that it regards such help as the holiest thing in the world. Helping others as the Holy Spirit directs doesn't reinforce our belief in separation, but in fact undoes that belief.

Given all this, I would like to suggest that we remove from our fund of Course lore the idea that helping others in the world makes the error real. In my opinion, doing so will remove a major block to experiencing the promises of the Course in our lives. Those promises will manifest in us only if we become true miracle workers who bring the healing Love of God to our brothers in need, and in so doing save the world. 

**Even when
our helping *is*
tainted to some
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world.**

Circle Mailbox

Thank you for your letters to the Circle. We enjoy receiving them and sharing them with our readers. These letters are on a variety of topics, and include your letters to the editor of A Better Way, and your comments on our various services, programs, publications, and on our website. Write us at P.O. Box 4238, W. Sedona, AZ 86340, or send us an e-mail at: info@circleofa.com. Letters may be edited for space and clarity.

Letters to the Editor

When I read Mary Anne's article "Walking with the Holy Spirit in Post-Workbook Practice" [*A Better Way*, Issue 41] I felt that funny inner feeling that always lets me know that what I am reading is important and that it pertains to me. I could feel the resistance along with an excitement about letting go of the structured practicing and letting the Holy Spirit lead me in this part of my life.

In other areas of my life, I've been very open to the Holy Spirit's leading and guidance, which has never failed, yet I have always kept with the structured Workbook practices. After reading the article, I let go and started opening up for the Holy Spirit to choose what I am to focus on each day. The most startling experience is that I don't need to write down the daily practice and keep referring to it, which I always did in the past. Whatever He chooses for me is always in my mind and seems to be just what is needed for the situations and events that the day presents.

Thanks for sharing your experiences because it was exactly what I needed to hear!

Claire Mogle
Brookville, Ohio



Other Mail

I just wanted to thank you so much for the great help your website has offered me. I have been studying the Course for almost a year, and prior to that have been on a spiritual quest for a couple of years. The beautiful articles written by Robert Perry, Allen Watson, and Greg Mackie have given me amazing insights. I thank you all.

Siham Ghaibi
Dubai, United Arab Emirates



I just thought I'd take this opportunity to say how much I appreciate your efforts to keep the information flowing out to us from your website. It's nice to return to the Circle online for inspiration on a regular basis.

Deb Byster
Cottonwood, Arizona



In March of 2002, my husband and I were visiting Sedona. As students of *A Course in Miracles*, we looked up the Circle of Atonement. Each morning we spent an hour there with other students, working on the lesson for that day. We also got a chance to attend the weekly study class, taught by Robert.

I write this to thank you for the major change it has made in our lives. This year when we arrived for our annual visit in Arizona, we went directly to the Circle house before we even got to our time-share in Sedona. We were greeted with love and joy, and a schedule so we could be part of all doings while we were there.

Cal and I have now formed the habit (which started last year at the Circle house) of studying every morning, and that has helped to make our lives so much more serene. It is a blessing to have found the Circle—to have found the love and fellowship there, to have found the oneness we seek, to have brought it back to Tennessee to share with our home group each Sunday night, and to see it rippling out to our family and friends. When we studied Lesson 88 today ("The light has come"), I knew it truly had come to us, thanks in no small part to the Circle out there in Red Rock country. Today we shall walk with Holy Spirit and each other.

Cal and Carol Davis
Fairfield Glade, Tennessee



I am enjoying the new e-newsletter very much. I found that the Spring edition covered the very issues I have been struggling with. I often find that the Holy Spirit is speaking to me through your articles, which seem to pop up on the computer screen at the exact right time. Thanks. The Circle of Atonement has helped me tremendously.

Sandy Schairer
Tijeras, New Mexico



We had a number of messages in response to Robert's article "Being Truly Helpful," which was posted on our website. Here are two of them:

Thank you for an inspiring and helpful article. I have read it before but it addresses very directly my situation at present. After a long, "tiring" day at work, what a message to read at 5.15 pm. We need to hear these things over and over because we keep on forgetting. What a relief it would be if we kept on remembering.

Mary Benton
Gladesville, New South Wales, Australia



That prayer is so helpful. I am in Atlanta helping my daughter and son-in-law with their brand new baby boy, and I need to say this prayer a lot. Thanks so much for sending it!

Beverley Lawrence
Fair Haven, New Jersey

What Is a Holy Instant?

Part I of two parts

by Allen Watson

The Course uses the phrase “holy instant” 147 times. In an early discussion it identifies the holy instant as “the lesson God gives you” through the Holy Spirit (T-15.II.2:3); it says that the holy instant is sufficient to “re-establish perfect sanity, perfect peace, and perfect love,” “exchange hell for Heaven,” and “transcend all of the ego’s making” (T-15.I.14:2,4,5). What then *is* this incredibly powerful thing? What is a holy instant? Is it something within our reach now, or something that lies at the end of our spiritual journey? Is it only a distant inspiration, or is there some practical application we can make of it today?

In this article we’re going to look at several passages from the Course in an attempt to answer these questions. There are too many passages to quote them all, so you will need to look up and read the passages in your Course book, in order to understand the remarks that refer to them.

Most of the time when the Course refers to the holy instant, the phrase describes a window in time through which we look upon eternity. It is a moment that becomes a frame in which we see, not merely a picture of eternity, but eternity itself (which is why the window metaphor is so apt). Eventually, the window fades, the frame disappears, and all that’s left is eternity.

However, there are a few passages in the Course (for instance, T-15.I.15:4-11 and T-16.VII.7:5) that seem to use the phrase “holy instant” to refer to eternity itself, and in a sense that is accurate, since what we see in the holy instant, through the window, *is* eternity. When the frame is gone, the limitations of time are gone as well. The frame, the instant in time, disappears, and all that is left is eternity: “In exchange for this instant He stands ready to give you the remembrance of eternity” (T-15.I.11:4).

The holy instant, then, has a double sense:

1. There is *the* holy instant, which represents the window on eternity available in every present moment. Whenever we experience it we are always in the same holy instant, so in that sense there is only one holy instant.
2. Then, there are holy instants, plural. At various times in our lives, we enter a moment and, in it, we have a tiny glimpse of eternity. Our experiences of having *a* holy instant seem to be multiple, but, although the instants may look truly different, the content is really one thing. We are tapping in to the eternal *now* of Heaven.

The Larger Sense

Let’s look first at the larger sense of the term, the window on eternity. The holy instant enables us to see eternity, even though we remain in time (T-17.IV.11:4-5). The content of the holy instant is eternal; it is all that is unchanging and unchangeable (T-15.VI.6:1-3). No matter how many different times we look through that window, we are always looking onto the same landscape, the landscape of eternity.

There Is Only One

In Chapter 20 of the Text the Course states quite clearly that only one holy instant exists (T-20.V.5-6). There, the holy instant is called “the little breath of eternity that runs through time” (T-20.V.5:8). Let’s look at the fifth paragraph, beginning with the sixth sentence.

The subject in this section is the holy relationship. Jesus says that we believe that we need many holy instants to reach the point where we know for certain that our partner is not a body and that bodies are not needed to communicate, but we are mistaken in our belief: all it takes is one holy instant. Indeed, “there *is* but one” (T-20.V.5:7). It is all there is, with “nothing before it, nothing afterwards” (T-20.V.5:8).

The holy instant runs through time like a thread of golden light. Every time we experience a particular holy instant we are experiencing the same thing. It is “all the same.” We are simply re-experiencing the eternal and changeless state of reality, now in this moment of time, now in another. To us they seem like separate instants. But it is all the same instant of reality, the same eternity tasted in discrete moments of time. The entire content of the holy instant is accessible in every discrete experience of it. It literally holds *everything* (T-20.V.6:5). It holds the entirety of our spiritual experience. Call it total enlightenment, if you will. It is always here, always now.

One of the wonderful things about the truth is that it always *is*. In a full experience of the holy instant we become aware that *nothing has ever been wrong, nor ever will be wrong*. What you are is “unchanged, unchanging and unchangeable” (W-pI.190.6:5). All experience to the contrary is illusion. There is no way to describe the peace that comes in such a holy instant, the joy of knowing the utter invulnerability of what you are. The eternal nature of the holy instant is what imbues our experiences of it with such power.

It is a moment that becomes a frame in which we see eternity itself.

The Holy and Unholy Instants

Most of us probably think of our lives as normal or neutral, punctuated from time to time by holy instants. In reality, any moment that is not a holy instant is a moment of insanity.

One way of thinking of our life in time and space is that every instant we spend here is the re-enactment of one of two “instants,” either the *unholy* instant or the *holy* instant. The Course tells us frequently that our ego experience is nothing more than a constant reliving of one unholy instant. We go through time choosing, moment by moment, which of these two instants to tune in to and to manifest.

For instance, the section in Chapter 20 that follows the one we were just looking at describes this choice between the two instants quite clearly (T-20.VI.8-9). Start reading in the eighth paragraph, sixth sentence, and read until the end of the paragraph.

Here, the *unholy instant* is described. It was the birth of the mad idea of separation. Time and bodies house this mad idea, and every moment in time is meant by the ego to be an expression of this single idea, that single instant of madness.

In paragraph nine, our choice between the two instants is clearly highlighted. Even though we are in time, in each moment we can enter the holy instant. We can look through the frame of this present moment and gaze on eternity. That choice is available to us, but instead we have replaced it with the unholy instant. In every moment we are choosing between the two—the unholy madness of separation or the holy joy of union with God. We have trained ourselves to consistently choose the unholy instant, almost without exception. The exceptions are what *we* think of as holy instants, which we categorize as spiritual peak experiences, when in fact they are simply moments when we drop our hold on the illusion and let the ever-present reality shine through.

Turn to Chapter 26, the fifth section, for another passage in which the Course speaks of the unholy instant (T-26.V.3:3-7, T-26.V.5:1-7, and T-26.V.13:1,3-4).

Time is really no more than our attempt to hold on to the unholy instant and make it last forever. Our life, apart from the holy instants we experience, is nothing but a repetition of the unholy instant, calling back the ancient memory of the mad idea of separation and trying to make it real again in time. All of it is a reliving of that time when “terror took the place of love” (T-26.V.13:1). Our minds are *constantly* choosing, and choosing wrongly. We think of the separation as something that “happened” a long time ago. In reality it is always a present choice, and can be undone in the present (T-26.V.3:3-7, T-26.V.5:1-7, and T-26.V.13:1,3-4). This is why the Course tells us to look for the cause of the ego, not in the ancient past, but in the present moment, in our present thinking (T-4.II.1:1-3, 3:1).

In the Manual for Teachers (M-2.2:6-3:3 and M-2.4:1-2) the identical idea is restated. It says the separation happened long

ago in time, but in reality, never. Time is the illusion that what never happened is happening now. We continually relive that ancient instant. We manufacture the appearance of separation by mentally reviewing our impossible wish to separate from God. Our seeming life on earth is the mental projection of that unreal image. All of time is a remembering of that single unholy instant, unless it is made holy in the reality of God’s Answer. We live that one instant, “again and again and still again” (M-2.4:2).

Our choice—or what seems to be our choice—is which instant to accept into our experience right now: Holy or unholy? Joy or pain? Heaven or hell? The choice we make is the measure of what we usually call spiritual growth. Nothing is growing; rather, something is shrinking: our attachment to the unholy illusion, our trust in what the ego wants us to believe.

When we have ceased entirely to listen to the ego, when we have dropped our last defense, and our trust in the Holy Spirit is total, “this life becomes a holy instant” (W-pI.135.19:1): a life that is lived constantly in the present, and constantly shares the Holy Spirit’s perception of the world; a life that is a reflection of eternity in time.

Many Experiences of the One Instant

Let’s look now at the second sense of the term *holy instant*: a moment in time in which we experience, to a greater or lesser degree, the reality of eternity. Such a holy instant is simply an experience of that changelessness. “It is a picture of timelessness, set in a frame of time” (T-17.IV.11:5). It is what happens when, for a moment, our mind peels away the layers of illusion we have superimposed on reality, and we see the reality that has *always been there*. In the many different

experiences of a holy instant in our lifetimes, we are simply tapping into the one holy instant.

Just as the sun can shine through many different sizes and shapes of windows, so the holy instant appears in this world in many different forms and expressions. The holy instant contains the whole thought system of Heaven, and so it can take on appearance as any aspect of that thought system showing up in our lives (T-17.IV.11:8).

One way of thinking of it is that at times we just touch lightly upon the holy instant, and other times we enter in more fully. Some of the descriptions of the holy instant in the Course sound like a full-fledged mystical experience that totally overwhelms our consciousness; other descriptions sound more like an experience we might not even consider to be spiritual.

One such instant was Helen and Bill’s initial joining, in which Bill said, “There must be another way,” and Helen agreed to help him find it. The Course often refers to it as the holy instant that transformed the purpose of their relationship and thus initiated their holy relationship, although they were not aware of its full significance at the time. They had to be *told* that it had been a holy instant, and they seemed to need constant reminders. It was hardly a time when the heavens opened up, the body receded from awareness, and time gave way to eternity—at least it was not that *consciously*. But apparently, in some part

All of time is a remembering of that single unholy instant.

of their minds, *exactly that really did happen*. In their right minds, they responded completely to the presence of God with a joyous “Yes!”

Why is it that the holy instant appears to us in different degrees, aspects, strengths, and intensities? The Course explains that we can bring some of our illusions along with us, and that they weaken the full experience (see T-16.VII.7:1-5). In one place, the Course compares our first brush with a holy instant to “a little flicker of the eyelids, closed so long” in dreaming (T-18.III.3:4). We just let in a flash of light and can barely sort out any images from it. That little flicker, Jesus says, isn’t enough to overcome our reluctance in approaching the light of love.


The shreds of illusion we cling to filter out the pure light of the holy instant and diminish our experience of it. But the pure bliss is always there; only our awareness of it is limited (T-16.VII.7:5). Jesus says that we won’t dilute our experience in this way for long, but he has a different perspective on time than we do; “not long” to him may seem long to us (T-16.VII.7:2). In reality, however long it may take, it does not matter, because “time is but an illusion” (T-13.I.5:5-6).

Eventually we will fully accept the holy instant. The Course also refers to that final, full acceptance as “the holy instant.” To my understanding, that sense of the holy instant is synonymous with attaining the real world. In that sense, the Course declares that the holy instant has not yet happened to us (T-15.II.5:1), although elsewhere it states quite clearly that we have received the holy instant (T-17.V.13:1). This isn’t a contradiction. The Course

distinguishes between our *receiving* a gift and our *accepting* that gift. God has given us the holy instant; therefore, it does belong to us. We have indeed received it, but we have never unwrapped the gift. We may have had brief tastes of it, but we have not allowed it to *happen to us* in that final, enduring sense.

The experience of a holy instant is pure bliss. But it is a mistake to sit down with the intent of having an experience of bliss, and then getting up frustrated after fifteen minutes when we don’t get it. *The bliss is there whether you experience it or not*. Just because we do not see something does not mean that it does not exist. That is what we should be reminding ourselves about.

The experience is just an experience; it is just our conscious mind allowing itself to connect to the bliss that is always there. “The holy instant is eternal” (T-16.VII.7:5). It *is*, always. Our failure to experience it does not diminish it; our right mind is in that bliss right now. “Spirit is in a state of grace forever” (T-1.III.5:4). Or as it says in Chapter 11, “The universe of love does not stop because you do not see it” (T-11.I.5:10).

We are advised to “practice the mechanics of the holy instant” (T-15.II.5:5), which refers to the kind of practices given in the Text and the Workbook. We go through the motions, we repeat the truths to ourselves time after time, until finally the barriers in our minds melt away and the truth dawns unhindered upon our awareness. 

The concluding segment of this article, which will appear in the next issue of A Better Way, will discuss in detail what the experience of a holy instant is like.

Our failure to experience it does not diminish it; our right mind is in that bliss right now.

How Does A Course in Miracles Regard the Lord’s Prayer?

by Robert Perry

How should students of *A Course in Miracles* view the Lord’s Prayer? Should they pray it, for instance, as part of their spiritual practice? Many students know that the Course has its own version of this prayer (T-16.VII.12), but what they may not realize is that the Course contains literally dozens of scattered references to different parts of the Lord’s Prayer. I recently did a study of these references, as part of a dialogue with a friend (in which, for his part, he educated me on how the prayer has been traditionally viewed), and what I found was fascinating. Over and over the Course alludes to some particular part of the Lord’s Prayer but modifies it in such a way as to subtly comment on it. Overall, this commentary expresses significant agreement with the prayer but also communicates a great deal of correction,

either of the meaning *in* the prayer or the meaning we *associate* with the prayer. In what follows I will attempt to capture the essence of that commentary for each of the lines of the Lord’s Prayer.

Our Father Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name.

The Lord’s Prayer opens with this familiar exaltation of God. Everything points upward. God is not only our Father, His abode is high in Heaven and His very Name is holy. The Course essentially agrees with all of this. Most of its prayers open by addressing God as Father and several even open with “our Father.” The Course loves the image of God as the perfectly

caring, protective, generous, accessible father. Ironically, though, this image places the Course in a certain tension with the rest of this first line. For, as we all know, a perfectly loving father does not exalt himself above his children; his attitude is more like that of the father of the prodigal son: “Son...all that is mine is yours” (Luke 15:31). For this reason, whenever the Course alludes to the phrase “hallowed be Thy Name,” it modifies it in such a way as to exalt us right along with God: “Hallowed your name and His, for they are joined” (C-4.8:2). In the Course’s teaching, our true name is not the name on our birth certificate. Our real name is actually God’s Name, for just as a father gives his name to his children, so God gave His Name to us. This paves the way for an amazing reversal. The Course takes the final phrase of this petition, which we normally say to God, and instead says it to *us*: “Hallowed your name. Your glory undefiled forever” (W-pI.rV.in.10:2-3).

Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.

Here we pray that God’s Will be the sovereign force on earth, that Heaven be brought down to earth. Such a sentiment is very close to the Course’s heart, which alludes more times to this petition than any other (I count twenty-three). Yet the Course tries to counter a deep assumption that we unwittingly inject into this line: that our will and God’s Will are on different sides of a great divide. Instead, says the Course, God’s Will is on our side. He wills only that we be eternally happy. And He makes sure that nothing stands in the way of our will, even when we choose misery. Just as with the first petition, the Course turns this one around and says it to us; indeed, has *God* saying it to us: “For God Himself has said, ‘Your will be done’” (T-31.VI.4:7; see also T-24.III.5:8, 8:9). Yet why would He do something so seemingly reckless? Because He knows that our will is not what it seems. We don’t really want all the toys we so wearily pursue; they cannot satisfy infinite beings. God is the only true object of our desire. Knowing this, God *asks* us to *let*

our will be done (T-24.III.8:7-9)—our true will. And this is how we fulfill the biblical imperative that His Kingdom come to earth. God doesn’t just zap the world into compliance; He must work through willing messengers. By realizing our will is really His, we become His Will in action, and through *us* Heaven is brought down to earth.

Give us this day our daily bread

This line expresses a wonderful trust in God to supply our needs on a continual basis. It does not say, “Give us a big windfall so that we don’t have to worry about trusting You for a while.” The Course, too, sees God (through the Holy Spirit) supplying even our most mundane needs, if our minds are truly open to Him (see T-13.VII.12-13). Yet what exactly *is* our daily bread? What is it that truly sustains us? The only definite Course reference to this line (T-2.III.5:10) and another possible reference (T-16.VII.12:6) combine to supply this answer: our real bread is

the peace and freedom from fear that we experience in the holy instant. Relying on God for our daily bread therefore means consistently accepting His gift of the holy instant into our minds.

And forgive us our debts [trespasses], as we forgive our debtors [those who trespass against us].

This petition speaks of giving and receiving forgiveness, and how one leads to the other, themes that are central to *A Course in Miracles*. There are, however, two ways in which the Course parts company with this petition. First, this sounds as if God’s forgiveness of us is contingent on our forgiving others. There is a good argument that this is not what the original language suggested, but I think this is the way most of us have understood it. The Course, on the other hand, is clear that forgiving others awakens us to the fact that we have *always* been forgiven. Second, the Course teaches that it makes no sense to ask God to forgive our sins, for He knows us only as holy. Both of these points are captured in the following passage: “Ask not to be forgiven, for this has already been accomplished. Ask, rather, to learn how to forgive, and to restore what always was [your innocence] to your unforgiving mind” (T-14.IV.3:4-5).

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil

I think all Christians have puzzled over this line. I know I did when I was in church. Why would God lead us into temptation in the first place, and why would we have to *ask* Him not to? Modern translations have slightly softer versions: “do not bring us to the time of trial” (NRSV) or “do not subject us to the final test” (NAB). But these do not wipe away the impression that unless we ask, God might stick us in a bad situation. The Course, always alert to correct our fearful images of God, refers many times to this line, each time making clear that we are the ones who wander off into temptation, led there by our ego, and that God, rather than being the one who leads us *into* temptation, is the One Who leads us *out* of it.

For Thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

The Lord’s Prayer ends on this stirring affirmation of the greatness of God. Yet while we are affirming that the Kingdom and power and glory are God’s, we are probably assuming they are not *ours*, that they are as far beyond our reach as the stars in the sky. The Course takes the opposite tack. It says that *because* they are God’s, they *must* be ours. It is the nature of God to simply give us everything He has, including His power and glory. The same holds for His Kingdom. We may feel sure that God will cast us out of His Kingdom after consulting our file. Yet His actual verdict will come as a liberating surprise: “His verdict will always be ‘thine is the Kingdom’” (T-5.VI.10:8). Here again the Course takes a line that we are used to saying to God and shows God saying it to *us*. The Course even goes so far as to say that His Kingdom is not something we enter or even something inside us.

Whenever the Course alludes to the phrase “hallowed be Thy Name,” it modifies it in such a way as to exalt us right along with God.

Rather *we* are His Kingdom. We are the domain in which He reigns.

Here is my attempt to compact all of this into a Course version of the Lord's Prayer:

Our Father, Your holy Name is ours, for we are Your Son. We ask but that Your Will, which is our own as well, be done in us and in the world, that it become a part of Heaven now (W-pl.189.10:9).

Let us this day accept the holy instant as a gift from You, for that is our true daily bread.

Let us forgive the illusion of sin we see in our brother, and so awaken to the eternal truth that You have never seen sin in us.

And when we wander into temptation, we count on You to lead us back.

For You have shared all Your power and glory with us, and we acknowledge that we are Your Kingdom forever.


I also felt it was appropriate to construct a version that God speaks to us, based on that fascinating pattern we saw in which the Course turned three of the petitions around and said them to us:

My Son, hallowed be your name, for your true name is My Name.

Thy will be done. I ask you to let your will be done, for your true will is My Will.

Your glory be undefiled forever.

However defiled you may think you are, My verdict will always be "thine is the Kingdom."

To get the full benefit of these, I recommend that you actually use them: pray the first version, repeating it slowly and meaningfully to God, and really imagine the second version being spoken quite personally to you by God. I think you will be surprised at the results. 

This article originally appeared in Jon Mundy's Miracles Magazine.

The Weird Disease

A transcription from "Walk You in Glory," a workshop on self-esteem presented by Robert Perry in Sedona, in February 2003.

Imagine that you have contracted a really weird disease, unlike anything you have ever heard of. This is how it progresses:

First, you notice that your eyesight starts going blurry and then you go blind. You can't see a thing. But you are really okay, because you can still hear, you can feel, you can move around. Ultimately, you would adjust and you would still have your same basic sense of self although you would feel as though a chunk had been taken out of it.

But the disease is a lot weirder than that, so after a while you go deaf. Now your main ways of gathering information about the world are gone—you can't see and you can't hear. But you still have touch and smell...and taste, which works for things that allow you to get close, but doesn't tell you where the telephone poles are.

Then the weird disease progresses one step further and you become paralyzed. You can't get around and gather information about your world. But what do you still have? If someone touches you, you can feel him or her. You have a sense of smell. If someone shoves something in your mouth, you can taste it.

However, the weird disease progresses one step further and you lose all that—no sensation, no smell, no taste. You can't move, you can't see, you can't hear. At this point, how do you know where you are? How do you know if you are in a car? How do you know if you are at the hospital? How do you know if they are amputating something from your body? How do you know you are not falling out of a plane at that moment, or hitting the ground? You wouldn't know any of that.

You've lost all contact with your environment. But what about your sense of self? It's still pretty much there. You have your memories. You know who you are. You have that whole mental world you've built up.

But then the weird disease goes one step further and you get a profound case of amnesia. You have no clue who you are. You've forgotten everything. Now you are in this weird blank state: you don't know who you are; you don't know where you are. And in this state you start to dream.

Now most dreams last a short time and they are full of all sorts of chaotic elements. Things switch around rapidly and bizarrely. But the weird disease is such that it induces

**You are a
worthless,
miserable
rodent.**

a very different kind of dream—a dream that is consistent. It just keeps going and going. And it's more internally logical than most dreams. Things just don't happen, where something turns into something else immediately. It's a lot more logical, and it doesn't stop.

In this dream, you are some sort of rodent creature on some other planet. And in this rodent society, you are one of the lower caste rodents—you are homeless; you don't have any family. You are a worthless, miserable rodent.

Meanwhile, in real life, you have been hospitalized and the doctors are trying to figure out what the hell you have. And while you are lying there in the state induced by the weird disease, years pass—years of this dream of being some sort of intelligent rodent creature on some other planet. It just keeps going and going.

Finally, in real life, they hire an amazing psychic who can project his mind into your dream, and appear as another creature, say a robed rodent. And this robed rodent walks up to you in your dream and says, "Listen, I've got some really startling news to tell you: You are not actually this homeless rodent on Planet X. You are actually a thing called a human being named such-and-such on Planet Earth and you've been in a hospital in Cottonwood for ten years."

Would you believe this messenger? What reason would you have to buy a crazy story like that?

Workshop participant: It depends on how much pain you had. If you were in a lot of pain, you might want to believe whatever came out of the blue.

In a sense, that is exactly the condition we are in now. We are not anything like these creatures. And in a very literal and real sense, we are not here. From the Course's standpoint, we are no more here than you are on Planet X. It's just a dream.

We all know that you are not literally in the places that you experience yourself in when you are dreaming. When you wake up from a dream that you were in Europe, you don't think, "I need to go to Europe and find out more about where I was, and find evidence of my being there." You'd be labeled crazy. So from the Course's standpoint, we very literally aren't these people. We are another kind of creature dreaming we are these people. And we very literally are not in this place. We are in a whole other place simply dreaming we are in this place. And we are not in these bodies.

Participant: Is there anything the robed rodent could tell the rodent to convince him he is only dreaming?


I think that there are a lot of things that might be somewhat persuasive. The Course is one long series of things like that. One thing it tells us is: You've never really felt at home here. You've always felt as if you were from somewhere else. Another thing it tells us is that it really is no fun being this rodent creature. It also tells us that if we quiet our mind, we can directly experience who we really are. Everything the Course tells us, to one degree or another, has some power to open our mind to that possibility.

When I've shared this story in the past, people have often responded, "It's like an out-of-body experience!" What the Course would say is: not at all. From the Course's standpoint, you were dreaming about being in your body, you dreamt about leaving it, and then you dreamt you were floating around in this world. But all that's still a dream. Being out of your body is no more real than being in your body, because the only *real* out-of-body experience is the experience of being in Heaven.

You could say that our presence in this room here is very much as if we had all made a pact to have a group dream where we would all be in the same dream room and experiencing the same dream situation, but from different vantage points. If that were true right now, I could say, "Hey guys, remember that plan we had? We did it! What is happening right now is just the group dream we set up." Then if I were to ask you, "Where are you really right now?" you would say, "I am in bed, dreaming." You would know that you were not here.

The Course says that if I were to ask you that same question right now, the correct answer would be, "I am not here. I am asleep in Heaven, 'at home in God, dreaming of exile'" (T-10.I.2:1).

And let's say that we also planned that we would show up in this room as different people. Somebody would show up as Saddam Hussein and somebody else would show up as Franklin Roosevelt. And I would look at somebody who looks like Franklin Roosevelt and say, "Who are you really?" And he would say, "I am so and so, lying in bed in my home, dreaming that I am Franklin Roosevelt in this room." Similarly, the answer for the real life version is, "I am God's son, lying asleep in Heaven, dreaming that I am Janet Miller [a workshop participant] or whoever, in this room, on this world."

The reason that this is so important is that it is our ticket to limitless self-esteem. There is no "this" me, there is just the Son of God experiencing itself as "this" me. Then all of my low self-esteem is my own delusion and who I am is something of infinite worth. 

**It is our
ticket to
limitless
self-esteem.**

The Circle of Atonement Mission Statement

To discern the author's vision of *A Course in Miracles* and manifest that in our lives, in the lives of students, and in the world.

1. To faithfully discern the author's vision of *A Course in Miracles*.

In interpreting the Course we strive for total fidelity to its words and the meanings they express. We thereby seek to discover the Course as the author saw it.

2. To be an instrument in Jesus' plan to manifest his vision of the Course in the lives of students and in the world.

We consider this to be Jesus' organization and therefore we attempt to follow his guidance in all we do. Our goal is to help students understand, as well as discern for themselves, the Course's thought system as he intended, and use it as he meant it to be used—as a literal program in spiritual awakening. Through doing so we hope to help ground in the world the intended way of doing the Course, here at the beginning of its history.

3. To help spark an enduring tradition based entirely on students joining together in doing the Course as the author envisioned.

We have a vision of local Course support systems composed of teachers, students, healers, and groups, all there to support one another in making full use of the Course. These support systems, as they continue and multiply, will together comprise an enduring spiritual tradition, dedicated solely to doing the Course as the author intended. Our goal is to help spark this tradition, and to assist others in doing the same.

4. To become an embodiment, a birthplace of this enduring spiritual tradition.

To help spark this tradition we must first become a model for it ourselves. This requires that we at the Circle follow the Course as our individual path; that we ourselves learn forgiveness through its program. It requires that we join each other in a group holy relationship dedicated to the common goal of awakening through the Course. It also requires that we cultivate a local support system here in Sedona, and that we have a facility where others could join with us in learning this approach to the Course. Through all of this we hope to become a seed for an ongoing spiritual tradition based on *A Course in Miracles*.

Friends of the Circle

An Invitation to Join with Us

If you have benefited from the materials, programs, and services of the Circle of Atonement and would like to help us fulfill our role with *A Course in Miracles*, we invite you to consider joining the Friends of the Circle. Over the years, the Friends' financial assistance, spiritual support, words of appreciation and encouragement, as well as the relationships we have developed, have brought us many blessings and much joy, and have been instrumental in our fulfilling our vision and mission statement (see opposite).

Benefits

In addition to offering you the opportunity to join with us in our vision, contribute to our work, and experience being an active part of our Circle family, your annual membership of \$180 includes:

- **Four issues of our quarterly newsletter, *A Better Way*;**
- **20% off Circle books, tapes, workshops, and retreats;**
- **90% tax-deductible donation;**
- ***Friends of the Circle* newsletter and updates**, keeping you up to date with the life and work of the Circle;
- **Support** in your study, practice, and extension of the Course's teachings;
- **Special materials** from workshops and classes;
- **Feedback forms** for sharing your ideas and concerns.

To Join

- Tell us about yourself and why you want to join the Friends;
- Take a few moments to silently join with us in purpose;
- Send us your initial contribution for a full year (\$180 U.S.) *or* for the first quarter (\$45 U.S.).

You may join:

- 1) through our website** (www.circleofa.com - "About the Circle")
- 2) via e-mail** to: info@circleofa.com (please include your credit card number and its expiry date)
- 3) by regular mail;** send your request, along with payment, to:
The Circle of Atonement, P.O. Box 4238, West Sedona, AZ 86340.

Donations: Contributions above the annual membership fee are gratefully received, both for our general operating fund, as well as for special projects as they arise.