A Course In Miracles – A Christian Worldview Evaluation

Former Probe staffer Russ Wise looks at the religious movement started by A Course in Miracles *from a Christian, biblical worldview perspective. As he examines its origins and its tenets, he finds that it departs from true Christianity in multiple areas and is clearly a false teaching.*

Historical Background

In 1965 a Jewish atheistic psychologist from Columbia University began to channel messages from a spirit she believed to be Jesus. She ultimately produced, or she says Jesus revealed to her, well over a thousand pages of revelation during the next seven years.

According to her testimony, Helen Schucman had a difficult relationship with her department head at the university. In an attempt to move beyond their differences, they set out on a journey to find a base of common agreement. Schucman began having "highly symbolic dreams" and experiencing "strange images." Her colleague encouraged her to transcribe the content of these phenomena so they might understand them better.

As she began to write, she was surprised to see "This is a course in miracles" appear on the paper. She went on to say that this was her introduction to the "Voice." This voice began to give her rapid inner dictation that she took down in shorthand.

According to the dictated material, the voice of *The Course* was Jesus. As a result of the influence Christianity has had on humanity, *The Course* chose Christian terminology to convey

its message. A 1977 pamphlet published by the *Foundation For Inner Peace* states, “its only purpose is to provide a way in which some people will be able to find their own Internal Teacher”—in other words, their personal “Spirit Guide.”

Key Players

There are several individuals who play key roles in spreading the message of *The Course.* Perhaps the most prominent is Marianne Williamson. A former lounge singer and now its most celebrated guru, she has become *The Course’s* media star, appearing on numerous television programs. Her most-watched and persuasive appearance was on *Oprah.* She has been Oprah’s guest on several occasions. Because of her personal interest in New Age philosophy, Oprah Winfrey purchased a thousand copies of *A Return To Love,* Williamson’s book, to give to her television audiences.

Another high profile individual, well-known in New Age circles, is Gerald Jampolsky, M.D. He is a psychiatrist, formerly on the faculty of the University of California Medical Center in San Francisco and founder of the Center for Attitudinal Healing in 1975. He has written several books based on what he has gleaned from *The Course.*

In his influential book, *Good-Bye to Guilt,* Jampolsky describes his conversion to *The Course*.

> I began to change my way of looking at the world in 1975. Until then I had considered myself a militant atheist, and the last thing I was consciously interested in was being on a spiritual pathway that would lead to God. In that year I was introduced to . . . *A Course in Miracles. . . .* My resistance was immediate. . . . Nevertheless, after reading just one page, I had a sudden and dramatic experience. There was an instantaneous memory of God, a feeling of oneness with everyone in the world, and the belief that my only function on earth was to serve God.

As a result of the moral and spiritual bankruptcy of our society, namely the baby boomer generation, there is a ready-made market for the "feel good" spirituality of *The Course.* Through the influence of Williamson, Jampolsky, and others, a growing number of Christians are being sucked into this whirlpool of spiritual confusion in which they exchange the truth for a lie.

The Course and the Mainline Church

We have already established that *The Course* uses Christian terminology and its followers believe it to be the revelation of Jesus. As a result, a number of denominations within Christendom have embraced *The Course* as being legitimate and introduced it into their churches.

Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians have used *The Course* in Sunday schools and special study groups within the church. Presently there are over 1,500 official study groups that have utilized *The Course* both inside and outside traditional Christian churches.

If It's Not Love—It Must Be Illusion

Marianne Williamson, author of the best-selling book *A Return To Love,* says that we have "a natural tendency to focus on love."

Only love is real. All that is negative is illusion. It simply does not exist. If anything negative is in your consciousness, it is real only because you give it reality by holding it in your mind. According to *The Course,* sickness, hate, pain, fear, guilt, and sin are all illusions. The *Cyclopedia In A Course In Miracles* states that "illusions are investments. They will last as long as you value them." The Cyclopedia continues, "The only way to dispel illusions is to withdraw all investment from them, and they will have no life for you because you will have put them out of your mind."

The Course sums it up this way, “There is no life outside of Heaven. Where God created life, there life must be. In any state apart from Heaven life is illusion.” There you have it! It is perfectly clear—murder, rape, and other forms of evil do not exist because they do not come from “love.” Try explaining to a mother who has lost a son or daughter that their loss is the result of an illusion.

The Problem of Evil

You guessed it, *The Course* also teaches that evil does not exist. It is an illusion that must be overcome by right thinking. *The Text* (i.e., volume one of *The Course*) reads, “Innocence is wisdom because it is unaware of evil, and evil does not exist.” In essence what is meant is that evil does not stand on its own, that it only has reality as the individual believes its existence. So, you might say that the rape victim created her own evil situation and thereby caused her own suffering. The victim is guilty; the perpetrator had no choice.

The Problem of Guilt and Sin

A pamphlet published by the *Foundation For Inner Peace* states, “Sin is defined as a ‘lack of love.’ Since love is all there is, sin in the sight of the Holy Spirit is a mistake to be corrected, rather than an evil to be punished.”

The Course further teaches that there is no need to feel guilt because there is no sin. Sin does not exist. The problems that man faces are a result of separation from God. This separation is only illusion because it likewise does not exist. It is only a reality for those who believe they are not part of the divine.

The Text makes this point clear where it declares that “no one is punished for sins, and the Sons of God are not sinners.” As you might anticipate, there is likewise no need for the cross because there was never a transgression that needed to be

dealt with by God, only a mistake. If we are a part of God, how then can we become fragmented by sin since separation (i.e., sin) does not exist?

Thought-Reversal

The stated goal of *The Course* is to change how one thinks, to change one's belief system by subtle deception. The individual is for the most part unaware of the transformation he or she is undergoing because *The Course* utilizes Christian terminology. *The Manual for Teachers* (i.e., volume three of *The Course*) boldly says, "It cannot be too strongly emphasized that this course aims at a complete reversal of thought."

Religious Recovery—The Thirteenth Step

Many who become involved in studying *The Course* are active in self-help groups such as Twelve Step programs. They are seeking to make connections in their lives and discover who they truly are. They are willing participants in this transformation.

Many are desiring some form of "spirituality" and for those who see the Bible as being too harsh, *The Course* offers what they believe to be God's correction of our misinterpretation of the original message of Jesus.

The Course becomes the "thirteenth step" in recovery for those who are attempting to escape the rigid fundamentalism that has smothered them in the past. For them, the recovery process becomes a spiritual transformation.

The integration of psychology and spirituality becomes a lure that pulls them deeper into the web of deception and ultimately suffocates them. The biblical teaching of original sin is dismissed for the more palatable "original goodness."

This "thirteenth step" regards all faiths as a part of the whole; they are one, and a psychological unity of sorts is

achieved. *The Course* becomes whatever the individual desires it to be, it is "Christian," but not if you don't want it to be. It's psychology, but more than psychology. It's not New Age, but then again it is.

The Course claims to have all of life's answers. It has become the "spiritually correct" solution to bring about peace and unity. However, in the end, this transformation brings spiritual death.

Helen Schucman's new do-it-yourself psycho-spirituality is not new. The Hindus have been taught for centuries that the world and all that is in it is *Maya,* or illusion.

Sense and Sensibilities

We must be clear that the message of *The Course in Miracles* is *not* the message of Jesus Christ. Schucman and her Course do not teach that Jesus is God incarnate yet fully human, but that He is an highly evolved being who became divine. The Bible does not allow for such an idea.

The Bible also leaves no room for the idea that evil does not exist, but instead that evil entered the world through disobedience. Likewise, the Bible does not allow for the idea that God is a universal oneness rather than a personal Being.

Kenneth Wapnick, a Jewish agnostic who later became a Catholic monk, founded the *Foundation for A Course in Miracles.* Wapnick states that *The Course* and biblical Christianity are not compatible. He gives three reasons why he holds such a view. First, *The Course* teaches that God did not create the world. Second, *The Course* teaches that we are all equally Christ. Jesus is not the *only* Son of God. And third, *The Course* is clear in its teaching that Jesus did not suffer and die for man's sin.

The above differences clearly show why a Christian cannot in good faith consider *The Course* as a source for his or her

spiritual understanding. It is unequivocally anti-biblical and is without doubt promoted by Satanic deception (2 Corinthians 11:14: 1 Timothy 4:1).

A Short Course in Doctrine

The Course teaches that there are no absolutes; truth is relative and is determined by one's experience. According to the *Cyclopedia In A Course In Miracles,* "only what is loving is true." So truth is subjective.

Marianne Williamson, the author of *A Return To Love,* made this observation about truth in her book: "There's only one truth, spoken different ways, and the Course is just one path to it out of many." In other words, no one religious tradition has all the truth, but there are many avenues to the truth and the individual has the freedom to choose the path most suitable to him or her.

Who Is Jesus?

According to Williamson, Jesus is one of many enlightened beings. In her text she makes this statement, "Jesus and other enlightened masters are our evolutionary elder brothers." She continues by saying that "the mutation, the enlightened ones, (including Jesus) show the rest of us our evolutionary potential. They point the way." So in reality Jesus is a way-shower.

Williamson makes a telling observation on page 41 of her book by saying that *"A Course In Miracles* does not push Jesus. Although the books come from him, it is made very clear that you can be an advanced student of the Course and not relate personally to him at all." This is an interesting comment regarding the lack of relationship one is to have with their God. For Christians, faith is built on a personal relationship with Jesus. Without it, their salvation would be in question.

Williamson continues by saying, "Jesus reached total

actualization of the Christ mind, and was then given by God the power to help the rest of us reach that place within ourselves." Such a statement brings to mind Matthew 7:23 where Jesus says, "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

The Christ and Salvation

The Manual For Teachers states that "Jesus became what all of you must be." It continues by declaring, "Is he the Christ? O yes, along with you."

The Course identifies with much of New Age thought in that it teaches false Christology. New Age proponents teach that *The Christ* is the one who is the most highly evolved being during a given age. This Christ, whether it be Buddha, Krishna, or Jesus, is the messiah for a given age. They believe, for example, that Jesus was *The Christ* for the Church or Piscean Age. According to their philosophy, Jesus achieved Christhood and by right-thinking we too can achieve Christhood.

The Text says that, "Christ waits for your acceptance of Him as yourself, and of His wholeness as yours." Keep in mind that these words you have just read are, according to *The Course,* the "spirit-dictated" words of Jesus. Now hear the true Word of God from the Bible where we read, "Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many" (Matthew 24:4-5). The Scripture is crystal clear about the deception of multitudes by signs and wonders based in experience rather than His Word.

The Scripture teaches that Jesus alone is the Christ, the Son of the living God. John 1:20 and 20:31 indicate that we are not His equals.

Abandoning Your Miracle

There are a growing number of people waking up to the fact that *The Course* cannot adequately meet their growing need to

worship a being beyond themselves, much less defend them in spiritual warfare.

Warren and Joy Smith are examples of how *The Course* is totally inadequate when it comes to defending one's spirit from the evil one and his dominion. The Smiths were deeply involved in the study of *The Course*. Warren relates Joy's story in his book, *The Light That Was Dark.*

Joy was being spiritually harassed by a man who was highly proficient in astral projection (projecting his spirit for great distances). Warren relates how they faced the attacks. "We tried every metaphysical and spiritual technique we had ever learned—we repeated our *Course in Miracles* lessons, did visualizations, prayed as best we knew how, sent the spiritual intruder blessings, and kept the whole situation surrounded in white light—but none of it had any effect. We had to wait it out. The spiritual presence was calling the shots."

After an intense time of frustration, they went to their course study leaders for help. Joy explained that they "had repeatedly applied their *Course in Miracles* lessons, such as: 'There is nothing to fear,' 'In my defenselessness my safety lies,' and, 'I could see peace instead of this.'" After explaining that nothing had worked, Frank, their study leader, "made it clear that he agreed with the Course's metaphysical teaching that evil was only an illusion and that the experience was probably something that Joy was working out within herself."

Frank's wife, Trudy, was dazed when she heard herself say, "Put on the whole armor of God and stand fast against the wiles of the devil!" In amazement at herself she added, "Ephesians 6:10. It's in your Bible."

Trudy went on and said, "I'm sorry, Frank. There is a devil . . . read Ephesians!" In the days ahead Joy continued to undergo the harassing attacks. During this time of uncertainty

Warren visited a bookstore and discovered a book entitled *The Beautiful Side of Evil* by Johanna Michaelsen. He read it through and decided its message of deliverance was worth a try.

It wasn't long before he had an opportunity to test his newly found discovery—biblical exorcism. Joy fell into a depression as she had on so many occasions, and Warren seized the opportunity to act.

He relates the incident in his book this way, "Reading from my notes the exact words that I had taken from Johanna's book, I firmly addressed the presence. 'Satan, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, I command you to be gone! I forbid your presence here. I claim the protection of the blood of Jesus upon us. Go where Jesus sends you!" Immediately Joy's face cleared and the oppression was gone.

Warren later remarked, "We were amazed that the presence left every time we called on his [Jesus Christ's] name. Nothing in *A Course in Miracles* or any other metaphysical teachings had ever talked about this aspect of Jesus."

Warren and Joy's encounter with personal evil ultimately convinced them that the Bible was the spiritual teaching that they could rely on. Warren said it best, "So far it hasn't let us down."

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