

# **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of A Course In Miracles**

A Presentation by Jan Worley

Some material in this presentation was adapted from Robert Perry's books  
"Path of Light" and "An Introduction to A Course in Miracles"

# 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of A Course In Miracles

- In early 1965, Helen Schucman began having physic experiences and vivid mental images
- These caused her extreme inner turmoil, for she did not believe in the validity of such things
- These experiences culminated one night in October that year
  - She telephoned her boss, Bill Thetford, in a panic
  - She told him the now familiar inner Voice would not leave her alone
  - The voice kept saying, “This is a Course in miracles. Please take notes.”

# 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary – in gratitude



Bill Thetford and Helen Schucman in 1960

# Agenda

- **Eight categorizations of the “Course”**
- **Ten Themes of the “Course”**
- **My story of finding the Course and how it has changed my life**

# **\*Eight categorization's of ACIM**

1. An educational course
2. A channeled spiritual teaching
3. A purported communication from Jesus of Nazareth
4. A new system of psychology, with ties to Freud
5. An inspired scripture, in the lineage of the Bible
6. A path of enlightenment, as found in Eastern spirituality
7. A literary work of art
8. A manual for interpersonal healing and harmony

\*Adapted from Robert Perry's book "Path of Light"

# **ACIM categorization #1 --**

## **An educational course**

- It calls itself a course, with a text, workbook, and a manual for teachers
- The Text provides the theoretical foundation
- The Workbook contains 365 lessons or exercises, one for each day of the year
- The Manual for Teachers provides support for those students who may become teachers to their own “pupils”
- The purpose of the Course is to bring peace to its students
- The course trains our minds through exercises, practice, study, meditation, and forgiveness, to heal our relationships with others and with God, and thereby find real love and joy

# **ACIM categorization #2 -- A channeled spiritual teaching**

- Helen Schucman heard an inner voice that said, “This is a course in miracles. Please take notes”; Helen called this inner dictation
- The inner voice claims to have lived on earth long ago, and speaks wisdom to her mind that is to be recorded for the benefit of many
- The voice could be turned on or off instantly, and would pick up right where it left off
- The process took seven years for the three books of the Course to be dictated

# **ACIM categorization #3 --**

## **A communication from Jesus**

- The voice that Helen heard claims to be Jesus of Nazareth, who is the center of the Christian religion
- His message both supports and contradicts messages of the Old and New Testaments
- His pronouncements in the Course are to correct misunderstandings of his teachings two thousand years ago
- He did not die for the sins of others, is a son of God just like we are, and Heaven is the only reality
- God does not forgive, because God does not condemn
- If the Course really is from Jesus with correct teachings, it is of monumental importance to the world (where over 2.3 billion people claim to be his followers – 30% of the world's population)

# **ACIM categorization #4 --**

## **A new system of psychology**

- The Course has much in common with modern psychology
  - Beneath the conscious mind lies an immense unconscious filled with mysterious dynamics
  - Most of our problems have their source in the mind
  - We habitually rely on defense mechanisms, such as denial and projection
- The Course contains a remarkably extensive and intricate theory of the mind, of its fundamental nature, how it works, what makes it sick, and how it can be healed
- Those that are insane have a break from reality
  - We are all mad; we have broken away from reality (God); we have acquired the false delusion that we are separate beings, and we hallucinate a world of time and space

# ACIM categorization #5 --

## An inspired scripture

- Like other writings claiming to be scripture
  - It was written by a specially chosen messenger (not just through inspiration, however, but via direct dictation)
  - It is considered authoritative, and the words sacred and profound to its followers
- The Course frequently refers to the Bible
- The Course sees itself as possessing an authority greater than that of the Bible
- The Course corrects Bible teachings; for example
  - From the Bible -- “God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” (Galatians 6:7, KJV)
  - From the Course -- “‘God is not mocked’ is not a warning but a reassurance. God *would* be mocked if any of His creations lacked holiness.” (T-1.V.4:3-4)

# **ACIM categorization #6 --**

## **A path of enlightenment**

- The Course shares concepts that are found in Eastern spirituality (e.g. Hinduism and Buddhism)
  - One's own selfish desires are the main impediments to salvation
  - Inner liberation and peace is available in this life
  - We can awake to the true reality of oneness with the Divine
  - Meditation is important to become enlightened
  - This life is an illusion, and not reality
  - Everyone will eventually be saved or enlightened
  - Our reawakening or enlightenment requires healing of our mind, which will probably take longer than this mortal existence
  - There are many paths to salvation or awakening

# **ACIM categorization #7 --**

## **A literary work of art**

- The aim of art is to move us emotionally to see things differently – the Course wants us to see things differently; to transform us
- The Course uses literary language of simile, metaphor, symbol, personification, imagery, and allusion
- It uses terms that are more suggestive than definitive
- It has aspects of an epic story with characters, places, and events
- Large portions of the Course are written in iambic pentameter – a poetic quality that Shakespeare used
  - Each line has five “feet” of two syllables each, with the second syllable stressed
  - This results in ten syllables with every other syllable stressed

# ACIM categorization #7 -- A literary work of art (cont.)

- Examples of iambic pentameter from the Course
  - ✓ “When peace is not with you entirely, and when you suffer pain of any kind, you have beheld some sin within your brother, and have rejoiced at what you thought was there.” (T-24.VI.5:2)
  - ✓ “Do not forget today that there can be no form of suffering that fails to hide an unforgiving thought. Nor can there be a form of pain forgiveness cannot heal.” (W-pl.198.9:5-6)

# **ACIM categorization #8 -- A manual for interpersonal healing and harmony**

- The Course tells us the underlying problems that make relationships painful, and how to change them to be completely loving and joyous -- “It is impossible to remember God in secret and alone.” (T-14.X.10:1)
  - Healing our painful romantic relationships, family relationships and friendships (special relationships)
  - Joining in a common goal with another and undertaking a joint developmental journey (holy relationship)
  - Reaching out to help those who feel alone and in need
  - Healing the sick in mind and body
  - Saving the world
- If we understand the message of the Course and impart true love (real forgiveness with no grievances), we can work miracles in our relationships and with everyone we encounter

# **The Course can be viewed many ways as we have seen**

1. An educational course
2. A channeled spiritual teaching
3. A purported communication from Jesus of Nazareth
4. A new system of psychology, with ties to Freud
5. An inspired scripture, in the lineage of the Bible
6. A path of enlightenment, as found in Eastern spirituality
7. A literary work of art
8. A manual for interpersonal healing and harmony

# **Jan's Ten Themes of A Course In Miracles**

- 1. Perform miracles**
- 2. Extend forgiveness**
- 3. Listen, learn, do**
- 4. Heal relationships**
- 5. Accept and trust**
- 6. Understand Jesus' example and role**
- 7. Understand meta-physical concepts**
- 8. See the Real World**
- 9. Practice meditation**
- 10. Pray**

# Jan's ten themes – #1

## Perform miracles (1)

- The Course's generic definition of miracle
  - “An extension of love from one brother to another”
- Every extension of love provides healing to the mind of the recipient and also healing to the mind of the miracle giver
- “Miracles are teaching devices for demonstrating it is as blessed to give as to receive. They simultaneously increase the strength of the giver and supply strength to the receiver.” (T-1.I.16)
- They should occur often
  - “Miracles are natural. When they do not occur something has gone wrong.” (T-1.I.6:1-2, T-21.V.3:3)
- Big or small, they are the same
  - “There is no order of difficulty in miracles. One is not "harder" or "bigger" than another. They are all the same. All expressions of love are maximal.” (T-1.I.1:1-4)

# Jan's ten themes – #1

## Perform miracles (2)

- We will be guided on when, to whom, and how
  - “All miracles mean life, and God is the Giver of life. His Voice will direct you very specifically. You will be told all you need to know.” (T-1.I.4:1-3)
- Miracles are powerful tools for blessing
  - “What He [Holy Spirit] enables you to do is clearly not of this world, for miracles violate every law of reality as this world judges it. Every law of time and space, of magnitude and mass is transcended, for what the Holy Spirit enables you to do is clearly beyond all of them.” (T-12.VII.3:2-3)
  - “It must be true the miracle can heal all forms of sickness, or it cannot heal.” (T-30.VI.7:1)
- “The miracle is a learning device that lessens the need for time”, and “substitutes for learning that might have taken thousands of years.” (T-1.I.47:1, T-1.II.6:7)

# Jan's ten themes – #2

## Extend forgiveness (1)

- Learning how to forgive is the most fundamental teaching of the Course
- The Course teaches a radical form of forgiveness
- There is no sin – only mistakes/errors
- We forgive others by recognizing that they didn't take our peace away from us – we decided to blame them (project our guilt) which took our peace away
- Forgiveness allows us to keep the peace of God, as well as extend healing to our brother as we recognize every brother as holy, innocent, and pure

# Jan's ten themes – #2

## Extend forgiveness (2)

- “You who want peace can find it only by complete forgiveness.” (T-1.VI.1:1)
- “Forgiveness is the key to happiness.”  
(W-pl.121.title)
- “If what you offer is complete forgiveness you must have let guilt go, accepting the Atonement for yourself and learning you are guiltless.”  
(T-14.I.1:7)
- “Forgiveness is my function as the light of the world.”  
(W-pl.62.title)
- “The way to God is through forgiveness here. There is no other way.” (W-pII.256.1:1-2)

# **Jan's ten themes – #3**

## **Listen, learn, do (1)**

- Our inner guide, or Holy Spirit, is a gift from God
- Our inner guide tells us how to make each decision so that the result will be peace and joy, if we listen for guidance, learn from it, and follow it
- However, if we listen to the ego, those decisions will result in pain and suffering
- If we are not feeling peaceful, we can choose once again to listen to the gentle, still, voice within us

# Jan's ten themes – #3

## Listen, learn, do (2)

- “As you share my unwillingness to accept error in yourself and others, you must join the great crusade to correct it; listen to my voice, learn to undo error and act to correct it. The power to work miracles belongs to you. I will provide the opportunities to do them, but you must be ready and willing. Doing them will bring conviction in the ability, because conviction comes through accomplishment. The ability is the potential, the achievement is its expression, and the Atonement, which is the natural profession of the children of God, is the purpose.”  
(T-1.III.1:6-10)

# Jan's ten themes – #4

## Heal relationships (1)

- Relationships are the most pervasive, most important, and most emotionally painful of mortal experiences
- The ego is a false belief in our minds that we are separate from everything that exists and cut off from the light, life, and holiness of our Creator
  - “The ego is certain that love is dangerous, and this is always its central teaching. It never puts it this way; on the contrary, everyone who believes that the ego is salvation seems to be intensely engaged in the search for love. Yet the ego, though encouraging the search for love very actively, makes one proviso; do not find it. ... 'Seek and do not find'.” T-12.IV.1:1-5

# Jan's ten themes – #4

## Heal relationships (2)

- We don't find the love we need because we seek outside ourselves
  - “Seek not outside yourself” (T-29.VII.title)
  - “How can you decide that special aspects of the Sonship can give you more than others?” (T-15.V.3:5)
- [Holy] relationships are our salvation (T-20.VI.11:9)
- The Course gives two ways to make our relationships holy – the holy instant and forgiveness
  - “The holy instant is the Holy Spirit's most useful learning device for teaching you love's meaning. For its purpose is to suspend judgment entirely.” (T-15.V.1:1-2)
  - “What is your brother for? You do not know, because your function is obscure to you. Do not ascribe a role to him that you imagine would bring happiness to you. And do not try to hurt him when he fails to take the part that you assigned to him, in what you dream your life was meant to be.” (T-29.IV.6:1-4)

# Jan's ten themes – #4

## Heal relationships (3)

- Only holy relationships provide real joining
  - “Each herald of eternity [holy relationship] sings of the end of sin and fear. Each speaks in time of what is far beyond it. Two voices raised together call to the hearts of everyone, to let them beat as one. And in that single heartbeat is the unity of love proclaimed and given welcome.”  
(T-20.V.2:1-4)

# Jan's ten themes – #5

## Accept and trust (1)

- Events in our life are not random
  - “Time is a trick, a sleight of hand, a vast illusion in which figures come and go as if by magic. Yet there is a plan behind appearances that does not change. The script is written.” (W.pl.158.4:1-3)
  - “Remember that no one is where he is by accident, and chance plays no part in God’s plan.” (M-9.1:3)
  - “Your passage through time and space is not at random. You cannot but be in the right place at the right time.” (W-pl.42.2:3-4)

# Jan's ten themes – #5

## Accept and trust (2)

- Every event in our life is for our good
  - “What could you not accept, if you but knew that everything that happens, all events, past, present and to come, are gently planned by One Whose only purpose is your good? Perhaps you have misunderstood His plan, for He would never offer pain to you.” (W-pl.135.18;1-2)
  - “Everything is for your own best interests.” (W-pl.25.1:5)
  - “All things are lessons God would have me learn.” (W-pl.193.Title)

# Jan's ten themes – #5

## Accept and trust (3)

- If we have trust in God and accept all things, we will find joy and peace
  - “God established His relationship with you to make you happy, ...” T-17.IV.1:1
  - “Think, then, how great the Love of God for you must be, that He has given you a part of Him to save from pain and give you happiness.” T-24.VI.10:5
  - “I will accept my part in God's plan for salvation. ... Give Him the words, and He will do the rest. He will enable you to understand your special function. He will open up the way to happiness, and peace and trust will be His gifts; His answer to your words.”  
W-pl.98:7:6, 9:1-3

# Jan's ten themes – #6

## Understand Jesus's example and role (1)

- The cornerstones of the Course's message are the same fundamental teachings that Jesus gave in the Sermon on the Mount as recorded in the New Testament – love, non-judgment, forgiveness, and defenselessness (turning the other cheek)
- However, the Course departs from some basic Christian beliefs, such as:
  - There is no sin (only mistakes)
  - God does not judge
  - Jesus did not perform an atoning sacrifice for the sins of others; he was crucified as an extreme example that you cannot be persecuted
  - Everyone is a child of God, was created perfect, remains perfect, and all will return home to Him, as perfect as they were created

# Jan's ten themes – #6

## Understand Jesus's example and role (2)

- “I am in charge of the process of Atonement, which I undertook to begin.” (T-1.III.1:1)
- “You stand below me and I stand below God. In the process of "rising up," I am higher because without me the distance between God and man would be too great for you to encompass.” (T-1.II.4:3-4)
- “The crucifixion had no part in the Atonement. Only the resurrection became my part in it. That is the symbol of the release from guilt by guiltlessness.” (T-14.V.10:1-3)
- “The message the crucifixion was intended to teach was that it is not necessary to perceive any form of assault in persecution, because you cannot be persecuted.” (T-6.I.4:6)

# **Jan's ten themes – #6**

## **Understand Jesus's example and role (3)**

- “You do not walk alone. God's angels hover near and all about. His Love surrounds you, and of this be sure; that I will never leave you comfortless.”  
(W-pII.Epilogue.6:6-8)

# Jan's ten themes – #7

## Understand meta-physical concepts

- God is the uncreated creator, the uncaused Cause, infinite and eternal, and dependent on nothing for His existence
- Only God and His creations (which we are) are real
- God did not make this world of pain and suffering – we collectively did, therefore it is not real
- We chose to try to separate from God, made up the fantasy of the ego, and dreamed up the notion of guilt, which is “the sole cause of pain in any form.”  
(T-30.V.2:4)
- Everyone will return to God (whom we never really left) when we have healed our minds and understand the true nature of ourselves and our brothers

# Jan's ten themes – #8

## See the real world (1)

- When the Course speaks about vision or seeing, it means we need to change our false perception to true perception and see the real world, which is:
  - A state of mind where the world disappears in awareness and all that remains is a reflection of Oneness; it is not Heaven, but a perceptual reflection of heaven; this is our goal for it contains the memory of God
- The world we see with unhealed minds is false perception:
  - “I have invented the world I see.” (W-pl.32.title)
  - A world seen through eyes of fear, which brings thoughts of terror to our mind; we hear cries of pain and sorrow, and sounds of battle; our thoughts are full of danger, death, attack, murder, sin, guilt, and judgment.  
(W-pII.8:1,2,3,4)

# Jan's ten themes – #8

## See the real world (2)

- We have a choice on which world we want to see
  - “You are not the victim of the world you see because you invented it. You can give it up as easily as you made it up. You will see it or not see it, as you wish. While you want it you will see it; when you no longer want it, it will not be there for you to see.” (W-pl.32.1:2-5)
  - “The real world can actually be perceived. All that is necessary is a willingness to perceive nothing else.” (T-11.VII.2:6-7)

# Jan's ten themes – #8

## See the real world (3)

- True perception, or the real world
  - “It has no buildings and there are no streets where people walk alone and separate. There are no stores where people buy an endless list of things they do not need. It is not lit with artificial light, and night comes not upon it. There is no day that brightens and grows dim. This is no loss. Nothing is there but shines, and shines forever.” (T-13.VII.1:2-7)
  - A perception of safety, love and joy; it looks on only kindness (W-pII.8.3:2,5)

# Jan's ten themes – #9

## Practice meditation (1)

- A major purpose of the Course is to discipline our mind:
  - “This is a course in mind training.” (T-1.VII.4:1)
  - “This [practice periods] is part of the long-range disciplinary training your mind needs, so that the Holy Spirit can use it consistently for the purpose He shares with you.” (W-pl.65.4:4)
- The meditation sessions in the Workbook are generally called practice periods or quiet times

# Jan's ten themes – #9

## Practice meditation (2)

- Amazing benefits of the Course's form of meditation:
  - Reveal the perfect place deep within us (W-pl.41.3:1)
  - Cure all sorrow, pain, fear, and loss (W-pl.41.3:2)
  - Remove loneliness and suffering (W-pl.41.4:2-3)
  - Allow us to reach God (W-pl.41.8:1-4)
  - Recognize the light within (W-pl.44.2:1, 3:1)
  - Allow us to see, i.e., have vision and thereby see the real world (W-pl.44.3:5)
  - Find our real thoughts (W-pl.45.3:1-5)
  - Hear God's voice (W-pl.49.3:2-5)
  - Accept the happiness God has given us (W-pl.98.5:1)
  - Find joy the world does not contain (W-pl.98.6:1)
  - Find peace of mind and certainty of purpose (W-pl.98.6:2)
  - See our own transfiguration (W-pl.124.10:1)

# Jan's ten themes – #10

## Pray (1)

- “The Bible emphasizes that all prayer is answered, and this is indeed true. The very fact that the Holy Spirit has been asked for anything will ensure a response.” (T-9.II.3:1-2)
- *“And let me not forget my hourly thanksgiving that You have remained with me, and always will be there to hear my call to You and answer me.”*  
(W-pII.232.1:3)
- “... God Himself will never fail to answer.”  
(T-21.VIII.3:6)
- God hears the prayer of the heart. (M-21.1:1-7)

# Jan's ten themes – #10

## Pray (2)

- “Your Friend goes with you. You are not alone. No one who calls on Him can call in vain. Whatever troubles you, be certain that He has the answer, and will gladly give it to you, if you simply turn to Him and ask it of Him. He will not withhold all answers that you need for anything that seems to trouble you. He knows the way to solve all problems, and resolve all doubts. His certainty is yours. You need but ask it of Him, and it will be given you.”  
(W-Epilogue.1:2-9)

# Jan's ten themes – #10

## Pray (3)

- How we should pray
  - Pray to God, our Father, through the feelings in our heart at any time and anywhere
  - Prayer is a quiet time of thanksgiving, listening and loving. (S-1.I.7:1, S-1.I.5:1)
  - Don't entreat; forget the things that we think we need; ask, rather, to receive what is already given and to accept what is already there. (S-1.I.1:6-7, 4:1)
  - We can ask for right-minded things. “There are decisions to be made here, and they must be made whether they be illusions or not.” (S-1.I.2:4)
  - We will receive a specific answer if such is our need. (S-1.I.2:1)
  - Seek first the Kingdom of Heaven, and all else will indeed be given us. (S-1.I.3:5)
  - Ask in Jesus' name (T-4.III.6:3)

# **Jan's Ten Themes of A Course In Miracles**

- 1. Perform miracles**
- 2. Extend forgiveness**
- 3. Listen, learn, do**
- 4. Heal relationships**
- 5. Accept and trust**
- 6. Understand Jesus' example and role**
- 7. Understand meta-physical concepts**
- 8. See the Real World**
- 9. Practice meditation**
- 10. Pray**

# The “Course” and me

- How I found it
- How it dramatically changed my religious and spiritual life
- How it changed me

# A Promise of the “Course”

- “Once you accept His plan as the one function that you would fulfill, there will be nothing else the Holy Spirit will not arrange for you without your effort. He will go before you making straight your path, and leaving in your way no stones to trip on, and no obstacles to bar your way. Nothing you need will be denied you. Not one seeming difficulty but will melt away before you reach it. You need take thought for nothing, careless of everything except the only purpose that you would fulfill.” (T-20.IV.8:4-8)

**50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**  
**of**  
**A Course In Miracles**

**End of Presentation**

A Presentation by Jan Worley