

THANK YOU, TEACHERS OF GOD

I am motivated to express my gratitude to all of God's teachers and to express some concerns about my perceptions of the growing ACIM community.

I was drawn to ACIM fifteen years ago and once I picked up the book I could not put it down. I read the text out loud, to avoid getting drowsy, about 3-4 hours a day until complete. I did the lessons in about eighteen months and read the manual, also out loud.

Based on the Preface that states, "It is not intended to become the basis for another cult. It's only purpose is to provide a way in which some people will be able to find their own Internal Teacher." and "The Course makes no claim to finality, nor are the Workbook lessons intended to bring the student's learning to completion. At the end, the reader is left in the hands of his or her own Internal Teacher, who will direct all subsequent learning as He sees fit." I loved this self-study approach and the fact that I did not need some external teacher in order to understand the Course.

I continue to this day to study ACIM in this self study mode and turn to my Internal Teacher, the Holy Spirit, many, many times to help me understand the text, lessons and manual. Although frustrating at times I stick with it and originally was determined not to make a decision about ACIM until I had read the text and manual and had done the lessons. Slowly, at first, a knowing started to dawn in my mind. It might occur a hundred or more pages beyond where I had asked the question, but a knowing does come. It is not a knowing similar to worldly knowing, that is based on logic, analysis or facts, it is a deep feeling of understanding. This knowing is peaceful and loving, a place that is not of this world. This knowing is not always easily translated into words and when it is it is not always easy to find words in ACIM that explain what I have come to know. But I do feel that I understand what Jesus is attempting to tell me using the words in ACIM. This method of learning has served me well and I would recommend it to any ACIM student.

It was about one year into the study of ACIM that I became aware of Miracles communities. At a seminar at the Association For Research and Enlightenment (A.R.E.) I met a fellow student of ACIM and he assumed that I knew Ruth Hanna, the Midwest coordinator of ACIM activities. I was not and upon my return to Missouri I contacted Ruth in St.Louis, and she provided me with very useful information and asked if I would be willing to host an ACIM Study Group in my area. I said yes, she provided me with some names, and in February 1993 our ACIM group was formed. Ruth and her husband Robert have been very helpful to ACIM students in this area over the years. Ruth laid her body aside early this year and we all miss her.

By meeting Ruth I became aware of other, more formal teachers of ACIM, other than my daily contact with others, and that that there were books, audio, video and presentations available to help students come to a better understanding of ACIM. What a blessing!! Because I had developed a relationship with my Internal Teacher, all new information was taken to him to ensure that it felt "right" and resonated with my current level of understanding. I used all that I came into contact with and still do to this day. I am eternally

grateful to these loving spirits that have helped me on my path. I continue to keep an open mind towards these teachers and resist pitting one against another. I get what I am supposed to get from each and move on. I continue to learn from all of them and will always be grateful and open to their sharing.

I am not a prolific writer and since the beginning of my study of ACIM I have been only motivated on three occasions to write an article. Once when a teacher of ACIM suggested that we needed to use external teachers of ACIM because ACIM is not a self study course and that the Manual for Teachers dictates it and implying it is the only way to “really” understand and practice the Course (I mistakenly thought the article was a satire!); another time when the copyright issue seemed to be polarizing the ACIM community and dividing it into “sects” in direct opposition, I believe, to the teachings of ACIM and the third time being this article.

When I first starting using external teachers there seemed to be a mutual respect for and among these teachers. Everyone shared everyone’s ideas whether they agreed completely with them or not. If conflicting thoughts did arise they were taken to my Internal Teacher for resolution. I found this very helpful and in accordance with what Jesus was attempting to teach us. It does not surprise me as much as disappoint me that the Course community is splintering. Just look at the history of mankind and the splintering of religions and spiritual beliefs over time. We can see how time is collapsing because the ACIM splintering is happening in decades where many other paths took centuries to splinter. It is just unsettling to see knowledgeable ACIM teachers and students choosing separation over oneness and not believing or recognizing that the ego has something to do with it.

Over the last few years I have been puzzled about my perception of apparent hostility growing between students and teachers of this wonderful book. There have been books, articles and seminars devoted to judging other ACIM teachers and basically asking students to choose one teacher over others.

Although there are specific things ACIM says we should do to achieve the goals of the Course, I am hearing more and more from teachers and students things like “That is not what the Course says.”; “Show me, in words, where the Course says that and if you cannot than you are wrong.”; “If you do not do this or that you are not doing the Course.” I like to believe that the study of ACIM is highly individualized and not the same for everyone. As it states in the Manual For Teachers: 29. 2. “Which is for which? Who would profit more from prayers alone? Who needs but a smile, being as yet unready for more? No one should attempt to answer these questions alone. Surely no teacher of God has come this far without realizing that. The curriculum is highly individualized, and all aspects are under the Holy Spirit’s particular care and guidance. Ask and He will answer. The responsibility is His, and He alone is fit to assume it. To do so is His function. To refer the questions to Him is yours. Would you want to be responsible for decisions about which you understand so little? Be glad you have a Teacher Who cannot make a mistake. His answers are always right. Would you say that of yours?”

I do not believe in a cookbook step by step approach to learning ACIM other than what is said in ACIM. I do not think we need new books that attempt to show students what to do step by step in order to do it "right". I am finding that what Jesus gave us in ACIM is very learnable and with the use of my Internal Teacher and working with my Internal Teacher I will get what I need when I need it. I am grateful to all who feel motivated by the Holy Spirit to provide material that will help them and others to successfully achieve the goals of the Course. I hope and encourage them to continue to do so and to help me and the Sonship to awaken.

So once again I thank all the external teachers for their help but I do not need them to judge my study of ACIM or to tell me what teachers are acceptable or good and what teachers are unacceptable or bad. I know they mean well and believe they are being motivated by the Holy Spirit to judge or discern each other but like so many other things in the illusion there are so many well meaning opinions one could become more confused. Again that is why I feel much more comfortable relying on my own Internal Teacher. I will get where I am to get when I need to get there. I am doing the best I can with my willingness and my Internal Teacher.

So yes, I do have concerns about divisions within the Course community and although it can be expected from the ego's perspective I have hoped, and continue to hope, that the temporarily more knowledgeable and experienced of God's teachers would encourage a loving collective approach to learning ACIM without separation. Peace, love and joy!!