



Spiritual Light Center

Newsletter—August 2014

MESSAGE FROM BILL

Dear SLC Family,

Sunday the 17th of August is our Annual Membership Meeting. We'll have no regular service that Sunday; rather, we'll meet in the fellowship hall at 11 a.m. for our anticipated meeting.

It is hard for me to imagine that it has already been a year since we gathered for our annual meeting in 2013. So much has happened since then; much has been accomplished, and I am grateful. The changes in our Center are so very noticeable that I have heard the word "miracle" used more than once to describe it. And so it is.

As far as I'm concerned, the greatest of these miracles is the beautiful comradery I sense within our membership. Our community is exactly that, a community. The experiences we have shared have bonded us into a unified body with a common goal. It appears to me that we have accepted our mission—to spearhead the emerging realization of an Era of Peace and Unity in this world. That is no small task. We will only accomplish it by surrender to Spirit. There will, of course, be opposition, but that is of no consequence when it is Spirit that moves us.

As I sense the miracles occurring within the Spiritual Light Center, I have chosen

to make "miracles" the theme of this current newsletter. I'm grateful for the three articles I found on that topic which I've edited to include herein. They each deal beautifully with the subject. The second one may help those of us who struggled through *The Course in Miracles* to gain a better understanding of its message.

My desire for each of us is that we may surrender to the flow of the miraculous which permeates our entire experience. Our very being manifests the miracle which is the ground of our existence and of all that IS. I inhale the miraculous. May I exhale surrender. In doing so I may live in peace and serenity, in harmony with the Universe and all that dwells therein.

Many blessings to you,
Bill Groves, President

OUR VISION STATEMENT

The Spiritual Light Center is a peaceful and joyful fellowship of individuals, centered in love, dedicated to the God within, and honoring the many paths to truth.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

We seek to develop our highest selves by continuous sharing of spiritual ideas, in an environment of unconditional love and respect for others.



ONGOING EVENTS At SLC

Every Tuesday at 5:15 p.m. - Join our group in the Hall as we watch a selected film of a spiritual nature, followed by discussion to develop our evolution. Afterward we choose a restaurant and go out to eat!

Every other Thursday, August 7 & 21, at 5:15 p.m. - Please join us for our meditation group in the Chapel led by Dr. Richard Kimball. He begins with an informative discussion on the practice of meditation followed by walking and then sitting meditation. Call Richard at 371-3425 for further details.

Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. come join us for our **book study**. We are now reading *One Day My Soul Just Opened Up* by Iyanla Vanzant. This is one powerful book! Join us for some enlightening conversation.

UPCOMING SPEAKERS

August 3, 11 a.m.

Arthur Cataldo, who has many years of experience in energetic bodywork, sound therapy, and clinical psychology, will speak on "The Validation of Ancient Wisdom by New Science".

August 10, 11 a.m.

Lesley Reifert-Hughes, an ordained spiritualist minister, healer, and author, and one of our favorite speakers, will speak on "Getting Unstuck".

August 17, 11 a.m.

NO SERVICE THIS SUNDAY due to our **Annual Membership Meeting**. Please join us in the Fellowship Hall.

August 24, 11 a.m.

Dr. Harvey Tritel, retired cardiologist and former lay rabbi of Mountain Synagogue, returns to speak on "Why a Three Day Journey took Forty Years".

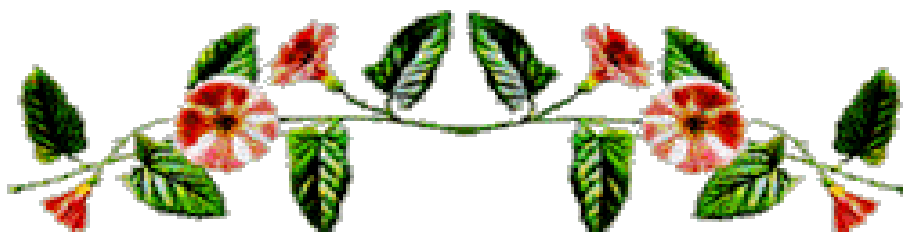
August 31, 11 a.m.

Judy Stepp, a DreamBuilder Life Coach who helps people transform dreams into reality, will speak on "Faith--Believe the Impossible or How We Can Make Miracles Happen".

FRIDAY SPIRITUAL EDUCATION 6 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall

August 8 – Dr. David Marn, a chiropractic physician at Aery Chiropractic & Acupuncture, will speak on "The Mind-Body Dynamic".

August 22 – Barbara Meister Vitale, highly trained in the Lakota and ancient Celtic traditions, will speak on "Healing Techniques & Gemstones".



OUR SLC METAPHYSICAL STORE IS IN FULL SWING!

Our store is open under the experienced management of Sandy Frary, certified gemologist. We are selling consignment or donated items, including books, jewelry, gift and decorative items, original art, and handmade crafts and clothing. **The store hours are Fridays 2 pm to 6 pm & Saturdays 12 pm to 4 pm, and Sundays after the service.** Come see the beauty! For information please call Sandy at 828-200-2451.

OUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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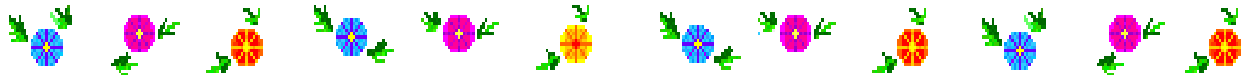
SPIRITUAL LIGHT CENTER INFORMATION

80 Heritage Hollow Drive, Franklin, NC 28734
Right behind the Gazebo Restaurant in Heritage Hollow
828-369-3065
slcfranklin@frontier.com
www.spirituallightcenter.com

August 17th is our Annual Membership Meeting!

This is our annual gathering for everyone to share in discussion and decision-making. There will be **NO REGULAR SERVICE THAT SUNDAY**, so please come straight to the Fellowship Hall at 11a.m. Although only members can vote, everyone is welcome to freely voice your ideas and opinions. We've always got lots to say!

There are two positions available on the Board of Trustees. We are welcoming any member who would be interested in serving on the Board to contact either Beverly Allen or Luci Swanson. We'll also be taking nominees at the meeting. Come join in!!



☞“The doctrine of the divine unity means not only that there is but one God; it means also that God is simple, uncomplex, one with Himself. The harmony of His being is the result not of a perfect balance of parts but of the absence of parts. Between his attributes no contradiction can exist. He need not suspend one attribute to exercise another, for all those attributes are one. He does not divide himself to perform a work, but works in the total unity of His being.” ~ A.W. Tozer from his book Knowledge of the Holy

Reflections on the Miraculous

☞ Smile, Life is a Miracle By Jonathan in General (condensed)

In every moment, we are living in a miracle. Just our being here right now is proof of that miracle.

We often get caught up in the drama of life and don't stop and realize how much of a miracle life really is. It's hard to imagine what it would be like to live in a lifeless universe. In fact, if we were in a lifeless universe, there would be no "us"; there would be no "perspective." Existence is the manifestation of this miracle; existence *is the miracle in action*.

Every day of our life is a miracle, every moment is a miracle. We can take life for granted, we can focus on all our shortcomings, all our pain and trials, but even still, it is a miracle that these things even exist. Experience is the greatest miracle of all. When we realize this, even if something didn't turn out the way we wanted it to, we can still see that life is a miracle because of the very experience of life itself.

Three Levels of Perceiving Miracles

There are three levels of miracle perception. The first is seeing nothing as a miracle. Everything is completely ordinary; there is nothing particularly amazing about life, or existence. The second is seeing only blatant, unexplainable events as miracles. The third view, which for me is closest to the truth, is living as though everything is a miracle.

When you live as if everything is a miracle something strange happens. You realize that there is no difference between the good and the bad. Sure, some situations are more desirable than others. When you realize the miracle of everything in life, you transcend duality. There is both discomfort and comfort, but you no longer judge them as wrong or right. You see all experience equally as miracles.



We can experience hurt, or sadness, and with the view of non-judgment, we can realize the cause of our hurt or sadness. If we can maintain this perspective, we can untie our internal knots. We can see a difficult time in our life as an opportunity to learn and to grow.

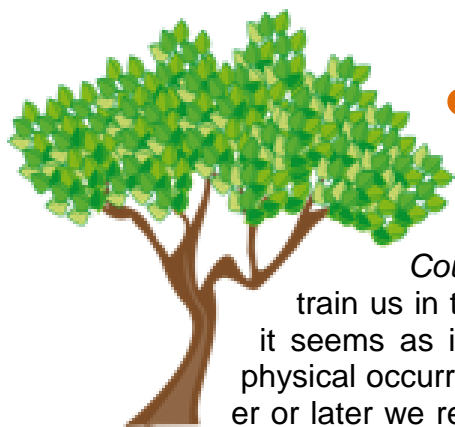
Whenever I used to experience something painful or I became depressed, I would deny my feelings. I thought this denial made me stronger, I thought the more numb I became the more I would be "invincible" to life's adversities. But the more numb I became to the painful experiences I had, the more I was unable to experience and appreciate the beauty and love around me. Eventually I couldn't take the numbness and denial anymore. I didn't want to experience the pain but I also didn't want to be numb to all the joy and love I used to know. That's when I realized the courage of being honest with myself,

I stopped rejecting my feelings and starting accepting them. Whatever I felt, I gave myself permission to feel it. Even if the source of those feelings was based on assumption, simply my accepting the feelings allowed me to see into their cause. With my honesty I gained awareness, with my awareness I saw my mistakes and with my courage I forgave myself and others. I realized that simply being honest and being open to the truth, whether it was painful or not, brought me more and more freedom. Eventually I realized the greatest truth is in silence.

The Miracle of Silence

In silence we can realize that everything in life is a miracle. Simply existing is a miracle, because we are alive. In silence we let go of judgment. Silence is the highest truth because we transcend judgment. In reality, in nature there is no judgment, there simply *is*. Untying all of the knots within me was not easy, I had to examine each of my beliefs and question them. I asked myself whether my belief was based on experience or assumption. Even if it was based on experience, there was a chance I could have overlooked something. I realized that our deepest beliefs about ourselves and the nature of our world are not true in themselves, but *our thinking makes them true in our experience*. The more I challenged my beliefs and aligned myself with the truth, the more obstacles I removed to living life as if every moment is a miracle.

We may forget to be mindful, we may become distracted, and we may fall down. But even these struggles are miracles. When we truly recognize this we can begin to live every day fully, without limitations. We can overcome our fears and self-defeating beliefs and reclaim our personal freedom.



What is a Miracle? By Robert Perry (condensed)

What is a miracle? Obviously, to understand *A Course in Miracles* we must understand what a miracle is. By calling itself *A Course in Miracles*, it implies that its whole purpose is to educate and train us in the bringing forth of miracles. When one first encounters this title, it seems as if the Course is going to show us how to produce supernatural physical occurrences, like raising dead people or making food appear. But sooner or later we realize that a miracle is not an outer reversal of physical laws, but an inner shift in perception. And then the title seems to make more sense.

Miracles in the Ministry of Jesus

In the ministry of Jesus, miracles had an important meaning. Let me try to sketch that meaning as I understand it based on my reading of modern scholarship. In those times, sickness was not seen as much as the result of natural law or even divine punishment, but as the expression of evil powers. The fact that suffering was so rampant was proof that the world was in the grip of demonic influences. Jesus came preaching about a God Who was so loving, compassionate and providential that He sought simply to make His children happy. He sought to be the perfect Parent, Who would chase away the demons, gather His children up in His arms. This basic idea provided the center of Jesus' message. Above all Jesus proclaimed the coming of the Kingdom of God, by which he meant that the current rulership

of the earth was and is being overturned; that a loving Father was coming to take over the world and wrap it in wings of healing. So if we look at the miracles of Jesus, we see several key elements. 1) They are acts of God; 2) they pass through a human instrument (Jesus) to another person; and 3) they heal the other person, overturning the existing order of things in the process.

A Shift in Perception Now let us turn to the Course's definition of the miracle. Although the Course's definition of the miracle has much in common with the more traditional image, there is one very critical difference. The Course has taken an event that has been primarily conceived of as physical and made it primarily psychological. The Course has psychologized the traditional miracle.



As I read the life of Jesus and the scholarship about him, it seems clear to me that what Jesus was really all about was what you could call "the inner miracle." This was the conversion from inwardly obeying the rulership of evil to surrendering to God's rulership of love. This inner miracle, just like the outer one, was sparked by something that flowed from Jesus' presence and was made possible by a choice, an assent of faith on the part of the recipient. But, unlike the outer miracle, this inner miracle was the whole point of Jesus' ministry. The physical manifestations were just that: outer reflections of the real meat of things, the inner transformation.

Yet, even though I think Jesus understood that the mind, not the body, is the proper aim of healing, the rest of us generally have not grasped this. We have an addiction to hoping that if we can merely rearrange our outer world, and leave our minds just the way they are, then everything can be better. And so miracles, as traditionally conceived, have fed right into that addiction. By saying, then, that the miracle heals the mind, or shifts our perception, the Course is dramatically reinterpreting the normal use of the word.

The Course's assertion is that everything stems from the mind. The mind's thinking provides the basis for everything that it experiences. Whichever way the mind chooses to look at reality, it will find itself surrounded by and experiencing a "reality" that is the precise mirror of thought. The mind's fundamental belief-system first manifests as inner feelings, emotions, interpretations and perceptions; and then manifests as the "outer" reality in which the mind seems to live.

Our current human condition, then, including all of its sickness, pain, tragedy and limitation, is simply the outpicturing of a sick belief-system, which the Course calls the ego. This belief-system has blinded us to the eternal fact that we are God's children and that we abide forever in God. It has convinced us that we are tiny minds living in little bodies on a planet. It has manifested inwardly as feelings of anger, guilt and fear, and outwardly in the form of sick and fatigued bodies, painful life circumstances, and the overall confining structure of time and space.

Miracles occur naturally as expressions of love. The real miracle is the love that inspires them. In this sense everything that comes from love is a miracle. - *A Course in Miracles*

Our healing, then, must be a healing of the mind, a healing of our fundamental perspective on reality. This is what the miracle does. It comes in a moment, a holy instant, when we decide to temporarily suspend our habitual perspective on things. As we momentarily loosen our grip on the ego, our minds are allowed to shift into a new way of seeing things. And since our thinking is the foundation for our entire experience, as our thinking shifts, so does everything else. Our whole experience of life is allowed to brighten from the bottom up, making this kind of healing more deeply liberating than being healed of even the most destructive physical disease.

Webster's Dictionary says a miracle is "an extraordinary event manifesting divine intervention in human affairs." So central in the word's definition is this element of divine intervention that if the Course left that out there would not be much point anymore in using the word. This also helps explain why the Course has chosen to use the words "miracle" and "magic" as opposites, when in common parlance they are sometimes interchangeable. Even in normal parlance, magic is usually conceived of as a power that humans wield, while a miracle is something that somehow comes from above. As such, magic can be "white" or "black." Yet no one would talk about a "black miracle." In the Course, then, magic is the attempt to solve things through an outer change effected by our own power; while a miracle is a healing of the mind effected by the Holy Spirit.



A Healing of the Body

Even though we all know that a miracle is primarily aimed at healing the mind, the Course nevertheless makes it clear that a miracle *also* heals the body. This is, I perceive, a controversial subject among Course students, but the Course is very clear on this point. It routinely talks about miracles as if physical healing is a natural - though not a central or necessary - part of what they are. For instance: "If the mind can heal the body, but the body cannot heal the mind, then the mind must be stronger than the body. Every miracle demonstrates this". Or, "Thus is the body healed by miracles...". Even though the Course is extreme in saying that any sort of physical limitation can be easily removed by the miracle, it is equally extreme in saying that this will only happen if you focus your attention on mind, *not on the body*. For instance, we are urged to "not ask the Holy Spirit to heal the body". For seeing the body as the goal of healing and the center of life is part of the sickness that made the body ill in the first place. Thus, the Course would not agree with approaches that teach the mind to direct healing energy to the body, or that imply that the mind should be healed so *that* the more important physical healing can then follow. The way to heal the body, from the Course's standpoint, is to stop identifying with it, to realize that it is not who you are.

Summary

Instead of an outer Deity that intervenes physically, the Holy Spirit is an inner Presence dedicated to psychological healing which is manifested outwardly. Instead of a healer who may possibly be giving what he does not have, the healer must first accept the healing into himself. Instead of freeing a brother from the rule of evil spirits that have injured his body, he frees a brother from the ego's enslavement of his mind; the healing of the body is merely a consequence of the awakening of the mind. And now we know what Jesus was really doing 2,000 years ago. All that we saw on the outside was a man going around and changing bodies. Now we have the report on what was really happening on the inside. And this happening changed the world.

What is a Miracle? By Rabbi Shlomo Chein (condensed a little)

The Talmud relates the story of Rabbi Chaninah Ben Dosa, whose daughter once accidentally put vinegar instead of oil in the Shabbat lamp. He said to her: "Why are you sad? What difference does it make? He Who told oil to burn can tell vinegar to burn." And the vinegar burned all Shabbat until they lit the Havdalah light from it after Shabbat.

Common knowledge defines nature as a self propelled system of cause and effect, and a miracle as a supernatural occurrence. The believer might add that the self propelled system was created by G-d at the time of creation, and the miracle is G-d's intervention and overriding of that system.

Oil burns naturally. Vinegar does not. The miracle is that G-d made vinegar burn. The Jewish view is quite different.

In truth, nature is just as awesome as a miracle, and a miracle is just as "natural" as nature. Both are the fulfillment of G-d's will at any given moment. It is merely the frequency of nature that makes it lose its miraculous effect, and it is only the infrequency of the miracle that suddenly reminds us of G-d's involvement in our life.

Oil burns because G-d makes it burn. So does vinegar. The difference is only that G-d always makes oil burn, but He seldom makes vinegar burn.

Seen in this light, miracles aren't as much as an occurrence as they are an observance. In other words miracles are happening all the time, the question is only if we are observing them as such. Sometimes we must make an effort to see it. But ultimately we will perceive it only if we so desire. As the Talmud says, the skeptic will explain the splitting of the sea as a natural event, and the believer will explain the growth of wheat as a miracle.

Truth be told, just as G-d makes seas flow He can make them split, and just as He makes seeds fertile, He can make them sterile. So what separates the natural from the miracle? That which separates the skeptic from the believer: Perception. The skeptic attributes the supernatural to a self governed system, whereas the believer attributes the natural to a divinely governed law.

Thus the Hebrew word for Nature is Teva, which also means "sunk". In nature G-d's involvement is submerged and unnoticed. The Hebrew word for Miracle is Neis. Neis also means "sign". A miracle is an occasional reminder that G-d's will drives nature. Constantly.

Ultimately we will learn to recognize G-d as the driving force behind everything that occurs. We will view the consistency of nature as a prolonged miracle, and miracles will be the natural order.

