

MIRACLES MONTHLY

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Miracles Are For Everyone

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The Earlier Versions And The Editing Of A Course In Miracles®

by Robert Perry

Life for students of *A Course In Miracles*® used to be simpler than it is today. We had one version of our revered book, and we knew that this version was almost exactly as its scribe, Helen Schucman, heard it, straight from Jesus. She herself gave this impression in the *Course*'s preface:

Only a few minor changes have been made. Chapter titles and subheadings have been inserted in the *Text*, and some of the more personal references that occurred at the beginning have been omitted. Otherwise the material is substantially unchanged. (P. How It Came)

Then everything changed. In January of 2000, an earlier version of the *Course*, called the *Hugh Lynn Cayce Version*, was disseminated on the Internet. Later in that same year, an even earlier version, called the *Urtext*, also became available on the Internet. Both versions showed that the *Course* as we knew it had gone through a far more extensive editing process than anyone had suspected.

While before we felt the comfort of knowing that our scripture, unlike so many others, was free of human influence, we now began to wonder how much of the *Course* was altered by human editors. We also wondered which was the "true" version. Indeed, the *Hugh Lynn Cayce Version* was quickly published under the rather in-your-face title *Jesus' Course In Miracles* (and just as quickly became unavailable due to a court injunction).

This article attempts to answer, to the best of avail-

able knowledge, the following questions: What are the earlier versions? How do they differ from the standard *Course*? What was the editing process by which they became the standard *Course*? Finally, I will draw conclusions about the quality of the editing and offer recommendations about where to go from here.

THE VERSIONS

The Shorthand Notebooks

The very first version, you could say, of *A Course In Miracles* was Helen's shorthand notebooks. This was where she took down her inner dictation in the form of her own style of shorthand. Virtually everything Helen heard was taken down in these notebooks, though a few pieces of dictation (six by my count) she dictated directly to Bill without writing them down.

Helen would then dictate the notes to Bill Thetford, who would type them up. This is actually where the first editing took place, because Helen would not read to Bill everything she had taken down. She felt that some of the material was meant for her alone. According to Ken Wapnick, "When Helen dictated this to Bill, she basically dictated everything she had taken down with some very, very personal exceptions — material that was personal."¹

The shorthand notebooks are still under lock and key. Therefore, we don't really know what is in them that Helen chose not to dictate. However, some of this material is included in Ken Wapnick's *Absence from Felicity*. There, we have approximately 6,000 words from Jesus (about 15 pages worth) which do not appear in any of the later versions of the *Course*. What is this material like?

Much of it, as Ken Wapnick says, is indeed personal to Helen. For example, "Yes, indeed, the way the course is given you is quite unusual, but

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as Bill says you are not the average American woman." ² However, a surprising amount of the material seems suitable for the *Course*, and perhaps even meant for the *Course*. Note the following, for instance:

Remember a miracle is a spark of Life. It shines through the darkness and brings in the light. You must begin to forget and remember.

This is a private point, just for you. It is not part of the course. A miracle is love—you always wanted presents, and a closed package was intolerable. Please open this one. ³

Notice how the tone of this material shifts from the first paragraph—which sounds as if it could have come straight from the *Course*—to the second, which is obviously meant for Helen. Moreover, the second paragraph openly states that it is not meant for the *Course*, seemingly implying that the first paragraph is. There are several other discussions buried in the shorthand notebooks that appear suitable for the *Course*, including the following:

- Instruction in turning over our daily minutiae to Jesus so that he can save us time for more important things
- A definition of Atonement
- Two beautiful prayers given to Bill but suitable for all *Course* students
- A discussion of how reincarnation relates to the *Course's* thought system (which strikingly parallels the later discussion of reincarnation in the *Manual for Teachers*)

I believe that Helen's choices of what not to dictate to Bill cannot be considered infallible. Hence, there may well be material that never made it out of her shorthand notebooks that should have made it into the published *Course*.

The Urtext

What Bill typed from Helen's shorthand notebooks eventually became referred to by Helen and Bill as the *Urtext*. The word "urtext" means original text, and is often used to refer to the original manuscript of a musical score or literary work. The *Urtext* differs from the standard *Course* in several important ways:

It is continuous, without section or chapter breaks in the *Text* (although the *Workbook* and *Manual* have the same breaks as they do in the standard version).

- Its capitalization, punctuation, and paragraphing are rough.
- The flow of thought in the early portions is very choppy. The material is much more of a dialogue between Helen and Jesus than the monologue of the later *Course*. Jesus will often speak very personally to Helen and Bill. Helen will often interject and Jesus will respond. Jesus will sometimes step in and correct something Helen wrote down, saying she heard him wrong.
- The early portions are far more concrete and down-to-earth than the later *Course*. This concreteness falls mostly into two categories.

First, the personal material: Jesus speaks to Helen and Bill's personal lives, relationships, interactions, and developmental issues. Second, the professional material: Jesus speaks to Helen and Bill's background in psychology, explaining how the *Course* relates to Freud, Jung, Rank, and others. Most of the personal and professional material has been removed from the standard

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A Course In Miracles®

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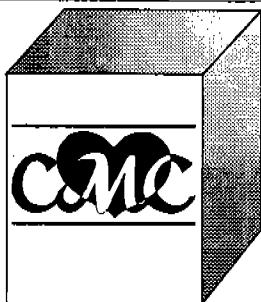
San Francisco Meetings

EDITORIAL CREDITS

Editors: Rev. Tony Ponticello & Rev. Larry Bedini

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T=Text, W=Workbook, M=Manual

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2004 Income & Expenses

Jan. thru Jun. -- Half Year

Income

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Other Donations	10,608.69	
Supporting Members	46,133.29	
Donations	Total	\$56,741.98
Books and Products		
Bookstore in S.F.	2,756.09	
E-Mail Orders	4,982.11	
Mail & FAX Order	4,008.08	
Books and Products	Total	\$11,746.28
Classes and Events		
Miracle Experience	12,395.00	
Classes, ACIM®	5,073.00	
Events	205.00	
Study Group, On-Line	25.00	
Classes and Events	Total	\$17,698.00
Other Income		
Center Rental	525.00	
Shipping Income	1,163.05	
Interest	202.77	
Advertising Sales	195.04	
Refresh / Candles / Pay Phone	20.36	
Special Income (sale of car)	1,571.50	
Misc. Income	31.06	
Other Income	Total	\$3,708.78

Income **Grand Total** **\$89,895.04**

Expenses

Teacher/Minister Comp.		
Rev. Tony Ponticello	13,432.50	
Rev. Larry Bedini	12,817.00	
Employees	3,884.98	
Payroll Taxes	822.82	
Benefits / Insurance	2,471.00	
Private Contractors (Other)	4,587.50	
Teacher/Min. Comp.	Total	\$38,015.80
Fixed Expenses		
Rent Paid	11,750.00	
Depreciation	4,252.85	
Utilities	3,379.11	
Insurance	2,617.54	
On-Line	1,163.62	
Licenses and Fees	1,475.64	
Fixed Expenses	Total	\$24,638.76
Miracles Monthly		4,942.81
General Expenses		
Purchases - Books	7,802.97	
Retreat Facility and Meals	8,295.00	
Supplies & Services	7,712.65	
Community Gifts	566.00	
Postage	4,681.27	
Car Expenses	2,713.81	
Meals & Travel, Gifts	980.97	
Publicity	1,449.00	
Expense - Misc.	165.08	
General Expenses	Total	\$34,366.75

Expenses **Grand Total** **\$101,964.12**

Income Remaining **(\$12,069.08)**

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Course.

- The language in the early portions is more informal and less elegant than in the standard *Course*. These early portions have been edited on an almost line-by-line basis, to make the language more formal.

The major differences between the *Urtext* and the standard *Course* are found almost exclusively in the first four to nine chapters of the *Text*. I say "four to nine" because the amount of editing tapers off gradually. In the first four chapters, about 30,000 words have been deleted (the equivalent of 75 pages). The amount of deleted material decreases until, in Chapter 9, only about 200 words are removed. In Chapter 10, only 37 words are removed.

Helen then retyped the *Urtext* and, according to Ken Wapnick, "edited as she went along."⁴ This, then, effectively produced a new version, which I will call simply, "the second draft." Some suspect that the *Urtext* currently available on the Internet is actually a combination of portions of the *Urtext* and portions of the second draft.

The Hugh Lynn Cayce Version

The *Hugh Lynn Cayce Version* is Helen's retyping of the second draft. It was an attempt by her and Bill to turn the very rough original dictation into a clean and readable manuscript.

This version is named after Hugh Lynn Cayce, son of the famous psychic Edgar Cayce. Hugh Lynn had been very supportive of Helen throughout her scribing of the *Course*, and so she and Bill sent him a copy of the completed manuscript in 1972. They called this the *Hugh Lynn Version* and it has become popularly known as the *Hugh Lynn Cayce* or *HLC*. The *HLC* occupies a middle ground between the *Urtext* and the standard *Course*:

- Chapter and section breaks have been inserted in the *Text* (though not always the same ones that we find in the standard *Course*).
- Capitalization, punctuation, and paragraphing have been cleaned up somewhat. The amount of emphasized words has been reduced, for stylistic reasons.
- Most of the personal and professional material has been removed, about two-thirds as much as is removed in the standard *Course*. References to Helen and Bill have been deleted, so that the material reads as if addressed to the reader.
- The flow of thought in the early portions has been considerably smoothed out, though not entirely. For this purpose, a fair amount of material (about a thousand words) has been moved from its original context and placed elsewhere.
- There is significant line-by-line editing in the early parts (about half as much as in the standard *Course*). This editing consists of minor wording changes which rarely affect the meaning. For example:

<u>Urtext</u>	<u>Hugh Lynn Cayce</u>
The reason why a solid foundation is necessary at this point is because of the highly likely confusion of "fearful" and "awesome", which most people do make. ⁵	The reason a solid foundation is necessary is because of the confusion between fear and awe to which we have already referred and which so many people hold. ⁶

Almost half of the words in the original sentence have been changed, yet, at the same time, the meaning has not been altered. However, the editors

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have themselves inserted the phrase "to which we have already referred," and this is a problem, because there has not been a recognizable reference to the confusion of fear and awe.

Early on in the dictation, Bill was placed in charge of what material was included in the *Course*. In speaking of a piece of personal dictation, Jesus said:

Ask him [Bill] later if this should be included in the written part of the course at all or whether you should keep these notes separately.

He is in charge of these decisions.⁷

This has led many to believe that Bill was in charge of the editing of the *HLC*. Ken Wapnick, however, says that this instruction pertained only to that early time, and was not intended to place Bill in the subsequent role of editor. Instead, he says, Helen was the one in charge of the editing process: "You can perhaps think of Bill as her consultant."⁸ Helen later wrote about the process of editing the *Urtext* into the *HLC*:

I assumed the attitude of an editor whose role is to consider only form and disregard content as much as possible.... Bill was adamant in opposing any changes at all, except for deleting the too personal early references and correcting actual typing errors.... I wanted to change just about everything, but I knew that Bill was right. Any changes I made were always wrong in the long run, and had to be put back.... [The material] had a way of knowing what it was doing, and was much better left exactly as it was.⁹

Two observations come to mind from this paragraph. First, Bill was probably placed in charge of decisions about what to include because Helen "wanted to change just about everything." Second, Helen understated the actual level of change, which, as you can see, was much greater than simply "deleting the too personal early references and correcting actual typing errors."

The Standard Course (First And Second Edition)

In 1973, Ken Wapnick was shown the *Course* by Helen. During his second reading of the *Text*, he says:

I commented to Helen and Bill that I thought the manuscript needed some additional editing. Some of the personal and professional material still remained, and seemed inappropriate for a published edition. The first four chapters did not read well at all, in large part because the deleted personal material left gaps in the remaining text, and thus required minor word additions to smooth the transition. Also, some of the divisions in the material appeared arbitrary to me, and many of the section and chapter titles did not really coincide with the material.... Finally, the paragraphing, punctuation, and capitalization were not only idiosyncratic, but notoriously inconsistent.

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Helen and Bill agreed that it did need a final run-through. As Bill lacked the patience and attention to detail that was needed for such a task, we decided that Helen and I should go through it together.... I earlier quoted Helen's statement that she had come to think of *A Course In Miracles* as her life's work, and she approached the editing project with a real dedication. She and I meticulously went over every word to be sure that the final manuscript was right.¹⁰

When Helen and Ken finished the process, they had gone as far beyond the *HLC* as the *HLC* had gone beyond the *Urtext*:

- Chapter and section breaks have sometimes been changed, along with chapter and section titles.
- Paragraphing, punctuation, and capitalization have been polished. The number of emphasized words has again been reduced.
- More personal and professional material has been removed (half as much again as was removed in the *HLC*), resulting in a total of about 35,000 words removed from the *Urtext*. This is the equivalent of the current first five chapters of the *Text*.
- There has been far more reordering of material. Over 6,000 words have been moved from their original context (compared to 1,000 in the *HLC*).
- More line-by-line editing has been done, as much as or more than was done in the *HLC*.

This edit resulted in the standard *Course*. It was first printed in 1975 as what is now called the *Criswell Edition* (this is the version that was recently released from copyright), and was then published in 1976 as the *First Edition*. In between these two printings, the *Clarification of Terms*, scribed in the fall of 1975, had been added in.

The Second Edition

In 1992, the Foundation for Inner Peace published the *Second Edition*. In the introduction to a pamphlet entitled *Errata for the Second Edition of 'A Course In Miracles'*, Ken Wapnick summarizes the process leading to the *Second Edition*. He explains that the evolving *Course* manuscript had gone through several retypings before it was finally printed. Helen herself had retyped the *Text* twice (the second retyping being the *HLC*) and "none of these retypings was ever proofread." Then Helen and Ken's edit of the *Text* was retyped twice before printing, and these retypings were "also not adequately proofread." He then continues:

As a result of this long process of retypings, some material was inadvertently omitted. Furthermore, a fair amount of typographical errors went unnoticed. Thus, when the *Second Edition Of 'A Course In Miracles'* was undertaken... it seemed to be an appropriate time to insert the deleted material and correct all prior mistakes. To ensure that this *Second Edition* be as free as

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possible from errors, the three books of the *First Edition of A Course In Miracles* were proofread against the *Urtext* that Bill had originally typed from Helen's notes. All retypings, as well as Helen's original shorthand notebooks, were consulted to trace the errors and omissions that were found.

The *Second Edition*, therefore, contains 97 sentences and six complete paragraphs that had inadvertently fallen out along the way. The *Second Edition* also contains a numbering system for sections, paragraphs, and sentences, which was not in the *First Edition*.

The *Second Edition* also contains about 175 changes designed to remove the plural "you," so that "you" often becomes "you and your brother." This was meant to complete the process of having the *Course* address the individual reader instead of Helen and Bill. However, these 175 changes occur almost entirely in the *Text's* discussions of the holy relationship, which speak of two people mutually joining and helping each other. Unfortunately, many of these changes (years ago, I counted about 30) strip out that sense of mutuality and thus alter the meaning. For instance:

First Edition	Second Edition
And you will help each other overcome mistakes by joyously releasing one another from the belief in sin. ¹¹	And you will help him overcome mistakes by joyously releasing him from the belief in sin. ¹²
But first, lift up your eyes and look on one another in innocence born of complete forgiveness of each other's illusions. ¹³	But first, lift up your eyes and look on your brother in innocence born of complete forgiveness of his illusions. ¹⁴

THE EDITING

The Editing Instructions Helen And Bill Were Given

Helen and Bill were given instructions by Jesus for the editing of the *Course*. A close study of these instructions reveals two kinds of changes he told them to make:

1. Remove material intended for you (Helen and Bill) alone

Earlier, we saw Jesus saying to Helen, "This is a private point, just for you. It is not part of the course." We also saw that he placed Bill in charge of what "should be included in the written part of the course" – implying there were gray areas that required a judgment call. In another place, Jesus said, "Nothing that relates to a specific relationship belongs in the notes."¹⁵ But why remove these private points from the *Course*? The answer is simple: because they were of value only to Helen and Bill, not to the general reader. This important principle is mentioned in a couple of places. One time, Jesus told Helen that she was taking "much more personal than usual notes" and that these did not have "the more generalizable quality which this course is aimed at"¹⁶ – meaning, generalizable to others. At another time, she wrote down a very personal experience, but in this case, he said, "What you wrote can be useful to miracle workers other than yourself."¹⁷ So the principle was very simple: If what you write is so personal that it cannot benefit others, take it out.

2. Correct scribal errors

In the early weeks of the dictation, Jesus would often tell Helen that she had heard him wrong, and then correct what she had written, sometimes more than once, as we see here:

20. Miracles are an industrial necessity. Industry depends on

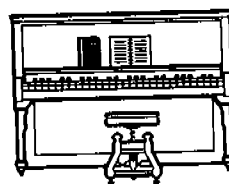
cooperation, and cooperation depends on miracles.¹⁸

Correction: And don't lose sight of the emphasis on cooperation, or the not singular. That point about "industrial necessity" should read "corporate," referring to the body of Christ which is a way of referring to the Church. But the Church of God is only the sum of the souls he created, which is the corporate body of Christ. Correct to read: "A Miracle makes souls one in

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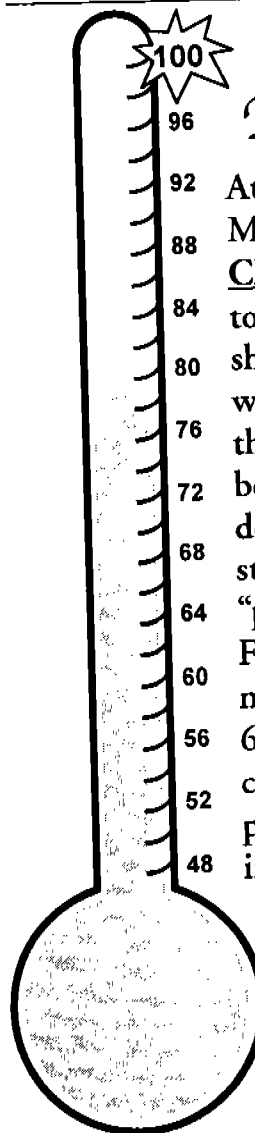
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• If you take down scribal errors, correct them.
The problem is not that the editors didn't carry out these instructions – I think they did. The problem is that they went way beyond these

Urtext	Standard Course	Nature Of Error
<p>"Lead us not into temptation" means "guide us out of our own errors"... "Take up they cross and follow me" should be interpreted to read "Recognize your errors and choose to abandon them by following My guidance."⁴⁰</p> <p><u>Denial</u> of the error results in projection. <u>Correc-tion</u> of the error brings release. ["The error" is the error responsible for sexual pleasure.]⁴²</p> <p>All material means which man accepts as remedies for bodily ills are simply restatements of magic principles. It was the first level of error to believe the body created its own illness. Thereafter, it is a second misstep to attempt to heal it through non-creative agents.⁴⁴</p>	<p>"Lead us not into temptation" means "Recognize your errors and choose to abandon them by following my guidance."⁴¹</p> <p>Denial of Self results in illusions while correction of error brings release from it.⁴³</p> <p>All material means that you accept as remedies for bodily ills are restatements of magic principles. This is the first step in believing that the body makes its own illness. It is a second misstep to attempt to heal it through non-creative agents.⁴⁵</p>	<p>"Lead us not into temptation" has been assigned the interpretation originally given for "Take up thy cross and follow me."</p> <p>In the original, you refuse to face within yourself the error behind sexual pleasure, and so you project this error outward. In the edited version, however, you refuse to acknowledge your true Self and thereby fall into illusions.</p> <p>In the original, there are two missteps. First, you believe the body created its own illness. Second, you attempt to heal it through non-creative agents. In the edited version, however, both steps are now the same. First step: trying to remedy bodily ills by using "material means." Second step: trying to heal the body through "non-creative agents."</p>

EVALUATION

Now that we have looked at the editing, what do we make of it? Was it an ideal editing job? Or has it perhaps altered the *Course's* message? Such questions seem inappropriate if you believe that Jesus specifically guided all the editing. However, the editors never really claimed that. In *Absence from Felicity*, Ken Wapnick claims simply, "We both felt [Jesus'] presence guiding us in this work."⁴⁶ He has clarified this further, saying, "Helen's experience was that she was guided all the way through the editing. When she felt she was not clear about the guidance, she would ask specifically, and this specific asking was relatively infrequent."⁴⁷

The Guiding Rule Behind The Editing

We saw earlier that the instructions that Jesus gave for the editing were as follows:

- If what you write is so personal that it cannot benefit others, take it out.

instructions. Jesus said the teachings on sex were something that "the miracle worker must understand,"⁴⁸ but they were taken out. There was a prayer that he called "the door that leads out of the desert forever," and which he specifically said "can be useful to miracle workers other than yourself,"⁴⁹ but it was not included. A close review of the various kinds of changes reveals that there was a single guiding rule behind the editing:

Make the early Course read as much as possible like the later Course.

The later *Course* is notoriously abstract, and so, under this guiding rule, almost everything specific and concrete in the early *Course* was removed. The language of the later *Course* is more formal and lofty, and so, under this rule, the informal, down-to-earth tone of the early *Course* was stripped out.

Now, there is nothing sinister about this guiding rule. When I review the changes made by the editors, I am left with the impression that the editing was a very sincere effort. It was tackled with a real dedication to doing it right and with a real honoring of the material on its own terms. It has not changed the message of the Course.

The problem with this guiding rule is that it is not the instruction that Jesus gave them. And it led to way more editing than his instructions alone ever would have. There is simply too much editing in the early *Course*. Did they really need to take out the equivalent of the first five chapters?

What difference does it make, you may ask? To be honest, it doesn't make that much difference. The *Course's* message, as I said, has remained intact. However, here is the difference it does make: When you encounter material that is very abstract, you immediately say, "Can you give me an example? Can you be more specific?" Well, the early dictation is full of

specific examples. When you encounter unfamiliar ideas, you want someone to relate them to what is familiar. The early dictation relates the *Course* to the ideas of other thinkers and to ordinary life issues. When you encounter the different writing style of *A Course In Miracles*, you say, "Can you give me that in plain English?" The early dictation's English is far more plain.

This early material, then, contains an excellent bridge into the strange and unfamiliar world of the *Course*. And for good reason – because that is exactly what it was intended to be for Helen and Bill. They needed the *Course's* lofty principles brought down to earth and related to their lives, their learning, and their world. They needed a bridge. Indeed, we saw Ken Wapnick above saying that the psychological material was just such a "bridge"⁵⁰ for them.

If Helen and Bill needed a bridge, surely the rest of us do, too. Yet for readers of the standard *Course*, this bridge has been burnt. The early chapters of the *Course* have been transformed from very specific and plainspoken into the cryptic material we find there now. And it is those cryptic early chapters that students face when they begin the *Course*. The

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the soul's three functions (knowing, loving, and creating) and theological statements about the Father and the Son (for example, "In the Divine psyche, the Father and the Holy Spirit are not incomplete at all. The Sonship has the unique faculty of believing in error, or incompleteness" ³¹). All references to meditation and most of the references to prayer have been removed. Also removed are a number of pages of commentary on the teachings of Edgar Cayce, which came because Bill and Helen were reading the Cayce material at the time.

Miscellaneous specifics

There are a whole host of other things that have been deleted, which I will simply class under "miscellaneous specifics." These include intellectual and literary references, including some brief discussions of mathematics and a bold interpretation of the real meaning of *Don Quixote*. There are many references to common expressions, such as "think big," and "live and let live." There are references to several individuals. I've mentioned most of these, but we can add Descartes and Jean Dixon (the astrologer) to the list. And finally, there is the following list of miscellaneous specifics: the Holocaust, daylight saving time, the CIA, sex crimes, kleptomania, bankruptcy, gambling, alcoholism, eyesight problems, alchemy, cryogenics, wars, money, voting, educational exams, ESP, and the psychological significance of names.

As you can see, far more than personal material was taken out. The real target was specifics. Virtually anything that was specific, concrete, or down-to-earth was removed.

The Reordering Of Material

As I said, over 6,000 words in the standard *Course* have been moved from their original location. This is largely because the miracle principles originally came interspersed with a great deal of related and unrelated discussion, and this interspersed material has all been deleted or moved elsewhere, reducing the section containing the miracle principles from 15,000 words to 1,400. Some of this reordering is definitely necessary, simply because the early dictation jumped around so much. However, I question the amount of it. Did so much material have to be moved?

Line-By-Line Editing

There is, as mentioned, copious line-by-line editing. The sheer volume of it takes one aback, as we are accustomed to thinking of the words of the *Course* as straight from Jesus. The following example will give you

a sense of the line-by-line editing. I suggest you read it in two ways. First, read down each column. Then, read across — reading each line as it evolves through the different versions.

Urtext	Hugh Lynn Cayce	Standard Course
You now share <u>my</u> inability to tolerate the lack of love in yourself and in everyone else, and <u>must</u> join the <u>Great Crusade</u> to correct it. The slogan for the Crusade is "Listen, Learn, and <u>Do</u> ." This means Listen to My Voice. Learn to undo the error, and <u>do</u> something to correct it. The first two are not enough. The real members of <u>my</u> party are <u>active</u> workers. ³²	As you share <u>my</u> inability to tolerate lack of love in yourself and others, you <u>must</u> join the Great Crusade to correct it. The slogan for the Crusade is "Listen, learn, and <u>do</u> ." — Listen to my voice, learn to undo error and <u>do</u> something to correct it. ³³	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. ³⁴

This brief example contains almost all of the important characteristics of the line-by-line editing:

Lots of editing. The sheer volume of changes is striking. Out of 68 words, 45 words have been changed (removed, replaced, added, or unemphasized).

Faithful. The editors have clearly tried very hard to be faithful to the meaning of the original. It is difficult to detect a significant change in meaning.

Slight alterations in meaning. While there are no significant changes in the meaning of our passage, there are some slight alterations. In the standard version, you join the great crusade because you have become unwilling to accept error (or lack of love). In the original version, however, both your joining the Great Crusade and your unwillingness to accept lack of love come from the fact that you have "been restored to your original state" (from the line preceding our passage). That's a very minor alteration. Slightly more significant is the downplaying of behavior in the editing of the final lines. This is a consistent pattern in the editing which I will discuss below.

Less lively, more tame. After editing, the material is generally less lively and spirited. In the original, you become unable to tolerate lack of love. In the standard version, however, you become merely unwilling to accept error. There is an insistent, emphatic note in the original that is consistently softened by the editing. This makes the Course sound more remote, more tame. Set next to the original, it feels sanitized.

Less specific. The removal of specifics takes place on a line-by-line basis. You can see that here. The Crusade no longer has a "slogan," and there is no longer a "party" with "workers." The familiar cultural image of a political party on a crusade, with busy workers chanting their slogan, has been taken out.

More vague. Although the meaning of our passage has not been changed, it is somewhat less apparent. For instance, we now may wonder what "act to correct" error means. Does this mean physical action? The original, however, leaves no doubt: "do something to correct it..." The real members of my party are active workers." Yes, he is talking about physical action. Another reason for loss of clarity is the removal of emphasis. As our

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God," and leave in the next part about cooperation.

Further Correction: "God" should read "Christ." The Father and the Son are not identical, but you can say "Like Father, like Son." ¹⁹

This principle quite naturally extends to things Helen took down early on which are clearly in conflict with the message of the later *Course*. For instance, the *Urtext* says, "The Holy Spirit is the Bringer of Revelations, not miracles." ²⁰ In contrast, the later *Course* consistently characterizes the Holy Spirit as "the Bringer of all miracles." ²¹ For this reason, the statement that the Holy Spirit is not the Bringer of miracles was quite rightfully deleted in the *HLC*. Several chapters into the process, Jesus told Helen that her hearing had dramatically improved, ²² and after that, these kinds of inconsistencies gradually disappeared.

Having seen the instructions for editing, let's look now at what the editors actually did.

The Removal Of Material

A huge amount of material has been removed from the notes that Helen originally took down. We know at least 6,000 words never made it out of her notebooks, and there may have been many more. And there are an additional 35,000 words that never made it from the *Urtext* into the standard *Course*. What was removed?

Personal material

As mentioned, personal material that commented on Helen and Bill's personal lives, situations, relationships, and developmental issues was removed from the *Urtext*. This is fascinating material and deserves study in its own right. Much of it is only indirectly relevant to the reader – but not all of it. Some of it has been lightly edited and included in the standard *Course*. For instance, the section "Right Teaching and Right Learning" (T-4.I) was originally addressed to Bill, to help him with a class on abnormal psychology he was scheduled to teach. In my opinion, there is a large amount of additional personal material that could have been edited in the same way for inclusion in the *Course*.

Psychological material

There is also a great deal of psychological material that was removed. Ken Wapnick speaks of this:

This personal material also included many references to psychologists and various psychological issues and subjects, which were also not meant for the public, but rather were to help Helen and Bill make the bridge between their psychological understanding and that of the *Course*. ²³

This psychological material is fascinating. It discusses various psychologists, such as Freud, Jung, Rank, and the neo-Freudians. It discusses therapy, statistics, behaviorism, the hierarchy of needs, defenses, psychic energy, mental retardation, the Oedipal complex, and fixation. Two running topics are notable. First, there are several lengthy discussions of Freud, pointing out the strengths and weaknesses of his system and, at times, of his character. Second, there is an ongoing presentation (running through the first four chapters) of the levels of the mind. In this model, the conscious mind is sandwiched between the superconscious (heavenly knowledge) and a two-layer subconscious, with an upper level dominated by fear, and a lower level filled with pure miracle-working ability. Impulses from all three non-conscious levels try to stream into the conscious mind, but are often blocked by the "censor" or distorted by the fear-filled upper subconscious. Some impulses make it in, though, and the conscious mind

must choose between them.

Miracles come from the subconscious (below conscious) level. Revelations come from the above conscious level. The conscious level is in between and reacts to either sub- or super-conscious impulses in varying ratios. ²⁴

If the rule is to remove material that is so personal that it cannot benefit others, then much of the psychological material should probably have stayed in. True, one lengthy discussion (on the pathology around possession – of people, things, and knowledge) was actually labeled as "less constructive for most people" and primarily constructive for psychologists. ²⁵ However, much of the psychological material seems useful for students in general. My experience, for instance, is that students find the material on the levels of the mind absolutely captivating. Indeed, some of that material remains in the *Course*, only with the words "superconscious" and "subconscious" removed. So why not include more of it?

Life issues

Under "life issues," I am classing material on sex, homosexuality, selection of partners, the role of the teacher, and parents and children (one of the original miracle principles began with, "Miracles are a blessing from parents to children." ²⁶ Some of this material spoke to personal situations, but much of it discusses these issues in the abstract. So why was it taken out?

The most notable of these life issues is sex, which is discussed repeatedly. By the *HLC*, however, all such discussions had been removed or reworded so as not to mention sex. Yet this is not personal material; it is abstract teaching. Indeed, Jesus says that this material is crucial for all miracle workers: "I want to finish the instructions about sex, because this is an area the miracle worker must understand." ²⁷

What does Jesus say about sex? In essence, he says the sex drive itself must finally be uprooted, for our attraction to bodies essentially turns people into objects. Once the drive has been uprooted (which I consider a very advanced state), we see the only purpose of sex as to bring children into the world for learning opportunities. This may appear to be saying, "Control your behavior so that you only have sex for procreation." However, Jesus says the answer is not simply controlling yourself. ²⁸ Instead, "the underlying mechanism must be uprooted." ²⁹ We must reach a place where we just don't find bodies attractive anymore. I personally see this as consistent with the later *Course*, which talks about "when the body ceases to attract you." ³⁰ What happens to sex when you have zero attraction to someone's body?

Religious and theological material

Material has been removed that discusses angels, fallen angels, Lucifer, reincarnation, karma, spirit possession, speaking in tongues, witchcraft, auras, and Christian Science. A number of clear theological statements have also been deleted, including two mentions of

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passage evolves, the emphasized words go from eight to zero. While the lessening of emphasized words (a trend throughout the editing) is stylistically practical, the emphasis definitely enhances clarity. I have found many passages where knowing a particular word was originally emphasized unlocks the whole meaning of the passage.

Compressed. The editing results in fewer and fewer words. We go from 68 words (*Urtext*) to 47 (*HLC*) to 34 (standard *Course*). The same ideas get compressed into a smaller and smaller space. One unfortunate result of this is that, quite often, ideas which you originally had time to digest, now come too fast for you to adequately take in.

More formal, less conversational and plainspoken. Overall, the editing seems designed to make the early *Course* sound less informal and conversational. If you read the first and last versions of our passage above, you can feel the difference. For another example, a line that originally read, "You and Bill have been afraid of God, of me, of yourselves, and of practically everyone you know at one time or another"³⁵ becomes simply, "You have been fearful of everyone and everything."³⁶ The early *Course* now reads less like someone talking and more, in fact, like the loftiness of the later *Course*. The question is, which is better? There are times when I prefer the edited passages, but most of the time I prefer the plainspoken original. I like being spoken to in a clear, down-to-earth way in the early chapters, before the *Course* lifts off into the stratospheric tone of the later material.

Mostly unnecessary. If you will, go back and read the first version of our passage. Then ask yourself, what is wrong with it? How much editing does it really need? Does it need any? I personally don't think it needs much editing, if any. In fact, I prefer it to either of the edited versions. Now this is not true of all the *Urtext* passages. Many of them are very rough and obviously need cleaning up. However, my opinion is that most of the line-by-line editing was unnecessary. Think about Jesus' instructions. He said remove personal material and correct scribal errors. Does the editing in our passage fit either of those rules?

Editing to make content Course-consistent (in the opinion of the editors)

There are three other aspects of the line-by-line editing which I'll discuss. The first is editing to harmonize the meaning of passages with the later *Course* – part of the process of correcting scribal errors. The chief examples of this are the following:

- All (six) references to the celestial speedup have been removed.
- All (seven) references to the Record, which seems similar to the Akashic records, have been removed.
- As mentioned above, behavior has been systematically downplayed. In the first five chapters, references to "behavior" and "behave" drop from 68 in the *Urtext* to 20 in the standard *Course*. All (five) references to the "doer" have been removed. In Chapter 9, the line "This course is a guide to behavior" has been removed. I assume all this was done to fit with the *Course's* emphasis on thought rather than behavior. However, I think these changes are inappropriate, since behavior remains important throughout the *Course*, despite the word being rarely used.
- Some of the very first references to the Holy Spirit (in Chapter 5) speak of Him as an "it" that is simply "your own right mind," rather than as a "He" Who "abides in... your mind."³⁷ These references have been changed to read like the later *Course*.
- In the early *Urtext*, the world is sometimes characterized as being made by the Divine in response to the separation, as a teaching device to lead us out of the separation. In the later *Course*, the world is the

direct manifestation of the separation, although the Holy Spirit uses it as a teaching device. Because of this discrepancy (which may have come from the influence of the Edgar Cayce material, which Helen was reading at the time of the early dictation), four of these early references have been softened. For example:

<u>Urtext</u>	<u>Standard Course</u>
God created time so that man could use it creatively Time is a teaching device, and a means to an end. ³⁸	The purpose of time is to enable you to learn to use time constructively. It is thus a teaching device and a means to an end. ³⁹

Terminology

There have been a number of changes in the early terminology. References to "soul" have been changed to "spirit" or "mind." The words "create," "will," and "know" have been changed in deference to their later, more technical meaning (though not entirely consistently). "The spiritual eye" has been changed to "spiritual sight" or "spiritual vision" (the *Urtext* defines the spiritual eye as "true vision"). However, in five places the spiritual eye has been changed to "the Holy Spirit" (e.g., see miracle principles 38 and 39); these changes are incorrect, in my opinion. The ego was sometimes referred to as "he" early on; those instances have been changed to the customary "it." "Projection" was originally an umbrella term covering false projection and "true projection." The references to true projection have been changed to "extension." All occurrences of "foolish journey" have been replaced with "useless journey." The word "human," prevalent in the early chapters, has been removed. References to "the self" (lowercase "s") have mostly been removed. "Man" has mostly been replaced with "you."

Editing Errors

It would be hard to do so much line-by-line editing and not make an occasional mistake. Indeed, a number of unambiguous errors – changes in the meaning of the original – have crept into the material (I count 27 in the first two chapters). Here are a few examples:

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bridge they could have walked across has been turned into a river they have to swim. And I've talked to a great many of them who never made it to the other side.

How Did The Over-Editing Happen?

Many have accused Ken Wapnick of the over-editing of the early *Course*. However, all of the evidence that I can see points to someone else as being primarily responsible: Helen Schucman. I don't at all mean to malign Helen; she has given all of us an incalculable gift. I'm merely trying to solve a historical puzzle.

The over-editing was present from beginning to end, in the decisions about what not to type into the *Urtext* from the shorthand notebooks (Helen), in the editing of the *HLC* (Helen and Bill), and in the editing of the standard *Course* (Helen and Ken). And Helen was the only one involved in all three processes. Indeed, as we saw earlier, Ken Wapnick maintains that she was in charge of all the editing.⁵¹ And it is true that the same editing tendencies can be seen in all the versions.

"Helen was a compulsive editor,"⁵² says Ken. In regard to editing the *Course*, she herself said, "I wanted to change just about everything."⁵³ This compulsive editing got worse under certain conditions. Ken reports that, when telling her story with the *Course* in her autobiography, "her discomfort directly led to an almost fierce over-editing."⁵⁴ He says that, for this reason, the new edit of her autobiography that they attempted "proved in many [ways] to be even worse than the original."⁵⁵

Ken Wapnick says that Helen was "very ashamed of" the early chapters of the *Course* and immensely preferred the later chapters:

As the *Text* moves on, the writing becomes more and more beautiful, and the last half of the text is filled with passage upon passage in wonderful blank verse. This is not the case in the first four chapters, however. And Helen was always very ashamed of them. In fact, when anyone in the early days would want to see the *Course*—and she would show the *Course* to very, very, very few people (and she wouldn't show them the whole *Course*)—she would just show the really beautiful, rhapsodic, ecstatic passages. And she was always rather ashamed of this early part.⁵⁶

Part of what grated against Helen in the early material was probably its specificity. Twice in the *Urtext* Jesus tells Helen that her "thinking is too abstract."⁵⁷

Given that Helen's compulsive editing could become "fierce over-editing" when she was uncomfortable, how would we expect her to respond to her extreme discomfort over the early chapters? How could she completely resist the temptation to make them read like the later chapters that she so vastly preferred? And isn't it odd that the very thing we would expect from her—the attempt to make the early *Course* read like the later *Course*—is the guiding rule that can be observed in all the editing? Ken Wapnick claims that Helen "was able to resist [her] compulsivity during the editing of the *Course*,"⁵⁸ but, based on the evidence, I don't think she was able to resist it completely.

What Now?

Is there an ideal version of *A Course In Miracles*? I think the simple answer is: yes, any version that you actually use. In the end, of course, the important thing is actually doing the *Course*, not discussing its editing. For now, I myself will continue to teach from the standard *Course*, though supplemented by material from the *Urtext*.

Ideally, though, I think there should be a new edit of the *Course*, one that does not overstep Jesus' editing instructions, one whose editing is more

minimal. This way, students could enter the unfamiliar world of the *Course* by walking across a more polished version of the same bridge that Helen and Bill crossed. My reasons for thinking a new edit is called for should be obvious by now, but there is one major reason I have not mentioned.

Part of the need for the *Second Edition*, as we saw earlier, was that a kind of telephone game had occurred with the retypings of the *Text*. There were four retypings, two of which were not proofread and two of which were not adequately proofread. This meant that errors (typographical errors and inadvertent omissions of material), rather than being corrected, simply accumulated with each new retyping. Hence, for the *Second Edition*, proofreaders went back to the beginning to catch all the errors: "The three books of the *First Edition Of A Course In Miracles* were proofread against the *Urtext* that Bill had originally typed from Helen's notes."⁵⁹

What I have not yet mentioned is that a similar telephone game occurred with the editing of the *Course*. A close comparison of the different versions reveals that each version was edited only by consulting the most recent version, a fact that Ken Wapnick has confirmed.⁶⁰ This means that the second draft was edited only by consulting the *Urtext*, not the shorthand notebooks. The *HLC* was edited only by consulting the second draft, not the *Urtext* or the shorthand notebooks. The standard *Course* was edited only by consulting the *HLC*, not the second draft, the *Urtext*, or the shorthand notebooks. If you look at the "Great Crusade" passage above, you can see this. Notice how, once material drops out, it stays out; it is not put back in. Notice how, once even the most minor changes are made, they are not undone; they either remain or are changed further. And what you see in this one passage is true all the way through.

So there was a kind of telephone game, which in this case means that imperfect editing decisions, rather than being corrected, simply compounded as the chain grew longer. Therefore, just as someone went back to the beginning to catch all the typos for the *Second Edition*, so someone needs to go back to the beginning (in this case, to the shorthand notebooks) and re-examine all the editing decisions. This new edit should receive the care befitting the scriptural status the *Course* has acquired for so many thousands of seekers, the kind of care you would associate with a new translation of the *Bible*.

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not just
about angels



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At the very least, there should be an authorized version of the shorthand notebooks, the *Urtext*, and the *HLC*. This would guarantee that we have complete and accurate versions of the *Urtext* and *HLC*, and would also make the shorthand notebooks publicly available.

Given that the earlier versions are still under copyright (although the *HLC*'s copyright is uncertain), I have difficulty imagining that a new edit will be undertaken. Where does that leave us? Here, as with so many other places, we can turn to Jesus' own words. Once, when Helen feared that she was hearing Jesus incorrectly, he said:

Contradictions in my words mean lack of understanding, or scribal failures, which I make every effort to correct. But they are still not crucial. The Bible has the same problem, I assure you, and it's still being edited. Consider the power of my Word, in that it has withstood all the attacks of error, and is the Source of Truth.⁶¹

Correcting the errors in the *Course* is important but "not crucial." Because of the power of his Word, the truth will get through anyway. After all, his Word in the Bible is still "the Source of Truth," despite its scribal errors, which are still being edited out.

Jesus also discussed the editing of the Edgar Cayce readings. He claimed that "Cayce was a somewhat erratic listener,"⁶² and that therefore his readings needed to be edited and "purged of their essential errors."⁶³ Jesus concluded, "When the time comes that this can be corrected to the point of real safety, I assure you it will be accomplished"⁶⁴ – even though Cayce had by this point been dead for twenty years. Jesus later compared the editing of the Cayce readings to the editing of the *Course*:

I told you I would edit the notes with you when it was helpful to do so.... I have already told you in connection with Cayce that out of respect for his great efforts on My behalf I would not let his life-work lead to anything but truth in the end. These notes are part of your life-work, and I will treat them with equal respect.⁶⁵

Jesus, therefore, likened the editing of two sets of teachings – the *Bible* and the Cayce readings – to the editing of *A Course In Miracles*. And with both, he spoke of them being edited long after their authors were gone. Clearly, he carries a very long-term perspective on such matters. If a few decades or even a few centuries pass before an ideal edit can be done, so be it. For now, then, the *Course*'s editing imperfections are not crucial, but at some point, Jesus will make sure the *Course* is placed in its ideal form. For we have his promise that he would not let Helen's "life-work lead to anything but truth in the end."

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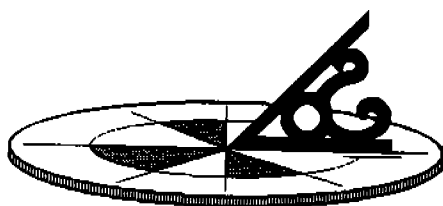
Footnotes:

1. Kenneth Wapnick, Ph.D., "The Urtext and the Early Chapters of the Text of A Course In Miracles." This is an excerpt from the introduction to the 32-part cassette tape series entitled "Classes on the Text of A Course In Miracles." It is online at www.miraclestudies.net/urtext2.html.
2. Kenneth Wapnick, Ph.D., Absence from Felicity: The Story of Helen Schucman and Her Scribbling of 'A Course In Miracles,' 1st ed. (Roscoe, NY: Foundation for "A Course In Miracles," 1991), p. 220.
3. Ibid., p. 223.
4. Personal communication from Ken Wapnick, August 9, 2004.
5. Urtext, p. 120. For my referencing of the Urtext and HLC, I will use the pagination from an electronic version entitled, "The Sonship Gift, Step One," available at: <http://ca.geocities.com/dthomp74ca/>.
6. Hugh Lynn Cayce Version, p. 46.
7. Urtext, p. 16.
8. Personal communication from Ken Wapnick, August 9, 2004.
9. Absence From Felicity, p. 329.
10. Ibid., pp. 359-360.
11. Ibid., pp. 359-360.
12. T-19.III.9:6.
13. First Edition, Text, p. 393.
14. T-19.IV(D).8:7.
15. Absence From Felicity, p. 293.
16. Urtext, p. 16.
17. Ibid., p. 40. I have converted the capitalized and underlined words in the Urtext to bold / underlined.
18. Ibid., p. 6.
19. Ibid., p. 8.
20. Ibid., p. 42.
21. W-pl.106.6:5.
22. See Absence From Felicity, p. 294.
23. Kenneth Wapnick, Ph.D., "The Early Manuscript of A Course In Miracles Given to Hugh Lynn Cayce." This article can be found at www.miraclestudies.net/HLV.html.
24. Urtext, p. 14.
25. Ibid., p. 71.
26. Ibid., p. 23.
27. Ibid., p. 37.
28. Ibid., p. 31.
29. Ibid., p. 31.
30. T-15.IX.7:1.
31. Urtext, p. 113.
32. Ibid., p. 12.
33. Hugh Lynn Cayce Version, p. 4.
34. T-1.III.1:6.
35. Urtext, p. 103.
36. T-2.VII.3:4.
37. C-6.4:1.
38. Urtext, p. 4.
39. T-1.I.15:2-3.
40. Urtext, p. 19.
41. T-1.III.4:7.
42. Urtext, p. 38.
43. T-1.VII.1:6.
44. Urtext, p. 89.
45. T-2.IV.4:1-3.
46. Absence From Felicity, p. 362.
47. Personal communication from Ken Wapnick, August 17, 2004.
48. Urtext, p. 37.
49. Ibid., p. 40.
50. "The Early Manuscript of A Course In Miracles Given to Hugh Lynn Cayce."
51. Personal communication from Ken Wapnick, August 9, 2004.
52. Absence From Felicity, p. 360.
53. Ibid., p. 329.
54. Ibid., p. 1.
55. Ibid., p. 1.
56. "The Urtext and the Early Chapters of the Text of A Course In Miracles."
57. Urtext, p. 24. See also Urtext, p. 56.
58. Absence From Felicity, p. 363.
59. Errata for the Second Edition of 'A Course In Miracles,' introduction.
60. Personal communication from Ken Wapnick, August 9, 2004.
61. Urtext, p. 18.
62. Ibid., p. 138.
63. Ibid., p. 141.
64. Ibid., p. 142.
65. Absence From Felicity, p. 296. ♥

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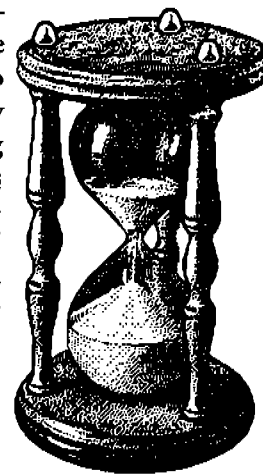
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Things Change

Once we used sundials and hourglasses to tell time and make appointments. ("Meet for the hunt when the shadow makes the second mark.") Now the world uses digital timepieces that rhythmically blink iridescent numbers. As the Community Miracles Center sails past it's 17th birthday (March 1st, 2004) we see many changes. With the advent of the Internet and the World Wide Web, spiritual education is different. Sixteen years ago, Miracles students were hungry and excited to see anything about *A Course In Miracles*® in print. They recognized the value of this healing information and supported it with book purchases and generous donations. Now there are pages and pages of "free" information available for anybody. Virtual libraries exist on-line and you can download it all free anytime. However, providing this free information isn't "free" for the providers. Developing Web pages is time consuming and expensive and Internet Service Providers

charge their monthly fees. Printing *Miracles Monthly* also keeps getting more and more expensive. Paper costs have risen and postage rates keep going up. Yet, things have changed and people now think "free" when it comes to the information age. It is time we all realized who is to pay for this information access. It's time we dedicated students took a good look at our responsibilities. Now, with this in mind we are asking for your help. We all need to assume the financial responsibility for making available this healing work. The Community Miracles Center needs your consistent, substantial support to keep all this "free" healing flowing. Please consider a one time financial gift below, or pledging regular monthly support for our healing mission. (See page #5.)



"I'm accept my responsibility and am happy to make this gift of \$_____ to the CMC"

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