



CONTENTS

The Creative Impulse: What Place Does it Have in the Spiritual Life? <i>by Robert Perry</i>	1
Circle News	6



A BETTER WAY

The Creative Impulse: What Place Does It Have in the Spiritual Life?

by Robert Perry

There is a deep-seated urge in our nature that we tend to associate more with art than spirituality: the impulse to create. Until recently, I didn't realize how much this impulse had shaped my life, and you may not realize how much it shapes yours.

Looking back now, it seems obvious. By the age of three, I was spending a good chunk of my days drawing, at first dinosaurs and then the Beatles. I wasn't content, though, just to copy, so by about eight or nine I was designing my own cartoon characters. By junior high, this turned into a passion for illustrating scenes from *The Lord of the Rings*. Some days I would get up and draw for the entire day. Once I started it was hard to stop. There was something extremely satisfying about having a finished piece of art that was born entirely from my mind and my hand.

A long time ago, this impulse to draw became the impulse to write. The two media are of course very different, but my experience of them is not as different as you might think. The main difference, I think, is that writing allows the same underlying impulse to express more fully. It lets more of me out. But aside from that, the process of an idea forming in me, followed by the urge to realize it in form, the drive to press forward until it's done, and then the satisfaction of the finished piece, is very similar, whether we are talking about drawing then or writing now.

This impulse in me, however, isn't confined to writing or art. It includes all kinds of things, like making food or just getting things done. There is a desire to produce, to accomplish, to bring about positive effects. Of course, this isn't my only desire; there are lots of competing ones. But this impulse to create is as powerful as any of the rest. If at the end of each day I can't point to something meaningful I have produced, I feel somewhat useless and empty. This, of course, is why so many men retire only to fall into depression.

I think we all have our versions of this impulse. You might want to look at your own life and see what forms the creative impulse takes in you, what kind of accomplishment is in your blood, what sorts of positive effects you feel compelled to produce in your environment.

Creativity and spirituality

As I said, we tend not to associate the impulse to create with spirituality, especially in circles influenced by Eastern religion. Rather, we spiritual seekers typically glorify the *receptive* over the *expressive*. By the receptive, in this case, I mean the ability to receive a higher awareness, to let in the experience of peace or bliss or oneness. We tend to see our job as getting out of the way, cleaning the windows of our minds, so to speak, so that divine light can flood in and fill our awareness. As such, we generally see the spiritual life as the process of becoming ever more receptive. We talk about letting go, relinquishing, surrendering, getting still, listening, ceasing to judge, etc. And we see Heaven as the ultimate receptive state, in which all impediments have been cleared away and we spend eternity in pure receptivity, basking in that oceanic experience we all long for.

All of this is absolutely valid, of course, and should never be minimized. Yet there is another side to our nature. This is the active or expressive side, and this tends to get short shrift in spiritual circles. We look with suspicion on activity, on doing, seeing it at best as a concession to earthly life and at worst as a yielding to egoic compulsion. We extol being

Continued on page 3

PUBLISHED BY

Circle of Atonement

P.O. Box 4238

West Sedona, AZ 86340

Phone: (928) 282-0790

Fax: (928) 282-0523

Toll-free (orders only): (888) 357-7520

E-mail: info@circleofa.org

Website: www.circleofa.org

Bookstore: www.circlepublishing.org

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

A Better Way is published monthly by e-mail. If you wish to subscribe, please visit our website.

CIRCLE OF ATONEMENT

is a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation dedicated to *A Course in Miracles*. It was founded in 1993. Its publishing division, Circle Publishing, was founded in 2003.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Robert Perry

Nicola Perry

Greg Mackie

André Gendron

Rick Baker

THE CIRCLE'S FINANCIAL POLICY

As stated in the *Psychotherapy* pamphlet: "One rule should always be observed: No one should be turned away because he cannot pay" (P-3.III.6:1). If there are any of our materials or services that you want but cannot afford, please let us know, and give whatever you can.

THE CIRCLE'S REQUEST

You can have a profound effect on our ability to extend Jesus' vision of peace, love and understanding into the world and in assisting the implementation of the Circle's Financial Policy.

The Circle is supported entirely by your purchases and charitable gifts, and we ask you to look within to see if you might be led to support our vision financially with a donation (any donations are tax deductible). We encourage you to give not in payment for goods or services received, but in support of our work and outreach.

MAILING LIST POLICY

The Circle will share its mailing list on request with other *A Course in Miracles* organizations, using our discretion and being sensitive to guidance. If you do not want your name shared in this way, please let us know and we will ensure it is not.

WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT SAYS

A Course in Miracles is a spiritual path. Its purpose is to train us to work miracles—to accept and extend to others the shifts in perception that awaken us to God. It consists of three volumes, which signify the three aspects of its program:

- ◆ Text : Through studying the teaching, the Course's thought system first enters our minds.
- ◆ Workbook for Students: Through doing the practice, the Course's thought system penetrates more and more deeply into our minds.
- ◆ Manual for Teachers: Through extending our healed perception to others, the Course's thought system receives its final reinforcement and becomes the only thing in our minds.

The Course's message is that the source of our suffering is not the world's mistreatment of us, but rather our egocentric attack on the world. This attack convinces us that we have defiled our nature beyond repair, that we are irredeemably guilty. Yet the Course says true reality cannot be defiled; it is a realm of pure, changeless, unified spirit. This realization allows us to forgive the world's apparent mistreatment of us by recognizing that it did not actually occur. And as we see this forgiveness come forth from us—see that we are capable of something genuinely loving and egoless—we gradually realize that we never defiled ourselves. Thus we awaken to the untouched innocence of our true nature.

REGULAR CLASSES ♦ SEDONA, AZ

Daily Morning Workbook Class

With Ben Bartle

Weekdays, 8:30 - 9:30 am

Contact our office for information
info@circleofa.org - (928) 282-0790

REGULAR CLASSES ♦ PORTLAND, OR

Weekly Classes

With Allen Watson

In-depth study of the Workbook of

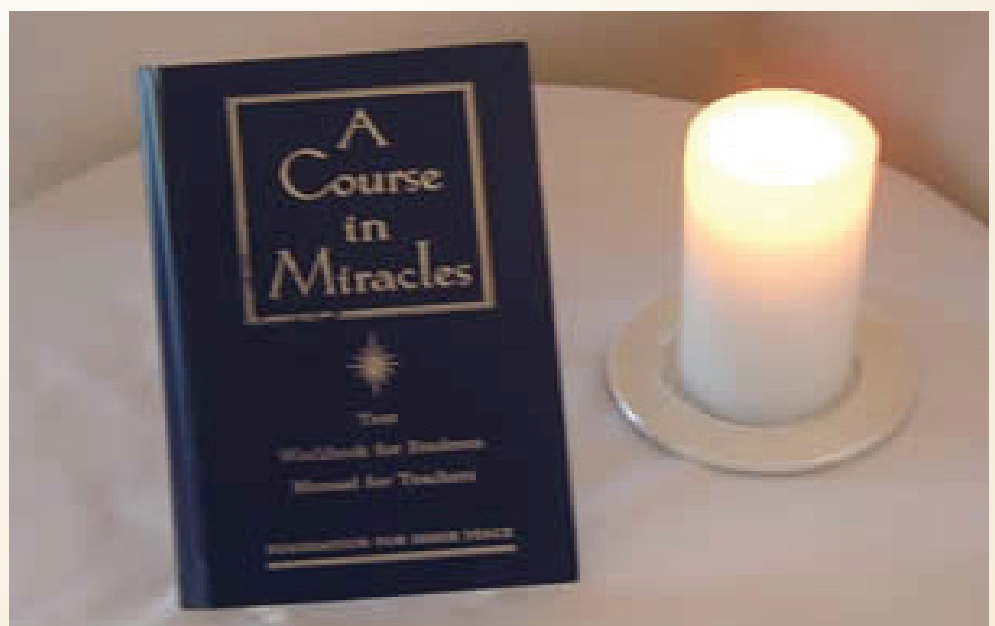
A Course in Miracles

Tuesdays, 10:30am - 12:30 pm

Thursdays, 7:00pm - 9:00pm

Contact Allen Watson

allen@circleofa.org - (503) 916-9411



rather than doing, and being willing rather than trying. We are especially wary of efforts to change things, smearing them with labels like “efforting” and praising instead the virtues of acceptance. We quote the Course as support, repeating lines like “seek not to change the world” and “I need do nothing.”

Yet let’s face it, the expressive side of our nature is not going to go away. It is too basic to who we are. There is a fundamental urge in us to create—to take something valuable and precious inside us and express it on the outside, thus producing effects after its own likeness, effects that make a difference, that become our contribution to the whole. That is the creative urge as I understand it—to *express something important within so that it becomes something valuable without*. I don’t know why we find the fulfillment of this urge so imperative, but we do. And any spirituality that leaves it out is really excluding half of our nature.

I say that with confidence because my spiritual path, *A Course in Miracles*, fully includes this side of our nature. This, I find, is one of the surprising things about the Course. It sets forth a theory of the mind in which the creative impulse is portrayed as fundamental to the mind’s nature. And this is not just true on earth, but in Heaven as well.

Creativity in Heaven

In fact, it is especially true in Heaven. According to the Course, what we call free will is just the tiniest remnant of an unlimited power that was given us by God, the will to create. God Himself possesses the will to create, which is how He created us. He then endowed us with the same will, so that we too could create. “Your will to create was given you by your Creator, Who was expressing the same Will in His creation” (T-2.VIII.1:3). The Course says this will had to be free: “This requires God’s endowment of the Son with free will, because all loving creation is freely given” (T-2.I.2:8). In fact, creation is the very reason we were given free will: “Your free will was given you for your joy in creating the perfect” (T-2.I.3:9-10). Imagine that—the whole reason we were given free will was so that we could create in Heaven.

We Course students typically back away from this idea of creating in Heaven. We find the whole topic extremely confusing. I can’t count how many questions I have gotten about this over the years. However, I don’t think it is inherently confusing. I think it confuses us simply because it is unfamiliar. If we had read about it in lots of spiritual teachings out there, I think it would strike us as quite natural and understandable.

The basic idea is really quite simple: we create actual beings in Heaven. We extend our own being outward to bring about other beings, whose nature is then the same as ours. In other words, we do exactly what God did in creating us. *We extend our being to create new beings*. These beings don’t have physical form, just as nothing in Heaven has physical form. They are formless spirit, just as everything in Heaven is. True, the idea of formless spirit is hard to wrap one’s mind around. But the basic notion of “we create beings by extending our being” is not particularly confusing. When we talk about it in relation to God, no one says “What do you mean ‘God creates beings’?” We are used to that idea. But when we talk about it in relation to us—we create beings—we get very confused. I think, however, if we heard this idea from many quarters, rather than just the Course, we wouldn’t be so puzzled. We would probably just think, “How amazing to think I have that power, too!”

The Course returns to the theme of our creations again and again. It repeatedly tells us we were actually created *in order* to create: “God created you to create” (T-6.II.8:4). “Child of God, you were created to create the good, the beautiful and the holy” (T-1.VII.2:1). That is quite a concept to take in. The Course also speaks of the eternal importance of this function: “You who are co-creator with Him extend His Kingdom forever and beyond limit” (T-7.I.5:4). And it speaks of our joy in fulfilling it: “Its extension is your joy” (T-7.VI.12:4). “God, Who encompasses all being, created beings who have everything individually, but who want to share it to increase their joy” (T-4.VII.5:1). Indeed, the Course goes so far as to say, “Unless you create you *are* unfulfilled” (T-7.IX.3:6). It is hard to imagine any teaching granting a more lofty status to the creative impulse.

Sharpening pencils without ever creating anything

It is crucial that we let in the importance the Course gives our creating. Only when we acknowledge just how central the creative impulse is to the Course’s view of Heaven can we grant it its proper place on earth. Unless we give it a status at that ultimate level, we will always be tempted to treat its forms on earth as manifestations of ego, leaving us to either minimize their importance or guard against their danger.

Our will to create in Heaven does take forms here on earth. The Course teaches that this urge is so basic to our nature that we simply cannot turn it off. It is operating all the time:

While you believe you are in a body, however, you can choose between loveless and miraculous channels of expression [originally: creativity]. You can make an empty shell, but you cannot express nothing at all. You can wait, delay, paralyze yourself, or reduce your creativity almost to nothing. But you cannot abolish it. (T-1.V.1:3-6)

The urge to create is so basic that the Urtext calls it instinctual: “His instincts for creation were given him by his own Creator, who was expressing the same instinct in His Creation.” While we cannot turn off this instinct, we can misdirect it. To use the Course’s term, we can “miscreate.” The Course says, “Miscreation is still a genuine creative act in terms of the underlying *impulse*, but *not* in terms of the *content* of the creation” (Urtext). And miscreation, says the Course, is most of what we do here. Examples of miscreation include all manner of attack and projection, but they also include most of what we normally call creativity. The Course’s attitude seems to be that most artistic creation, scientific invention, and intellectual ingenuity is miscreation.

The essence of the Course’s critique of conventional creativity is that we are devoting our creative abilities to things that have no real practical value. The Urtext says, “Methodologically, man’s mind has been very creative. But, as always occurs when method and content are separated, it has not been utilized for anything but an attempt to escape a fundamental and entirely inescapable impasse. This kind of thinking cannot result in a creative outcome, though it has resulted in considerable ingenuity.” In other words, while our *methods* have been quite creative—in the sense of ingenious and imaginative—the actual *outcomes* haven’t been creative—in the sense of constructive or productive. In short, our brilliance hasn’t produced anything of real value. An example from Helen’s original notes will illustrate what this means:

Jack and other very eminent methodologists have abandoned validity in favor of reliability because they have lost sight of the end and are concentrating on the means.

Remember the story about the artist who kept devoting himself to inventing better and better ways of sharpening pencils. He never created anything, but he had the sharpest pencil in town.

To understand this passage, you need to understand the terms “validity” and “reliability” in psychological testing. Reliability means that a certain test is consistently measuring *something*. The scores you are getting are not just random error. Validity, however, means that you are measuring the thing you were *trying* to measure. For example, if you conduct a study of the effect on children’s behavior of watching violent television, the measurements are *valid* if that effect is what they are actually measuring. On the other hand, the measurements are *reliable* if they consistently measure something, even if you don’t know what that something is.

Jesus is saying that what really matters is validity. After all, of what practical use is a test if you don’t know whether you’ve measured what you wanted to? Validity, therefore, is the end; reliability is only a means. To have validity, reliability is necessary, but it is not sufficient. Consequently, the statisticians who “have abandoned validity in favor of reliability” are like the artist who focused so completely on sharpening his pencils that “He never created anything, but he had the sharpest pencil in town.”

That is how Jesus sees so much of what we call creativity. We can pour an enormous amount of inventiveness and ingenuity into things that don’t actually deliver real results, that don’t truly solve our real problem. Indeed, in Jesus’ view, this seems to be how we spend virtually all of our time. The Course has many examples of us pouring our energy into what in the end is a colossal waste, so that, sadly, “time goes by without results” (W-p1.138.3:4).

The earthly reflection of heavenly creativity

What, then, counts for a valid application of our creative abilities in this world? In the strict meaning of the term, we cannot actually “create” in this world; that is reserved for Heaven. How could we possibly create infinite spirit in a world where only finite bodies exist? Yet although we cannot create here, we can perform a *reflection* of heavenly creation. What is that reflection? The following passage is a clue. This is miracle principle 15 as it was originally dictated to Helen:

Each day should be devoted to miracles. God created time so that man could use it creatively, and convince himself of his own ability to create.

What does it mean here to “use [time] creatively”? Clearly it is the same thing as devoting your day to giving miracles. I say “giving miracles” because the overwhelming focus throughout the Course is on miracles as acts of loving extension toward others. So the whole purpose of time, and each day in time, is so that we can give miracles. This is how we use time creatively, or as the FIP version has it, “constructively”—productively. (In the Course, “creative” almost always refers to producing something, rather than being imaginative or original.) And by being creative in this way, day in and day out, we finally become convinced of our “own ability to create.”

In other words, to be really creative here on earth, to be truly productive, to not just sharpen our pencils but to actu-

ally accomplish something, means *to give miracles to others*. In fact, when the word “creative” is used in the early dictation of the Course (before the term takes on its strictly heavenly connotations), it usually refers to “creating” miracles. Jesus talks about the “creative power of the miracle.” He calls the miracle a “creative act,” and also calls miracles “creative energizers” of others. The idea is that when you are giving a miracle to another, you are actually “creating” something. You are actually producing something. You are bringing into existence something of real value.

We need to pause to take in the enormity of this. Jesus is transferring the creative impulse from the artistic and scientific realms to the interpersonal realm. He is transferring it from producing forms to producing love and healing in others. This is especially clear in the following passage from Helen’s notes about sex and parenting, a continuation of the earlier discussion of reliability and validity:

Sex was intended [as] an instrument for physical creation (see previous notes), to enable Souls to embark on new chapters in their experience, and thus improve their records. The pencil was *not* an end in itself (See earlier section). It was an aid to the artist in his own creative endeavors. As he made new homes for Souls and guided them through the periods of their own developing readiness, he learned the role of the father himself.

As challenging as this message is to many of us, Jesus is basically saying that unless sex produces children, you are just sharpening your pencil (pun intended; Jesus said earlier that “the language here is intentional”). You are not actually creating anything. You are just spinning your wheels. To be truly creative, sex needs to be purely a means for allowing souls to come into this world and advance on their journeys. By providing them with a physical vehicle, and then by guiding them through their development, you are being so truly creative that you are learning the role of the Creator. Indeed, by producing children, you are coming about as close as you can to your heavenly role of creating beings.

Notice further that this passage overtly applies artistic creativity (“It was an aid to the artist in his own creative endeavors”) to the interpersonal realm. What is our art in this passage? It is “creating” something beautiful in the souls of our children. We can expand this, of course, to include our pupils, our patients, our colleagues, our friends, our spouses—our miracle receivers of every kind. Our true creative endeavor, then, is not to produce some lovely object; it is to produce something of God inside another person.

This will satisfy that creative impulse in us far more completely than our usual efforts at creating things. There is an adage that says, “No one on their deathbed ever said, ‘I wish I spent more time at work.’” The concrete things we produce will not truly satiate our urge to create. The legacy we leave behind is not something physical we can point to. It is always carried invisibly inside other people. Yet, as I think we all know, *that* legacy is the most meaningful and satisfying of all.

In another passage about art, the Course claims that God’s masterpiece is not any sort of physical form; rather, it is us, His Son. We are “His masterpiece” (T-25.II.5:6, 6:2, 6:6, 9:1). In the same way, *our* masterpiece is nothing that can be seen or touched. Rather, it is the lasting effect our miracles have produced in the minds and hearts of the people we encounter. A story told to me by a friend illustrates this idea perfectly:

I worked at a school for severely autistic children. I had a class of six children and most of them couldn’t speak, even though they were ages eight to twelve. I felt a particular closeness with the youngest boy in the class who was the most severely disabled of all of them. Some years after leaving the school I was thinking about him. So I did a meditation where in my mind I went to visit him. I found him asleep, and as I looked at him, I noticed that his aura had a pink area in it. It may have been a kind of pink oval around his heart, but I can’t remember for sure. I sensed that Jesus was telling me that was the love I had given him while I was working with him. I was told it was a permanent part of who he was now and it would help protect him through the rest of his life. It was a permanent gift, as it were.

For those of us who have a strong creative impulse in the conventional sense, this is a sea change in how to view creativity. Can we shift over to this new view? Can we see creativity as being not about things—paintings, books, meals, sales—but about using all such things as mere pencils for a deeper, holier kind of art? Can we see it as being about the light we leave behind in the souls of those we love?



E-mail your comments to the author at: robert@circleofa.org

Robert Perry. *He is the author or co-author of twenty books and booklets, including Path of Light: Stepping into Peace with ‘A Course in Miracles’.*

CIRCLE NEWS

I'D LIKE YOU TO JOIN THE CIRCLE COURSE COMMUNITY ... AND HERE'S WHY

As you may be aware, the last couple of years have seen us working very hard to breathe life and energy into something very important here at the Circle of Atonement.

That “something” is the Circle Course Community (or CCC for short). And, after two years, it now truly lives up to its name.

In other words, it's become exactly what we always wanted it to be – a genuine, nurturing *community* of like-minded people. A place, if you will, where those of us who see the Course in the same way can stand alongside each other, join with each other, and strengthen each other in our daily work of following our chosen spiritual path. A place where, by gathering together and supporting one another, we can each play our part, to the very best of our individual abilities, to help establish a genuine tradition for the future.

I hope that's the kind of community you wish to be part of. And if it is, I do so hope you will take this chance to add to our numbers and make our community *your* community too.

If you do join us, what can you look forward to? Well, you'll be free to take part in our regular phone classes as well as our wide-ranging blog discussions. You'll be able to listen, at your leisure, to any of our 71 archived CCC class recordings. You'll have full access to the 135 articles and handouts that are only available to CCC members. And you'll be able to join any of the work groups we've already formed. These include:

- The Teacher-Pupil Initiative (for teacher members), in which teachers serve as Course mentors for less experienced students,
- The End of Life Forum, in which those interested discuss how to serve those facing death,
- The Course Scholarship Project, for those interested in laying a foundation for a tradition of Course scholarship.

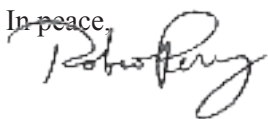
I'm happy to tell you we already have 142 members. But it would be great to have you with us as well. There are so many of you who care deeply about the Circle and are extremely supportive of it who aren't in the CCC. Yet I just have this sense that we should all be together. I would love for us all to be under the same roof, getting to know one another, supporting each other in this path, and joining in a common goal.

So, please, consider now: *should* this thriving and still young community of ours be *your* community too?

If your answer's “Yes”, please [click here](#) to visit our CCC homepage and enroll. And if you feel drawn to join us but cannot afford the full CCC membership fee we normally charge to cover our costs, don't let that stop you. These are tough times and it is our policy to not withhold anything we offer because someone cannot pay. Join us anyway. Be assured that your presence in the community, and your enthusiasm, are many times more valuable to us than your money. **Receive a free book by Robert Perry, Greg Mackie, or Allen Watson when you join us. To receive your free book, simply fill in the name of the book in an order note during the checkout process.**

Again, I hope you will decide to join with us. And in that hope, I look forward to sharing with you as a fellow Circle Course Community member very soon.

In peace,



Robert

PS. For a member's personal view of the CCC, see Amy's beautiful piece below.

THE CCC: MY SPIRITUAL HOME AND FAMILY BY AMY SPEACH

Before becoming a member of the Circle Course Community when it was founded in January 2008, I had been studying the Course pretty much on my own in my hometown of Syracuse, New York. I knew in my heart that this spiritual path had my name on it, and I recognized its life-changing potential. But trying to learn a new thought system in the midst of living an ordinary life was full of challenges that made my practice inconsistent and my progress limited. I often felt isolated and lonely, so much so that I sometimes gave up and just set the Course aside as too weird and too hard for me to stick to. Looking back, I see that I really longed for the support, companionship, and inspiration that I've found in the CCC, which has since become my spiritual home and family. But two years ago, I never would have dreamed an online community could come to mean so much to me or make such a difference in my life.

What is it about this community that I find so valuable? It isn't just the teaching, although I've been blown away by the quality and sheer volume of articles and other support materials made available to me through the CCC. I've loved the telephone classes too—not just for the knowledge shared there, but for the humor and kindness with which it is imparted, and for the opportunity to connect with others who share my spiritual path in the midst of an ordinary work week. And I'm especially fond of the blog section of our community, where Robert and other now-familiar friends so generously share their own journeys with the Course—their struggles and successes, their joys and insights, their times of questioning and doubt, and their glorious moments in the light.

But what has meant the most to me about being a part of the community is the people I've come to know and love here. I appreciate them for the work they do and for the generosity they've shown me. I'm grateful to them for learning to be teachers and healers and miracle workers, and for assuring me that I can do the same. And I honor them for the hope they hold in their hearts for a better world, and for their efforts each day to do their part in bringing it about by devoting themselves to their relationship with our Father, living a life guided by the Holy Spirit, and seeking out the holiness in their brothers.

On the outside, my life looks much like it did two years ago. But on the inside, I've been transformed by this community and all it's given me. My faith is stronger, my mind clearer, and my heart more open. And I have discovered a newfound sense of purpose that gives meaning to everything I do—the realization that I want to live a life that blesses, and the awareness of what that looks like and how to move toward it in confidence.

THANK YOU. WE MADE IT – JUST.

BUT WE GO INTO 2010 IN GREAT NEED ONCE AGAIN.

And I do mean great need. As you will appreciate, given the current economic climate, this has been an extremely tough year for us here at the Circle. Based on clear guidance, we've had to make some very difficult decisions. We've had to let go our office manager. And we've had to cut our teacher Greg Mackie's hours from full-time to part-time.

As you can imagine, those decisions hurt. Yet the truth is we had no alternative. If we hadn't cut our staff – and if we hadn't got such a wonderfully generous response, from you, to the fundraising letter we sent out back in spring – we would not have survived this year.

Yes, we have survived. Just. But, as we take stock and prepare for the coming year, huge challenges remain. We still have financial responsibilities to meet. We have a small fulltime staff of two modestly-paid people (Robert Perry and Dee Doyle), plus two part-time staff (Greg Mackie and Nicola Perry) and a few outside contractors (accountant and designers).

This small staff manages to keep all the balls in the air - all the programs, services and products that our supporters rely on. Services such as our new books, our constantly-improving website ... our online teaching programs ... our personal responses to individual questions ... our new articles ... our *A Better Way* newsletter ... our Course commentaries and our tele-classes.

And that's just what happens "front of house." This same small staff also keeps all the balls in the air behind the scenes: answering the phone, processing credit cards, packing and shipping your orders, producing monthly reports, and making bank deposits.

Most of the time, it feels like there just aren't enough hours in the day. And right now, there's certainly not enough money. Because, as well as having to cover those modest salaries, we also have rent and utility bills to pay, office supplies to purchase, and so on.

So, will you help us?

We recently sent out a fundraising letter in the mail to 1,000 people. We had generous responses from a number, who gave what they could to help. But that response – generous and important though it is – will not save us from having to make more agonizing decisions at the start of 2010. In order for the Circle to survive, in any form, which Circle service and activity will we have to cut? Worse still, which Circle member of staff will we have to say goodbye to next?

Those of you who know me personally will understand what a difficult letter I find this to write. I am not (I hope) prone to overblown expression. I certainly do not wish to sound alarmist. However, I do want to make all those of you who care about our work completely aware of the stark reality we face.

And the reality is that **we urgently need your help, right now.** So, if you benefit from any of the services we offer - or even if, simply, you believe the Circle's voice is one that deserves to be heard in the world – please, please consider sending us a donation to help us cover our day-to-day running costs. If you value our contribution to the ACIM community, please consider expressing that appreciation with a donation.

In particular, we need more monthly donors. Regular monthly giving helps us to plan our activities with far greater confidence. Rather than living "hand-to-mouth" we can be bold and commit to even quite long-term projects, knowing we have a sustained, reliable income to fund our work. A base of monthly contributors, so that we have income we can rely upon each month, is particularly crucial for a small organization such as ours.

For example, if just 200 of you read this appeal and then each set up a recurring donation of \$10 a month, it will give us a reliable additional monthly income of \$2,000 a month. That would make a massive difference. And that's exactly the kind of difference – exactly the kind of practical financial support– we need from you right now.

Will you support us? Indeed, will you become one of those 200 people? \$10 a month doesn't always buy very much. Maybe a coffee and cookie at Starbucks and a couple of other passing treats. Yet, if you set up a recurring donation to the Circle of just \$10 a month, and are joined in that by others who receive this letter, you will buy us a future. You will allow us to continue the work you value. You will save us from having to make further cuts.

Could you consider spending \$10 a month on us?

If you feel able to spend \$10 a month (or more) on us, please [click here](#).

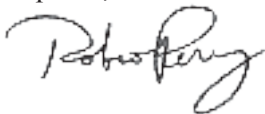
If you feel able to send a one-time donation, please [click here](#).

As a thank you for setting up a **monthly donation of \$10 or more** (or for your one-time gift of **\$50 or more**), we will send you a free copy of our new “Practice Tips,” a beautifully produced book-sized card insert for your copy of *A Course in Miracles*, with a long list of helpful reminders for how to repeat the idea for the day, when to repeat it, and why to repeat it.

I realize that, as well as being a hard letter to write, this is an uncomfortable letter to read. No one wants gloom – especially as we approach the holiday season. So let me close on a note of optimism. If you [click here](#) you can read a brief account of all the very important positive things we *did* achieve at the Circle in 2009, despite the difficulties. And just imagine: with your support *sent today* in the form of, say, a regular \$10 a month recurring donation, we could achieve every bit as much or even more in 2010.

With that thought in mind, let me thank you for walking this path with us. And let me wish you much joy and peace over the Holiday season and into 2010.

In peace,



Robert Perry

PS. If you can help us, please do so **TODAY**. Frankly, your support is so necessary we need to hear from you immediately, so there's no risk this message is put aside and then gets forgotten in the Christmas rush.

And still on the subject of support...here's a quick reminder of the several major programs we've created to aid you in your journey with the Course.

- [Daily Workbook Program](#): Recorded lesson commentaries and practice instructions, direct every day to your e-mail inbox. Your year can begin at any time.
- [Text Reading Program](#): Designed to guide you, in detail, through the Text in one year, so that you can finally get a deep grasp on this spiritual masterpiece. Your year can begin at any time. The Text has been divided into a weekday only daily reading schedule.
- [Manual Reading Program](#): The Manual has been divided into a two-day-a-week reading schedule.

For us, support is always best when it flows in both directions. So even as you consider helping us by sending your donation, please also take advantage of all the resources offered openly on our web site, and especially consider our educational and support programs for the practical help they can offer you.