

# ***ACIM* and Unity**

by George McCormick

*A Course in Miracles* and Unity teachings have more parallels than can be addressed in a short article, but some of the important ones are discussed below.

The Unity School of Christianity was founded by Charles and Myrtle Fillmore, in the 1880's, after they began to work with ideas about healing. Their teachings returned to the spiritual ideas of Jesus the Christ.

Unity believes that if God is everywhere, He must also be within everyone; that we create through the power of thought; and that Unity is Christian because it's based on the teachings of Jesus Christ and directs one to the Christ presence within.

Unity stresses the importance of aligning our thoughts with the mind of God and affirming the highest good for all. Unity seeks God first in everything, prays affirmatively, and gives thanks for what is desired.

Emily Cady in "Lessons in Truth" a Unity text, says, "In entering upon this course of instruction, each of you should, as far as possible, lay aside, for the time being, all previous theories and beliefs . . . If there is anything, as we proceed, which you do not understand or agree with, just let it lie passively in your mind until you receive the entire course, for many statements that would at first arouse antagonism and discussion will be clear and easily accepted a little farther on."

ACIM echoes this same caution. "Remember only this; you need not believe the ideas, you need not accept them, and you need not even welcome them. Some of them you may actively resist. None of this will matter, or decrease their efficacy. But do not allow yourself to make exceptions in applying the ideas the workbook contains, and whatever your reactions to the ideas may be, use them." (W-Intro)

Unity's approach to life is optimistic, positive, constructive, practical, and spiritual – it's often called "practical Christianity." It stresses our divine nature and our dominion over the conditions of our life.

ACIM says "You are as God created you. All else but this one thing is folly to believe. In this one thought is everyone set free. In this one truth are all illusions gone." (W191)

Unity stands firmly on a Christian foundation. It has no formal creed or dogma. It is neither cult nor sect. It asks no allegiance to personality or forms.

ACIM also advises against forms saying, "Routines as such are dangerous, because they easily become gods in their own right, threatening the very goals for which they were set up." (M38)

"Heaven is here," ACIM says. "There is nowhere else. Heaven is now, there is no other time. No teaching that does not lead to this is of concern to God's teachers. All beliefs will point to this if properly interpreted ... All beliefs that lead to progress should be honored." (M58)

Both Unity and ACIM seek to free us from lifeless monuments, religious routines, and meaningless forms of worship. They seek to liberate us from reliance on personalities, dogmas, and man-made creeds. They emphasize the importance of the message. They teach that we do not need to depend on anyone or anything outside ourselves and they stress our personal experience of God; a reliance on inner guidance and revelation; and a dependence only on God.

ACIM says "Whatever is true is eternal, and cannot change or be changed. Spirit is, therefore, unalterable because it is already perfect, but the mind can elect what it chooses to serve. The only limit put on its choice is that it cannot serve two masters." (T10)

According to Unity, Truth may be briefly defined as "the action of Spirit." The essence of Truth is that there is a higher law that governs and directs the universe and everything in it.

"Truth is that which accords with God as Divine Principle," Charles Fillmore said. Our access to that Truth is from within, both Unity and ACIM agree. When we understand Truth, Unity believes, we will demonstrate it.

ACIM is structured to teach us to consult and listen to the Holy Spirit which it identifies as "the Voice for God." (T70)

Unity stresses the Law of Cause and Effect.

ACIM tells us "a basic law of cause and effect is the most fundamental law there is" (T27) and that "Cause and effect are one, not separate." (T517) "This is a course in cause and effect." (T432)

ACIM says "Whatever you accept into your mind has reality for you. It is your acceptance of it that makes it real. (T77)

Unity tells us we have the power to choose and this directs the formative power of thought.

Unity and ACIM both use the analogy of our dreams. When we sleep, our dreams and dream figures seem very real. When we awaken, we realize they were only illusions.

Unity and ACIM would have us awaken from our dream of limitation and separation.

A fundamental belief of Unity is, “There is One Power, One Presence, One Activity in the universe, God, the Good; Omnipotent, Omnipresent, and Omniscient.

ACIM tells us, “All power is of God. What is not of Him has no power to do anything.” (T188)

ACIM identifies God as the only Cause and points out that God has only one Son which is all His Creation. “If all His creations are His Sons, everyone must be an integral part of the whole Sonship. The Sonship in its oneness transcends the sum of its parts.” (T29)

Charles Fillmore said “God is not person, but principle . . . God is personal to us when we recognize Him within us as our indwelling life, intelligence, love and power.” Principle is unchanging and unchangeable operating the same for everyone regardless of any other factor. God-Principle outside us is unchangeable law. God as personal Father-Mother is the Spirit within us, which responds to us and expresses as our individuality.

“Divine Order” is a popular Unity affirmation that means we place our complete and absolute trust in God and in His Will.

ACIM does not use the term “Divine Order,” but instead asks us if we can imagine what it would be like to be free of anxiety, care and worry, and to be at peace all the time? (T280) We can be when we realize that everything is for our highest good and that our life experiences are not by chance. We are always in the right place at the right time, according to the course, (M25) and everything that happens is a part of the Divine plan for us. “What could you not accept if you but know that everything that happens, all events, past, present and to come, are gently planned by the One Whose only purpose is your good?” (W135)

There is only one Mind in the universe and that Mind is God. God as Universal Mind and Spirit permeates all that is and finds Its highest expression through, and as, our mind, revealing Himself continually through our reasoning mind and the still, quiet voice of our intuition, according to Unity.

ACIM says, “Your mind is one with God’s.” (T70)

According to Unity, the more we become aware of the Presence of God in and

as us, the greater is our spiritual consciousness.

“ACIM equates our spiritual consciousness to our ability and willingness to listen to the Holy Spirit. “The Holy Spirit is God’s Answer to the separation; the means by which the Atonement heals until the whole mind returns to creation.” (T69)

ACIM continually identifies humankind as the Son of God. Each one of us is individually an equal part of the Sonship; all one with God and each other. (T29)

To Unity, we are each individualized centers of God-consciousness and spiritual power, as complete as we know ourselves to be, and we know ourselves only as we comprehend our relationship to the whole. It is in seeing ourselves as part of the whole that we can realize the true nature of our being which is spirit, or the image and likeness of God.

ACIM says, “You are one within yourself, and one with Him. Yours is the unity of all creation.” (W95)

Where Unity and ACIM differ from the traditional viewpoint is that Jesus was not the only Son of God or the only Christ.

“Christ abides in each person as his potential perfection,” Charles Fillmore said.

According to Unity, Jesus, the natural man of flesh and blood realized his Sonship and recognized the Christ within Himself. Jesus is recognized as our Elder Brother – our Wayshower – because He demonstrated how we can be aware of the Christ within us. He bore witness to the Truth that we are all sons of God, created spiritually in His image and likeness.

In ACIM, Jesus identifies himself as our “Elder Brother.”

ACIM says “The name of Jesus is the name of one who was a man but saw the face of Christ in all his brothers and remembered God. So he became identified with Christ, a man no longer, but at one with God.” (M83)

“ACIM identifies Jesus as a man who recognized the Christ in everyone and became identified with the Christ because He understood His oneness with God.

Neither Unity nor ACIM accept the concept of sacrifice. They believe that a loving Father would not require the suffering and death of His Son.

Both see the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus as the triumph of life over a belief in death; of Truth over error; of spiritual knowledge over ignorance; of the Christ over the ego, “not by attack but by transcendence.” (T192)

ACIM tells us that we don't have to believe God is Love, but we must accept it as a premise. It says, "But see the love of God in you, and you will see it everywhere because it is everywhere." (T120).

Charles Fillmore defined love as 'the pure essence of Being that binds together the whole human family.

Unity is a ministry of prayer. Prayer is understood as a conscious communion with God that takes place in the innermost part of our being. Charles Fillmore defined prayer as "the most highly accelerated mind action known."

ACIM tells us that prayer is our way to communicate with our Creator, and that it is through prayer that miracles occur. Prayer is the way through which Love is received and expressed; it is an ending of separation. (T1)

The essence of Unity's belief in healing is that our physical bodies reflect our mental attitudes. "Health is the normal condition of man, a condition true to the Truth of his being," Charles Fillmore said.

ACIM says "If God created you perfect, you are perfect. If you believe you can be sick, you have placed other Gods before Him." (T173)

It also says, "Strictly speaking, words play no part at all in healing. The motivating factor is prayer, or asking. What you ask for you receive. But this refers to the prayer of the heart, not the words you use in praying. Sometimes the words and the prayer are contradictory; sometimes they agree. It does not matter. God does not understand words, for they were made by separated minds to keep them in the illusion of separation ... the prayer of the heart does not really ask for concrete things. It always requests some kind of experience." (M51)

**True prosperity, according to Unity, is a consciousness or sense of well-being. We are prosperous when we are experiencing peace, health and plenty** in our lives. It is a consciousness of God as the abundant and unfailing Source of all our Good.

Charles Fillmore defined prosperity as "the consciousness of God as the abundant, everywhere present resource, unfailing, ready for all who open themselves to it through faith."

ACIM says, "Remember that spirit knows no difference between having and being." (T67)

But, what of the needs we perceive in our worldly experience?

Unity would have us realize that our worldly needs are supplied as we make them known to God. God already knows what we need, but our asking acknowledges our faith in Him as our Source.

ACIM tells us that God knows we have needs in this world because we have perceived it as a world of scarcity and as a place of lack. Only the Holy Spirit knows what we really need and will give us only those things that will not block our spiritual growth.

ACIM says “In time, He gives you all the things that you need have, and will renew them as long as you have need of them.” (T239)

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