

A few columns ago, I turned the reins over to my very talented friend, Trent Blanchard, MA so you could get a taste of what was to come during our upcoming seminar. Trent will be scheduling one on one appointments during his stay and I thought it would be lovely for you all to have a chance to see his style and experience his wisdom. And, as of this writing, the seminar still has a few seats left, but not many.

For the most part, we had tremendously positive feedback on his guest article. Thank you again dear readers for actually READING this column. And, I thank those of you who take the time to send us your thoughts and opinions. It means a lot to me.

However, in working with this type of material, sometimes issues arise that are meant for everyone's growth; my own, yours, and other "teachers". Recently, my friend, Pastor Miranda, graciously pointed out something in Trent's article which warranted further discussion and clarification. I absolutely agreed as I do not want my readers to be misled in any way, shape or form. Upon getting further and perhaps more "direct" information from my two great friends, I understood that I needed to learn, grow and stretch as this was an opportunity to educate myself further regarding the role of suffering and what the bible has to say about it.

I felt compelled to share first Pastor Miranda's clarification and positive encouragement followed by Trent's response. Also, please allow me to clarify that I feel blessed to have wonderful friends from all walks of life and more so I feel blessed with the intelligence and grace that comes forward from many of them. I can also tell you that of the many people I respect, both Trent and Miranda are at the top of my list. Please read through both of their responses with the same respect I afford them and know we are all coming from a positive place and want the best for all.

Firstly, here is Miranda's clarification: Greetings readers, as an ordained minister in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, I would like to respond to a paragraph of Susan's column written by Trent Blanchard that was printed on September 17th. I believe that Jesus Christ was misrepresented, and I would like to clarify Christian teaching on the subject. I thank Susan for listening to my response and for encouraging me to share it with you here. In responding to the specific paragraph, I do not claim to give approval to other content in the article; but I do want to speak up for the Christian faith in response to the content of that particular paragraph.

In the article "Interesting Times? They Are Happening For Us!" Susan Schafer, PhD, had a guest columnist, Trent Blanchard writing. Trent writes in the 8th paragraph, "As Jesus the Christ states in *A Course in Miracles*, the world is our mirror." The paragraph then goes on to say, "Anything resulting in suffering is a sure fire way of knowing that you are not in alignment with the Truth of who you are and that something is based on an illusion."

First of all, the readers of *The Flash* need to know that *A Course in Miracles* is NOT the Bible or any part of the Bible. It is a book written by Dr. Helen Shucman beginning in 1965 and published by the Foundation for Inner Peace in the year 1975.¹² Christians (Evangelical, Mainline, Catholic, and Orthodox) look to the

¹ According to the Foundation for Inner Peace website, Helen had an "unusual series of mental experiences that led to Helen hearing a by then familiar 'inner voice'". Helen understood this inner voice that dictated to her to be Jesus.

Bible to learn of the words, ministry, miracles, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Trent Blanchard was not quoting Jesus Christ of the Bible in the article.

Second of all, for our sake Jesus suffered, died, and rose again. I do not believe Jesus Christ would ever say or want to be connected to an idea like Trent was teaching when he wrote, "Anything resulting in suffering is a sure fire way of knowing that you are not in alignment with the Truth of who you are and that something is based on an illusion." Jesus Christ often taught about suffering, even his own suffering. As Christians, we believe that Jesus Christ suffered, died, and was buried. I believe that Jesus was very much in alignment with who he was as he went to suffer on the cross. One of the many times that Jesus teaches about this is in Matthew chapter 16 verses 21-28 in the Bible, "From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life."³ Suffering is not our hope or goal, but we cannot avoid suffering in a world where there are fallen people who sin and hurt one another and where oppressive social structures still hold sway. Jesus did free people from their suffering over and over again as part of his ministry (Mat 4:24; 8:5-7; Luke 14:1-4; Mark 5:29), and Jesus continues to work for healing in the world; but faith in Jesus Christ does not mean the end of all suffering in the present. Faith in Jesus Christ leads us to know that in the face of great suffering and grief, God is with us and we are not alone. We have a God in Jesus Christ that entered willingly into suffering for us, with us, to save us; and we have a God who brings Resurrection life in the face of death. Faith in Jesus Christ, invites us to follow Jesus and deny ourselves, to love one another as Jesus first loved us, to welcome the outcast, to love our enemies, to worship, to tell of God's love and grace, to help free those in bondage, to feed the hungry, to work for reconciliation. We wait for the day when all suffering will cease and all of broken creation will be made right; but in the meantime, we walk in the midst of that world where we experience suffering and follow Jesus in pursuing justice, freedom, healing, and life as Jesus did.

Thank you for reading. Please feel free to call or write with any questions (mirandaeh@hotmail.com or 815-369-5552), and please join us for worship at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church (118 E Mason St., Lena) on Sunday mornings at 9:30am or at any Christian church in the area as we explore God, faith, and real life together. Rev. Miranda E. Klosterboer, MDiv Pastor of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Lena, IL

And now, here is Trent's response to Miranda's clarification: Rev. Miranda is correct in saying that "A Course in Miracles" is not the bible or any part of it. Many do believe it was divinely spoken to Dr. Helen Shucman from Jesus the Christ to transcribe and be shared to specifically help people live a life based on love- of self and of others! As a result, many, such as myself, use "ACIM" as a "bible" in the way of looking to it daily for guidance on how to live a "Christ-like" life.

I specifically use "Jesus the Christ" in my article to not confuse readers with the Jesus Christ of the bible. I believe Jesus was a master teacher that came to the planet to teach the world how to love, how to be with one another and that we are all Divine beings of God- which is precisely what A Course in Miracles is. ACIM is a psychological teaching that helps mankind move from a thought system based on fear, to one based on love. In my opinion, how can that be looked at as negative?

² According to the Foundation for Inner Peace website which claims to publish and distribute the only authorized manuscript of *A Course in Miracles*, Helen wrote a Course in Miracles "through a process of inner dictation she identified as coming from Jesus." <http://www.acim.org/AboutACIM/index.html>

³ He goes on to teach them, "Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.'"

The concepts and beliefs I wrote in my article and teach are my, and many other spiritual beings, Truths - just like the concepts and beliefs of Rev. Miranda and many other Christians are their Truths. We are most likely not going to agree on doctrine and I am absolutely fine with that. What I do believe is most important to ask ourselves is the, "Are we living the main teaching of Jesus Christ, the Golden Rule, do unto others as you would want done to ourselves?" If the answer is NO, then we should put down whatever we consider a bible and make different choices in life!

That is what I teach! This is what I believe. I honor other people's spiritual path as long as it is done with love and is based in love! Blessings! Trent Blanchard, M.A. TrentBlanchard.com 760.481.4445
Skype: Trent4ChangeBe cool and connect with me at Facebook.com/Trent4Change & Twitter.com/Trent4Change Be super, super cool and sign up for my mailing list at <http://www.trentblanchard.com/subscribe/>

****Just before press time – Pastor Miranda offered this wonderful response: Dear Trent, Thank you for your graceful response. I am glad that we can work together to bring clarity for readers. Peace be with you as you continue to teach and to work towards love and healing for others. Sincerely, Pastor Miranda Klosterboer

And, if I know Trent – he will be offering the same gratitude toward Miranda. Blessings to both of you my friends!

Here's more news on the upcoming seminar with Trent and yours truly as moderators. . If you are interested in attending the Surviving to Thriving Workshop which is INKED for Saturday, October 25 in Lena, please contact us at 815 990 8732. We will limit the number of attendees to 35 so we can provide a lot of individualized and small group time for further facilitation of this skill set. So, if you are interested, please call Natural Healing Express and get on the Pre-Registration list. The seminar will be held at the Rafters. It is certainly not very often that someone as talented as Trent comes to our area. Please take advantage of this opportunity. Cost is 99.00. We will meet from 9:30 – 4:00 with a meal break.

Enjoy! Hope to see you soon and as always, please contact us via one of the following methods. Natural Healing Express: Phone 815 990 8732, email: skscham@aol.com 204 W Main St, Lena, IL 61048.

Website: www.naturalhealingexpress.com Facebook: Natural Healing Express