

ACIM & FUNDAMENTALISM



by Erwin Braker, *Fellowshipian*

Ever since 9/11 when we all were asking, “why do they hate us so much?” the word “fundamentalism” has weighed heavy on my mind. A dear friend softened my thoughts on the subject by holding up a mirror to show me how obsessed I was becoming. As *A Course in Miracles* teaches, our relationships are excellent tools for pushing our buttons and bringing to our consciousness negative thoughts that need healing.

Holy Spirit uses special relationships as learning experiences. Under His teaching, every relationship becomes a lesson in love.

T-15.V.4:5,6

Another powerful healing tool — humor — finally made me sane again on the subject of fundamentalism. In a recent trip east, I had a wonderful meal and evening with my sister, Ruth, and her son and his life partner Frank. For hours we engaged in my favorite sport: solving all the world’s problems with philosophical discussion. Every time we exhausted a subject I would conclude the problem was because of the fundamentalist. As the evening wore on and the wine bottles began to empty, we got a bit more raucous. Ever more frequently, we’d we raise our glasses with a great roar of laughter to blame yet another problem on the darn fundamentalist.

It became clear to me long before the evening ended that we were not laughing at the enemy out there, but at my own unconscious obsession within that needed healing. I was a student clearly ready for the teacher to appear.

At the beginning of my long trip back from Germany last summer help arrived. My granddaughter loaned me a copy of *The Battle for God* by Karen Armstrong. The book defined the entirely new concepts for me of “Mythos” and “Logos.” The author used these concepts to cover a detailed history of the fundamentalist movements

in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam and helped me see that fundamentalism is not in and of itself bad or new. I hoped my disdain for fundamentalism would lessen as I learned more about its interplay with Mythos and Logos, two different, complementary ways of thinking, speaking, and arriving at truth.

These concepts were developed during the Axial Age (700 to 200 BCE.) They were then considered essential to mankind’s survival, and they still are. If we keep confusing these two different ways of thinking, or attempt to depend on just one of them, we will be facing annihilation through the war that will end all wars. Not because of fundamentalism but because we don’t have our thinking straight.

Mythos is the realm of the subconscious, spirituality, and religion. It gives meaning and sense to our daily lives. Before current great religions were formed, the wisdom and truths resulting from this kind of thinking were preserved in mythological stories, which were never intended to be taken literally but often contained wisdom.

Mythos is a way of thinking that helps us arrive at truths by intuitive insight from the unconscious mind or flashes of right-brained creativity. It has nothing to do with logic but everything to do with inspiration. Truths arrived at by mythos can not be explained by words but only experienced and felt. For example “the feeling of love for all mankind as one” can not be explained with words or logic, but many people throughout history have reported feeling and experiencing such love.

Truths arrived at via mythos are validated by others having similar experiences. Truths arrived at via logos must be validated by mathematical or scientific proofs.

Logos is the realm of logic and science. It helped us create all of the conveniences and mechanical marvels of the modern world.

Mythos is about mystery. Logos is about reason. Karen Armstrong’s new book *A Short History of Myth* is a good quick read on this subject.

The world is a better place when we have available all the truths discovered by both mythos and logos. Problems arise when

we decide to accept only truths arrived at by one of these two types of thinking — or attempt to take a truth uncovered by mythos thinking and validate it by the methods of logos or vice versa.

Culture wars, divisiveness and alienation between large groups of people in the world today can often be traced to misguided attempts to meld Mythos and Logos. The whole campaign of fundamentalists to force educators to include “intelligent design” concepts in science classes is a current example of mixing Mythos and Logos.

The fundamentalist doctrine of the inerrancy of the Bible requires interpreting the Mythos of the Bible literally, which puts one in the awkward position of having to rationalize away the literal meaning of verses which give specific instructions on the correct way to sell your daughter or buy slaves.

Fundamentalist generated divisiveness can escalate to dangerous levels when the fundamentalists are also radical Muslim extremists who believe you’re either with us or against us. I’m going to Heaven and you’re going to Hell. Why should I not go to Heaven now as I destroy you?

What does this all have to do with the teachings of *A Course in Miracles*? The Course teaches we are all one with The One God. We are all there with Him now; we just don’t remember. Someday we will all remember, but words will not get us there.

“Instead of words, we need but feel God’s Love. Truth can only be experienced.” The Course is “a special form of a universal course. There are many thousands of other forms, all with the same outcome.”

(W-pII.int.10.3; T-8.VI.9:8; M-1.4:1,2)

The ACIM form, if you’re ready for it, may help you experience oneness sooner than you would otherwise. Meanwhile any other form that keeps you on a path of love, compassion, and acceptance will work. Finally, let’s all remember fundamentalism has been around for a very long time and it isn’t going away any time soon. Anger at what is going on in the world is not the answer.

“Anger is never justified. Attack has no foundation. It is here escape from fear begins.” (T-30.VI.1:1-3)

Instead of anger, let us use the mind training offered by the Course to help us follow the approach Gary Renard recommended last Fall in his FFT sponsored workshop. Let us use the teachings of the Course to train our minds to stop automatically judging others and instead automatically forgive others.

The teachings of the Course and acceptance of Truths revealed by both Mythos and Logos would go a long way to mitigating the negative effects of rising fundamentalism in the world.