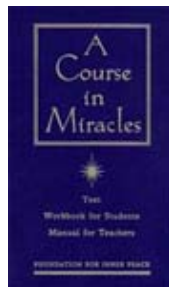


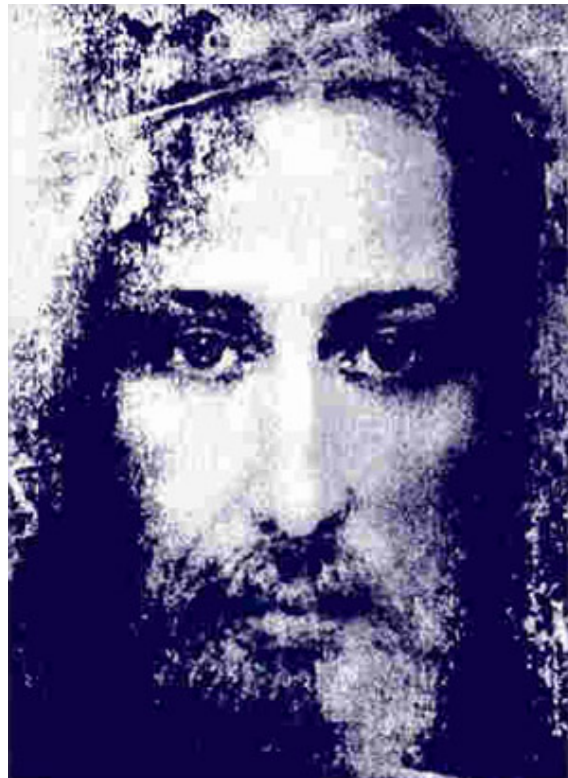
A Course in Miracles: a CIA exercise in mind control?



A Course in Miracles, published in 1975, is a book considered by its students to be their "spiritual path" - some have labelled it the "New Age Bible". It has sold millions of copies. But could it have been part of a CIA mind control experiment? One of its authors, was a key MKULTRA scientist.

Its promoters describe it as "A Course in Miracles is a complete self-study spiritual thought system. As a three-volume curriculum consisting of a Text, Workbook for Students, and Manual for Teachers, it teaches that the way to universal love and peace - or remembering God - is by undoing guilt through forgiving others. The Course thus focuses on the healing of relationships and making them holy. A Course in Miracles also emphasizes that it is but one version of the universal curriculum, of which there are 'many thousands.' Consequently, even though the language of the Course is that of traditional Christianity, it expresses a non-sectarian, non-denominational spirituality. A Course in Miracles therefore is a universal spiritual teaching, not a religion."

According to Dr. Helen Schucman and the Foundation for Inner Peace (FIP), she and Dr. William Thetford "scribed" the book by means of a process coming from a divine source through a form of channelling, which Schucman referred to as "inner dictation". Schucman described the divine source of her channelling as none other than the person of Jesus Christ - thus making one think that the notion that this is just a spiritual teaching "not a religion", somewhat suspect.



Channellers of Jesus Christ would - perhaps should - be treated with suspicion. But amongst the usual list of possible explanations for mounting a hoax, "A Course in Miracles" has an unusual candidate: CIA sponsored mind control.

Dr. William Thetford, co-scribe of the book, co-headed the CIA's "Mind Control" MK-ULTRA SubProject 130: Personality Theory, while at Columbia University, between 1971 and 1978. His colleague on this project was David Saunders. Thetford's Professional Bio, also available on the A Course in Miracles web site, makes reference to his involvement in a Personality Theory Research Project while Professor of Medical Psychology at Columbia University, but the information does not specifically cite this as a CIA MK-ULTRA SubProject - an omission we would expect to find. When we check dates, it is clear that A Course in Miracles was written in the middle of this project's existence. The next question should therefore be whether it was part of this project. After all, the project addresses "personality theory" and the Course tackles how heal the personality.

Some might argue that though the book was published in 1975, the sessions predated Thetford's involvement with the CIA in 1971. But can we be sure? The story goes that in late 1965, Schucman began to "channel" this voice in her head. From 1965 to 1972, Thetford directly assisted Schucman with the transcription of the first three sections of the work, which was in fact the great bulk of the material. But one year into his involvement with the CIA, in 1972, Thetford and Schucman were introduced to Dr. Kenneth Wapnick, whom they invited to assist with the editing that was required to render the rough draft of the ACIM manuscript into a publishable format. So though it is possible the actual sessions fell outside of Thetford's MKULTRA employment, the

promotion and publication fell squarely within it.

Furthermore, it has been alleged that among the subjects deleted from the original versions were remarks concerning "the CIA." When some of these original versions were first published on the Internet in the late 1990s, they were almost as quickly removed by a court injunction brought by none other than Wapnick himself.

The publisher of the Course was the Foundation for the Investigation of Para Sensory Phenomena. Some observers wonder whether this may have been funded by members involved with or employed by the Stanford Research Institute (SRI), Menlo Park, California, which at the time was home to the Remote Viewing project - itself sponsored by the CIA. One of the people with connections to SRI was Judith Skutch, the president and founder of the foundation. In 1973, Skutch was one of Uri Geller's first supporters. According to Andrew Tobias, most of Geller's private demonstrations were done in Skutch's apartment and it was this foundation that put up \$60,000 to pay for SRI's further study of Geller. As it is now known that funding for such experiments also came from the CIA, we can of course wonder whether the Foundation was a front for the CIA... which would mean that it was the CIA itself who published "A Course in Miracles" in 1975. That would mean that the Course was from beginning to end a CIA affair.



Could this couple have faked everything? Father Benedict Groeschel, a Catholic priest, knew Schucman both as a teacher and friend. He described William Thetford as "a mysterious character", and "probably the most sinister person I ever met." That is an interesting assessment. Only after he retired from teaching did Thetford's Columbia colleagues (who knew him best as a rare-books expert) discover that during the years they worked with him, he had been employed as an agent of the CIA - one who was, among other things, present at the first fission experiment conducted by physicists assigned to the Manhattan Project. Thetford also was "the most religious atheist I have ever known", Groeschel recalled. Equally, Groeschel uncovered that Schucman, though outwardly an atheist, had been an admirer of the apparition of the Virgin Mary at Lourdes - quite an uncommon fascination for a Jew. She was also embarrassed and feared, Groeschel remembered, that the book would create a cult, or a cult following, which of course it did. In her eyes, it was that "damned book".

Was Schucman the unknown victim, or active participant, in a government-sponsored experiment? As an associate professor, she definitely had the intelligence to figure whether or not she was abused.

Furthermore, J.W. Gittinger was the primary personality assessor for MKULTRA. He pioneered scientific methods to enable him to identify the most susceptible types of personalities for Dr. Sidney Gottlieb, one of the leading scientists on the MKULTRA project. Gittinger's work eventually surfaced as his "Personality Assessment System" (PAS). Two years after Schucman went to work for Thetford, they co-authored a paper on Gittinger's PAS, suggesting they at least knew of him... or may even have written this paper within the framework of the MKULTRA project.

So could the book be part of some mind control experiment? Author and Yogi Joel Kramer states that the Course could be considered a classic authoritarian example of programming thought to change beliefs. Long time teacher of the Course, Hugh Prather, notes that the Course students often become, "far more separate and egocentric", with many ultimately, "[losing] the ability to carry on a simple conversation". He admits that he and his wife Gayle, "had ended up less flexible, less forgiving, and less generous than we were when we first started our path!"

Furthermore, the book starts off as a psychic channelling session and this is an area that the CIA was involved with in the 1970s. So not only was Thetford an MK-ULTRA employee, the book itself, and the method in which it is said to have come about, also fits a CIA area of interest.



While occult phenomenon has long been ridiculed by the scientific establishment, the CIA seriously entertained the notion that such phenomena might be highly significant for the spy trade. The Agency speculated that if a number of people in the US were found to have high ESP capacity, their talent could be assigned to specific intelligence problems. In 1952, the CIA initiated an extensive program involving the search for, and development of, exceptionally gifted individuals who could approximate perfect success in ESP performance. The Office of Security, which ran the ARTICHOKE project, was urged to follow all leads on individuals reported to have true clairvoyant powers so as to be able to subject their claims to rigorous scientific investigation. The CIA began infiltrating séances and occult gatherings during the 1950s, which may explain

why they were interested in a bizarre UFO/medium case in Maine in 1959. A memo dated April 9, 1953, refers to a domestic - and therefore illegal - operation that required the planting of a very specialized observer at a séance in order to obtain a broad surveillance of all individuals attending the meetings.

During the late 1960s, the CIA experimented with mediums in an attempt to contact and possibly debrief dead CIA agents. These attempts, according to Victor Marchetti, a former high-ranking CIA official, were part of a larger effort to harness psychic powers for various intelligence-related missions (PROJECT SCANATE) that included utilizing clairvoyants to divine the intentions of the Kremlin leadership.

Early in 1981, a well-known syndicated columnist Jack Anderson said, "my associate and I revealed a Pentagon secret that raised eyebrows from coast-to-coast. To the sceptics who wrote in, no, we don't take hallucinogens. The Pentagon and the Kremlin are, indeed dabbling in the black arts, they are seriously trying to develop weapons based upon extrasensory perception...". A Course in Miracles seems to have been a part of this psychic warfare... the question is: what was its intended purpose?