



WORLDVIEW MADE PRACTICAL
Volume 14 Number 30
August 14 2019

The Truth About Marianne Williamson

By Tal Davis

On June 26th and 27th of 2019, twenty self-proclaimed Democratic candidates for President of the United States met in Miami to debate and explain why they should be nominated and elected to that high office. Ten aspirants faced off on Wednesday, June 26th, and the other ten on Thursday, June 27th. One of the candidates appearing on the Thursday night debate was best-selling author, speaker, and social activist Marianne Williamson (born July 8, 1952, in Houston, Texas). In January of 2019 she announced her candidacy. In 2014, she unsuccessfully ran as an Independent for the U.S. House of Representatives in California's 33rd District.

So now that her hat is in the ring as a presidential candidate, perhaps it is time to ask, just who is Marianne Williamson and what does she stand for? You might wonder why this website, dedicated to spiritual and worldview issues, would delve into the life and career of a politician. Are we going to analyze every one of the candidates for president? No, of course not. But Williamson is different in that her career has, for the last thirty years, focused on spiritual matters.

Actually, for decades Williamson has been one of the most followed-after leaders in the New Age Movement. Many Hollywood celebrities have praised her for changing their lives. Actress Gwyneth Paltrow, writing on an online website and podcast she and another woman produce called "goop," said this about Williamson and one of her books:

"Spiritual legend Marianne Williamson takes us on as only she could in this inspiring wake-up call.

Williamson argues for compassionate resistance, real maturity, and a greater understanding of the dichotomy that is built into the DNA of America. Her insight into crisis – and the people she sees us becoming on the other side of it – lights a fire." (<https://player.fm/series/the-goop-podcast/who-are-you-in-crisis>)

In 1992, Williamson wrote her first book, *A Return to Love*, which is perhaps the best-selling New Age how-to book of all time. Overall, she has written more than a dozen tomes, most of which have appeared on the *New York Times* bestsellers list. All told, more than three million copies of her books have been sold. In 1992, she appeared for the first time on the then top-rated Oprah Winfrey Show. Winfrey enthusiastically endorsed Williamson's books and lectures. That exposure naturally increased her personal brand enormously. Since then, she has been seen on numerous television programs promoting her books and philosophy. Williamson and Winfrey appeared together again in 2012 to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of *A Return to Love*.

Williamson was also the founder of a New Age organization called The Peace Alliance that is dedicated to promoting a "culture of peace." Additionally, she has started several charities including "Project Angel Food" which delivers free meals to people with illnesses (particularly AIDS) and disabilities.

Politically, Williamson is generally in line with the progressive ideas of most mainline Democrats. She supports climate change legislation (the "Green New Deal"), legal and tax-payer paid abortion, universal medical care, free college education for all, and an

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open border with an easy path to citizenship. She opposes mandatory vaccinations and funding for the military. In her appearance in the June debate, one of her most memorable statements, dealing with climate change, was this:

"I have had a career not making the political plans, but I have had I a career harnessing the inspiration and the motivation and the excitement of people. Masses of people. When we know that when we say we are going to turn from a dirty economy to a clean economy, we're going to have a Green New Deal, we're going to create millions of jobs, we're going to do this within the next 12 years, because I'm not interested in just winning the next election, we are interested in our grandchildren. Then it will happen."

The truth is, Williamson's political views are secondary to her spiritual and worldview beliefs. Here are a couple of her past statements. They clearly reflect her New Age mindset.

"You're a lamp; God is the electricity. You're a faucet; God is the water. You're a human; God is the divine within you. ALLOW the flow." Williamson tweeted in March 2010.

"God is BIG, swine flu SMALL. See every cell of your body filled with divine light. Pour God's love on our immune systems. Truth protects," she wrote in April 2009.

That being said, the most important things to understand are the sources of Williamson's unusual ideas. Essentially, all of her works and lectures are based on a 1975 New Age book and self-help program called *A Course in Miracles*, which she studied in the 1980s. In fact, the subtitle of *A Return to Love is Reflections on the Principles of A Course in Miracles*.

A Course in Miracles is a 1200 page book (originally in four volumes) written by the late tenured Psychology professor at Columbia University, Helen Shucman (1909-1981). Shucman had a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from New York University, and was esteemed in her field. However, beginning in 1965 and continuing through 1972, She claimed to receive revelations channeled to her from what she called "The Inner Voice." Shucman identified that voice as none other than Jesus! She dictated the revelations to scribes who wrote them down.

With the encouragement of a Columbia colleague, William Thetford, and others, Shucman formed an organization called The Foundation for Inner Peace, which published *A Course in Miracles*. A student manual was also produced to help learners better understand the teachings in the book.

She indicated that the voice had told her that the book's purpose was to "remove the blocks to the awareness of love's presence, which is your natural inheritance." (Foundation for Inner Peace, 1975) The authorship of *A Course in Miracles* was kept anonymous in its earliest years. Eventually the story came out and Shucman was identified as the author. *A Course in Miracles* is clearly a New Age system of philosophy. Here are three quotes from the book:

- 1) *"Nothing outside yourself can save you; nothing outside yourself can give you peace. But this also means that nothing outside yourself can hurt you or disturb your peace or upset you in any way."*
- 2) *"If you knew Who walked beside you at all times; On this Path that you have chosen; You could never experience fear or doubt again."*
- 3) *"The holiest of all places on earth is where an ancient hatred becomes a present love."*

(quoted at:
https://www.huffpost.com/entry/three-truths-from-a-cours_b_8461136)

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The ideas taught in *A Course in Miracles* are akin, in many ways, to those of a spiritual movement called New Thought, which began in the early 20th century. New Thought is a sort of mind-over-matter metaphysical movement whose advocates usually claim to be Christian and theistic, and that uses a lot of biblical terminology. Nonetheless, it actually is a hybrid belief system mixing Theism with Greek Platonism (Idealism) and Far Eastern Thought (FET). Its roots go back to the 19th century to a "mind-science" healing practitioner named Phineas Parkhurst Quimby (1802-1866). Quimby was probably the main influencer on Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910), founder of Christian Science, and on Ernest Holmes (1887-1960), founder of Religious Science. Later, a woman named Emma Curtis Hopkins (1853-1925), who had been a student of Christian Science, broke from that movement to espouse what became New Thought.

New Thought's doctrines of the nature of reality, God, and Man are thoroughly monistic and pantheistic, and resemble those of Christian Science. New Thought is also the primary philosophical and theological basis of the Unity School of Christianity. So, not coincidentally, *A Course in Miracles* is often taught in Unity Churches. Incredibly, it has also even been taught in some mainline Protestant churches whose leaders lack the spiritual discernment to recognize its doctri-

nal and philosophical problems. Marianne Williamson's books and lectures have thus widely disseminated the principles of New Thought and *A Course in Miracles*.

Whether or not Marianne Williamson's campaign for President will gain any real traction is yet to be seen, and is dubious at best. Nonetheless, it will give even greater public exposure to her ideas and books. Therefore, as the campaign goes forward, Christians should be aware of her unorthodox religious background and unbiblical metaphysical spiritual teachings. They should also apprise their friends and people in their churches about her beliefs. Whatever their political party affiliations, they need to be informed when deciding for whom to cast their votes in 2020.

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<http://www.marketfaith.org/non-christian-worldviews/the-gospel-according-to-marilyn-monroe-christian-science>

For more information on the history, beliefs, and worldview of New Thought and the Unity School of Christianity, go to these links:

<http://www.marketfaith.org/2018/03/do-you-know-the-daily-word-from-the-unity-school-of-christianity-part-1-pdf>

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