Welcome to *Divine Encounters: Mapping Your Spiritual Life*, a course designed to prepare you spiritually and emotionally as you begin your biblical and theological studies. You have a desire to know more about the Bible and to develop your relationship with God. Sometimes forward movement can occur most effectively after a backward look.

You will be invited in this course to create your personal life map. In this exercise you will think back on your life, focusing on various segments, and will recall certain relationships, events, influences, and insights that occurred during that time. As you review each life segment, you will begin to see that the hand of God has been at work at every step. Learning to recognize His encounters will equip and enable you to move deeper into your relationship with Him and with others.

All meetings for this course will be conducted online but, in a self-study format, you may begin when convenient for you and move at your own pace through the five lessons.

**Disclaimer**

You are about to embark on a journey that is both spiritual and emotional. We at CUGN are equipped to help you focus on your spiritual development, but we are not trained as counselors or psychologists. Therefore, if, as you visit events and issues in your personal history, you encounter emotional and/or relational matters that need to be addressed, we strongly recommend that you seek out a pastor, a counselor, or a psychologist.

Your mentor will be walking with you on this journey. If you sense a need to resolve some life issues, perhaps your mentor can recommend a counselor with whom you can meet. We encourage you not to ignore these issues, but to address them, because often they are roadblocks to spiritual growth.

**Course Objectives**

Many Christians desire spiritual transformation in their lives, but are mired in old patterns of thinking or are weighed down by unresolved issues in their lives. We believe that teaching that is transformative will include biblically accurate personal, emotional, and relational understanding. The teaching offered, the life-mapping project, and the interaction with a carefully selected mentor will combine to provide students with significant opportunities for self-reflection, for prayerful recollections, for relational growth, and for spiritual insights.
Upon completion of the course, you should be able to do the following:

- Recognize specific ways in which God has been involved in your life and experiences.
- Identify ways in which God motivates through divine promises.
- Define perfection in the context of spiritual formation.
- Create a life map recounting significant relationships, events, and influences in your life from early childhood to the present.
- Develop a healthy relationship with a mentor who will walk with you in your ongoing spiritual journey.
- Articulate the concept of spiritual formation and state its ultimate goal.

**Accessibility**

If you have particular accessibility needs, please contact the CUGN Registrar at the beginning of the course. This will allow us to work directly with you to make efforts to accommodate your situation and ensure as full as possible accessibility to the course.

**Course Lecturer**

Dr. John Worgul taught at Manna Bible Institute, an inner-city Bible school in Philadelphia, for two years before teaching at the Seminary of the East (now Bethel Seminary) for fifteen years as Professor of Biblical Studies. He continues teaching for Bethel Seminary as adjunct. Dr. Worgul began working with CUGN in 2011. His specialties are in Old Testament and Hebrew, and he has a keen interest in spiritual formation.

**Education:**

- B.A. in Bible and Economics from Bethel College in St. Paul, Minnesota, 1977
- M.A.R. from Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, 1979
- Ph.D. from the Dropsie College in Philadelphia, 1987

**Course Texts**

**Required:**

Worgul, John. *Jacob: His Family and Yours*. Westminster, Maryland: John E. Worgul, 2011. (Available only as an ebook)

**Recommended, but not required:**


If you wish to order the Richard Peace textbook, you may use the CUGN online store available on our website. For the Worgul book, go to Amazon.com for a digital download. Alyson Kieda’s book is available for free, located in the Before You Begin section of the course.
For additional reading and research:

Books about Spiritual Autobiography:


Examples of Spiritual Autobiography:


Books on Spiritual Formation:


The two books in this collection that are most directly relevant for this course are *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, and *Dark Night of the Soul*.

**Academic Honesty**

At CUGN, we believe all we do is “as unto the Lord” and we thus hold to a high academic standard of honesty; we do not tolerate plagiarism and cheating. Students found guilty of any form of academic dishonesty face consequences ranging from interaction with the Academic Dean to expulsion from CUGN.

Plagiarism: If a student’s work is found to be plagiarized, consequences will vary depending on the nature of the plagiarism.

If an offense is deemed unintentional, the student will have an opportunity to resubmit the work. A second offense will result in an automatic score of zero for that assignment, which may also result in failure of that course.

More serious plagiarism offenses could result in automatic course failure, disciplinary action, or expulsion from CUGN. Please view the [CUGN Academic Catalog](#) for a full definition and examples of plagiarism. If you have questions about plagiarism, or would like to request resources for learning how to avoid plagiarism, please contact our Registrar’s Office at registrar@cugn.org or toll free at (888) 487-5376 ext. 3.

**Course Methods**

Throughout this course, a number of methods will be used to engage the students in learning and processing information, interacting with other students, and applying the learning to their lives. These methods include the following:
Media/Materials
The course will include media presentations of lectures to be listened to and/or read throughout the lessons of the course.

- Audio-based teaching
  The primary teaching session in each lesson is provided in audio format. We also provide the option of reading the lesson from a transcript of the audio lecture (found in the course Audio Lecture section).

- Multisensory learning
  Because the primary teaching information is provided in audio and PDF text documents, students can choose the medium (or combination of media) that most closely aligns with their individual learning styles.

- Readings
  Reading from the required textbook will be assigned to students each week.

Interaction
Whether sitting in a traditional classroom or studying from a distance, students benefit from interaction and collaboration with other students. In order to meet this need in distance theological education, CUGN offers structures and resources to encourage effective community interaction in this course.

Course Discussion
This forum fosters peer-to-peer interaction in a global, threaded discussion. Students are required to respond to relevant questions posted by the instructors; students are also encouraged to read and respond to the posts of fellow students.

Reflection
Through journaling and the use of interactive exercises, CUGN provides many opportunities for students to reflect on what they have learned, what they believe, and where they are challenged. The goal of these reflections is personal spiritual growth and transformation.

Blog
Many of the assignments ask students to record their thoughts in a course blog. Students may use a paper notebook for this, or, as an alternative, they may use the blog to record thoughts and reflections as they go through the course. Blog entries can be viewed only by the student and by the site administrator, and are not graded.

Course Requirements
In order to receive credit, the student must complete the course requirements within a 90-day period. Those requirements include:

- Listening to and/or reading the audio lecture for each lesson
- Establishing a mentor relationship
- Reading the assigned text for each lesson
- Participating in and meeting all requirements of the Discussion Forum (see details below)
• Completing a life-mapping project
• Keeping a blog in response to reflection questions

Additional information about these requirements is provided below.

Audio Lectures
Each of the lessons in this course features an audio lecture of approximately 20 minutes in length delivered by Dr. John Worgul, a long-time professor with a focus on spiritual formation. These instructional lectures are required and can be listened to as many times as needed. The written text of the lectures as well as guided outlines to assist in note taking are made available in PDF format. There are five lectures in this course.

Mentor
This course requires that you seek out a mentor in your community with whom you can communicate by e-mail and/or telephone and with whom you can meet face-to-face at least twice during the course. The purpose of this mentoring relationship is to enable you to assimilate the teaching in this course into your life and ministry. Further definition of the mentor's role in this course can be found in the mentor requirements document available in the Before You Begin section of the course.

Reading
Study assignments covered in this course should be read in the context of the lesson in which they are assigned. In addition to the required textbook, you may be asked to read supplementary materials.

Discussion Forum
Discussion questions related to each lesson's lectures are integrated into the weekly course requirements. In order to obtain credit for the course, you must visit the Discussion Forum for each lesson of the course, and your attendance will be validated by your posts. You are required to post responses to all of the questions provided in the lesson's Discussion Forum. Each response should consist of two to three well-conceived paragraphs.

Life Mapping Project
You will develop a Life Map by reflecting upon and writing about your personal history as you recall events, relationships, and influences in various time segments of your life. Upon completion of your Life Map, you will submit a journal entry, of approximately 500 words, describing the project and the mentoring experience, and the benefits you sense you gained from both. More guidance concerning the project can be found by downloading the Life Mapping Instructions document here. Instructions can also be found in the Before You Begin section of the course.

Reflection
You will be required to keep a blog during this course. Your blog is available on the website for recording thoughts and reflections as you go through the course. Blog entries can be viewed only by you and the site administrator. Keeping a paper journal is also acceptable if that is your preference. At the end of the course, you will be asked to validate that you have completed the blogging requirement. The purpose of the blog is to help you reflect on what you are learning, what you believe, and where you may be challenged in your thinking and your life by what is studied in this course. The goal of these reflections is personal spiritual growth.
Grading
This course is offered for your personal and spiritual enrichment. Though it may be a required course for your program of study, this is a pass-fail course. No letter grade will be issued and the course will not be included in calculating your grade point average.

Other Course Requirements
Course requirements noted in this syllabus will be validated before credit is awarded to any student.

Single Course Requirements
If you are taking this course for Continuing Education Units (CEUs), or as a single course and would like a Certificate of Completion, course requirements noted in this syllabus will be validated before a Certificate of Completion is awarded.

Lesson Topics and Assignments

Lesson 1:
• Listen to Lecture One.
• Read Worgul, Introduction and Chapter 1.
• Participate in the online Discussion Forum.
• Identify and contact your mentor.
• Read Life Mapping instructions and/or view instructional video.

Lesson 2:
• Listen to Lecture Two.
• Read Worgul, Chapters 2 and 3.
• Participate in the online Discussion Forum.

Lesson 3:
• Listen to Lecture Three.
• Read Worgul, Chapters 4 and 5.
• Participate in the online Discussion Forum.

Lesson 4:
• Listen to Lecture Four.
• Participate in the online Discussion Forum.
• Read Worgul, Chapters 6 and 7.
• With the help of your mentor, complete your Life Map.

Lesson 5:
• Listen to Lecture Five.
• Read Worgul, Chapters 8 and 9.
• Participate in the online Discussion Forum.
• Submit summary paper concerning Life Map.

Upon completion of the course:
• Complete and submit mentor form.
• Complete and post all blog entries.
• Complete and submit course survey form.
Personal Reflection and Evaluation

The following guidelines may be of help to you as you prepare to make blog entries throughout the course.

To integrate academic studies with the walk of faith, you are asked to reflect on the content of the course and evaluate your life in light of what has been learned. These questions may help to guide your reflection process.

Step 1: Review
Think about the material you have studied in the course. Then ask these questions: What are two things you learned that you did not know before this study? What, if anything, in the course made you look at the church or something in the Bible in a new way?

Step 2: Assess
Think about your life, both past and present. Given the insights or understanding that you gained in this course, what changes do you need to make in the way you think or behave?

Step 3: Apply
What specific steps will you take in order to put these positive changes (from Step 2) into practice in your life?

Step 4: Record
Write your responses to the above reflections in your blog.

Notes Regarding This Syllabus

This syllabus is designed to provide learners with an overview of the course. Specific assignments are contained in each lesson.

Individuals taking the class for academic credit are responsible for the syllabus requirements of the specific institution through which the course is offered. Each individual institution has reserved the right to add additional reading requirements and to alter the syllabus to meet their accreditation requirements. Students seeking academic credit should check with their academic institution for details.