



photo

Spiritual “Body Building”

A message from Jim

People often wonder, “How can I become more aware at higher levels? Others have reached spiritual enlightenment; is it really possible for me, too?” Of course, higher awareness and even enlightenment really *are* possible for all of us. The key is in finding techniques that work, and then working with them diligently until they take us to the fulfillment they have to offer.

A few days ago, I was walking past some people who were doing physical training. One man was doing sit-ups on a slant board, and I overheard someone asking him how he developed such good muscle tone. “I found a system that works,” he said, “and by working with it every day, I get the results I want.”

Simple as it seemed, I thought this was a very profound statement – not just for developing the physical body, but for any part of our being. If we want to develop ourselves physically, it makes sense that we should search out an exercise and dietary routine that works for us, and the same with mental, emotional, and spiritual development: we need to start looking for techniques that help us develop the abilities we want, whatever the level of ourselves. Then, with time and perseverance, the right techniques will bring us the results we desire. Eventually, we are no longer just practicing a technique; we actually become the reality to which we’ve been working.

So, if we are looking for spiritual awareness, then we need to find spiritual exercises that work for us, and then give them the time and commitment they require. There is no set and universal pathway; it is up to each of us individually to find the techniques that help us experience and expand. It is also important to realize that there are

many exercises and techniques available, and what works well for some people may not be best for everyone. And so we have to look at the alternatives, work with them, and thereby find out what works for us and what doesn’t. When we find a technique that *doesn’t* work, we can always let go of it and move on to something else.

Very often, we find that certain techniques will take us to a certain point but not beyond it. Once we have reached that point, it becomes time to find another one that will take us even further. It is therefore very important not to become attached to any one technique or exercise. Even though it may have worked for us in the past, we must be willing to let go of it when it no longer works. Then, we can pick up new tools that will help us to keep moving forward.

Many people experience frustration and disappointment when they work with a technique and then don’t get the results they expected, and so they look for something else. But so often it is true that they really haven’t given it a fair try. They found a technique, but they didn’t add the other “key ingredients” of time and perseverance. It usually takes more than two or three times before we can even begin to evaluate a particular technique, and often even more.

I was once given a meditation technique which I worked with every day for 90 days. I never gave much consideration to whether it was or wasn’t working. Somehow, I just trusted that I would see some results, whatever they might be, if I just stayed with it. For the longest time, nothing, absolutely nothing, ever happened. Then about the 90th day, I had an amazing experience that made it all worthwhile. If I had given up after the 3rd, 4th, or even 60th day, I would never have gotten the benefits that I did.

If spiritual awareness is what we desire, then it is really up to each of us to seek out the techniques that work for us. Once we have a technique that truly works, then with time and perseverance, results are guaranteed. ■

LOTS GOIN' ON IN FORT WAYNE AND GRAND RAPIDS!

ILM minister, Steven McAfee, offers a variety of activities in Indiana and Michigan, often in conjunction with Faithful Heart Learning Center (FHLC), just north of Grand Rapids:

Spiritual Study Classes, Thursday evenings, 7:30-9 PM, in Fort Wayne, focusing on a wide range of teachings and their application in daily living; combines lecture, meditation, and group singing.

Sunday Morning Worship Services, 10-11:30 AM, in Fort Wayne, including personal and group prayer, communion service, and music.

The Academy, 1st Saturday of each month, 1-5 PM, in Fort Wayne – a new and exciting self-directed personal/spiritual self-development program; 10 arenas of endeavor, with group sharing and support to help us apply our understanding to the realization of our dreams (co-led by Randy Romero).

Weekend Retreats, 2nd weekend of each month, alternating between Grand Rapids and Fort Wayne – an opportunity for more in-depth sharing in a loving and supportive environment, with lecture, structured exercises, meditation, singing, fellowship, and vegetarian meals.

UPCOMING ILM-FAITHFUL HEART SPECIAL EVENTS

February 12-14, “Pathways Home: Prayer, Meditation, and Silence” – a weekend retreat for adults at Camp Mack, Milford, IN. \$95 suggested donation includes meals and lodging.

April 9-11, Annual Passover Celebration, at Faithful Heart – will focus on the mystical aspects of Jesus’ teachings. \$85 suggested donation includes meals, and limited housing will be available.

April 30-May 2, Spring Festival, “Camelot Revisited” – explore the spiritual themes of the Arthurian legend and quest in a festival atmosphere with lots of group participation (at Camp Mack, Milford, IN). \$115 suggested donation includes meals and lodging.

For details, call Steven at (219) 485-2167 or Marilyn Schuiling at (616) 887-7841.

God works through us if we let Him.

STORY TIME

There once was a woman who was feeling very alone and troubled one day, so she went to a nearby chapel, hoping for a few minutes alone in prayer. Seeing no one else around, she began to pray aloud.

“Dear Father, if you hear me, show me a sign. Show me that you are really there and really a God of kindness and compassion. I feel so alone and just don’t know what to do.”

At that very moment, the minister was walking by at the back of the chapel, and when he heard her distress, he reached out a hand and

touched her gently on the shoulder.

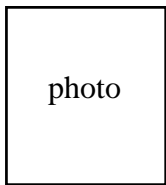
Thinking it was the hand of God, she looked up, startled for a moment, until she realized it was just the minister.

“Oh,” she said, “it’s only you.”

“Yes,” he replied with deep understanding, “and whose but the hand nearest you could our Father use to answer your prayer?”

OUR FIRST TWO BOOKS HAVE BEEN RELEASED!

Love and Loving and *The Knowing of God*, the first in the new ILM series of study books, are now in print and may be ordered from ILM at \$6 each plus \$3 shipping.



If We Only Had Time

by Steven McAfee

How often have we said to ourselves, “If I only had time!” This issue seems to be a constant and universal challenge for us, and something that, almost like the weather, we usually see as beyond our control.

On reflection, it occurs to me that, while we are born into different stations in life, and we each have our own unique gifts, personalities, and circumstances, there is one great equalizer, one thing that every soul on earth has always shared in equally: we have all been given 24 hours in a day. And those that have made the greatest contributions to mankind and those that have achieved the least have all had the same number of hours in a day that we have. But what do we *do* with our time, and who decides what matters most?

We tend to assume that there are certain times for this and certain times for that: a time to get up, a time to go to work, a time to have supper, a time to go to bed. We think of this as normal, and yet so often we find that we don’t have time for so many things that really matter to us, and things we really want to do – time to relax and just enjoy ourselves; time for play, for prayer, or for study; time for deepening our relationships with family, friends, and God. We tend to see time as a great restrainer, something that inhibits, binds, and limits us, and we accept it as normal that most of us will *not* have enough. But what if time just was, and was simply a resource we all have and can use as we wish?

Who said it is now time for this, and now time for that? Who agreed that we don’t have time? Most of the time, we have given our silent consent to the ways we have structured our lives and our days. Perhaps it is time to give our *conscious* consent to restructuring our lives so that we can do what really is our hearts’ desire.

In a real sense, time does “fall into our laps,” and yet what we do with our time requires decisions and commitment. For example, if a deepening personal relationship with God is something that really matters to us, we will have to decide that “This is my time with God,” and that it’s just as important as any other part of our day. This time might be used in any number of ways – for meditation, prayer, walking in nature, listening to inspirational music, spiritual study. Yet whether it’s five or ten minutes, or two hours a day, it’s up to each of us to set aside and dedicate, and even consecrate, that time, and to see it as important and worthy of respect.

It is said that time passes, and truly it does, but the spirit of love that we experience in time, within ourselves and with others, remains, and *that* is what we keep. While we move on in time, the spirit of love that we experience in passing moments is eternally ours. In fact, in the higher awareness of love, time actually shifts.

Many of us have had the experience of sharing deep and meaningful moments of loving in which we entered into a sort of timelessness. Such is the true nature of love: the actions of love occur within time, but the essence of love is timeless. If God really is love, and if life is an endless radiance of His divine loving, then every moment of time is an opportunity to experience, to express, and to share in that spirit of loving.

We have the opportunity to decide what matters to us. Once we know what those things are, it is our responsibility to then *do* what matters. The doing takes time, and the time is only ours if we will claim it, and dedicate it, and consecrate it to the realization of our dreams and what matters most in our inner hearts.

When we reach the end of our time on earth and look back at the lives we have led, we will see times when we had good health and times when we had bad, times when we had much and times when we had little, but the one thing we have always had is time. If we don’t take charge of time, then time takes charge of us. We have 24 hours each day. We do have time. What will we choose to do with it? ■

ILM Activities IN HONOLULU

Inner Light Ministries offers and/or sponsors a number of weekly study groups at its Honolulu location. An ILM study group meets on most Tuesday evenings from 7-9PM, and other worthwhile spiritual study groups are held on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings. Meetings are at:

108 Kuine Place
Honolulu, HI 96816

For more information, contact:
Tom Beaver (808) 732-8934

An **Insight I** seminar will be held January 22-24 in Honolulu. For details, call Laura Kesten-Beaver at (808) 732-8934.

FAVORITE DITTIES of the editor*

If you always do
what you've always done,
You'll always get
what you always got.
author unknown

Live in the moment. Live in
the now. Live in the loving.
Live one day at a time, one
breath at a time. Live in the
loving.
Jim Gordon

Three things that make for
success: insistency, persistency,
and consistency.
Hamid Bey

Whatever time it is
it's always now.
Steven McAfee

When we give that which
we are through that which we
have, then whatever we need to
continue to give comes to us as
we need it.
George Emery

****One good ditty can be worth
a thousand words. NM***

INNER LIGHT MINISTRIES

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Happy New Year!

A Letter to Our Readers

Dear Friends:

As a way of focusing our vision of ILM, what it does and whom it represents and serves, we are asking those who are interested to affirm their solidarity with us in our work.

What follows is the official "ILM Creed." If you share this vision with us and are not already a member of ILM, please sign the form below and allow us to think of you as part of our body of membership. There are no contingencies, requirements, or expectations involved – only the affirmation of our shared vision.

INNER LIGHT MINISTRIES CREED

We believe in God (the Father-Mother Creator), in Christ, and in the Holy Spirit, who together form the Holy Trinity. We believe that Christ is the consciousness of light and love, and that we can obtain the same awareness of being Christ that Jesus promised in saying: "the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do" [Jn 14:12]. We believe that the Holy Spirit is the presence of God and that, through the action of the Holy Spirit, we are lifted up into our own Christ consciousness.

We believe in the ever present grace of God through the uplifting action of the Holy Spirit. We believe that this upliftment is available to all who seek to find it. As it is said in scripture, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" [Mt 7:7]. We believe this is accomplished through meditation, prayer, study, and service.

We believe that through meditation, prayer, study, and service, we open ourselves more each day to the loving light of Christ and the uplifting grace of the Holy Spirit, and we enter into ever greater oneness with God, who dwells within.

Please cut along dotted line

Yes, please consider me a member of ILM: _____
signature

If you would like to remain on our mailing list but *do not* wish to be thought of as a member of ILM, no action is necessary on your part.

If for any reason you would prefer to be removed from our mailing list altogether, please just let us know by signing below.

Please remove my name from the ILM mailing list: _____

We do our best to keep our mailing list up-dated, and we sincerely apologize for any errors in spelling. Please help us to serve you better by printing your current name and address on the reverse side.

We thank you and bless you!

Please return to: **ILM, P.O. Box 36, Center Point, Texas 78010**