



A MATTER OF CHOICE

by Jim Gordon, President of ILM

Recently, a good friend of mine suffered a stroke. The stroke was rather massive and really set her back physically for several months. Her ability to move her body was limited. Her ability to speak was also affected, and she found herself initially quite limited in her ability to communicate with those around her. This was hard for us, her friends, to accept at first. She had always been very joyful in her sharing and expressing of herself. She was also a talented stage performer who liked to appear in theater productions. So movement and speaking had been a big part of her life.

When I first visited her in the hospital, right after she got out of intensive care, I was not sure what to expect. I have to admit I was anxious about my own ability to ‘handle’ seeing my friend in this condition. I’d visited many people in hospitals over the years, a good number of who were in serious condition, but never had I felt quite like this before. The woman I knew was so vibrant and filled with joy, laughter and loving. How would she be now?

I opened the door and saw that she had a few visitors who I knew, and that made me relax a little. And then I entered and looked at the bed — there before my eyes was a vibrant and alive woman who radiated loving and joy in her smile and in the brilliance of her eyes. As I came further into the room I heard her say, “OHHH,” as she recognized me and smiled with a joy that filled the room. I heard her familiar laugh fill the room as well, and my heart began to come alive.

As I stood there and became a part of the action in the room, I realized that my friend had had a rather massive stroke and that she was physically affected by it in several ways. Her right side had suffered paralysis. She also was unable to carry on a conversation. I joined into the conversation that was already taking place when I arrived. The questions were put in such a way that our friend could answer with a nod, yes or no. As we talked she laughed and smiled as she nodded her responses.

Some time passed as we stood around talking and sharing and doing things with and for her. Suddenly, I remembered — we were in a hospital and she was here because she’d had a massive stroke. This was quite an amazing moment for me, because in that instant I realized that it was our friend who was truly being of service to us as she smiled and laughed with us. Here we were, visitors who had come in to see how our friend was doing and to see if we could be of some help and bring some joy and companionship to her. And what we found instead was a woman serving us with her laughter, her smiles, and her sparkling eyes shining loving and joy into the room.

In that moment we saw something which I for one had not seen so directly in some time. We were seeing the spirit, the soul of our friend shining forth through this body of hers that had been hit so hard. We were witnessing the living, loving spirit that is God coming through her.

As the days went on she did have her moments of depression and fear, but she never let that last long. Very quickly she would move back into her loving and live from there. In watching her over the next several weeks I observed how she continually ‘chose into’ her loving and joy and did not let herself stay in a dark place for long.

Because of this experience, I began to look at my own life and the way I live. One thing I decided for myself was that when I am ‘down’ or in depression, I’d give myself ‘20 minutes’ to feel whatever there is to feel in that, and then move on to whatever is next. Often ‘move on’ literally means to get up and ‘get doing’. I have found that action helps me move out of whatever mental/emotional state is causing me to feel down or depressed. And I make it a point to see again, in my mind’s eye, my friend doing much the same thing, and that helps me to reaffirm an action that serves me.

Today my friend is doing great. She is walking much better and is able to share her self with her friends through talking once again. And she is a constant reminder to us, her friends, of what a positive attitude can do. ▲



MY TAPE RECORDER

by Laura Kesten-Beaver, ILM Minister

Throughout my life there have been times when I've reacted unwisely to certain situations, almost by rote, without thinking, and then wished I'd done it differently. I have become aware that it is at these times that I am not acting with my own heart and from my own truth but rather repeating a particular message left on a 'tape-recorder inside my head'.

The first time I was actually aware of hearing, and then repeating with my own voice, one of these pre-recorded messages was when I was fresh out of college and in my first year of teaching kindergarten. I had my good days and my bad days. Each day I would pray for patience, understanding, insight, and peace of mind. I would look at each day as a new beginning, holding out the hope that perhaps *that* day I would get it 'right', I would locate that 'teacher mold', slip into it, and automatically know exactly what to do with my kindergarten children in any given moment. But that never seemed to happen. At the end of each day, when it was time for all 23 bright-eyed, inquisitive, spirited, and precocious kindergartners to line up and leave, I was forever thanking God that all 23 of them belonged to someone else.

And so, when 'situations' with these kids came up, and come up they did, I frequently fell back on addressing them much as I, as a child, had experienced them being addressed. It was on one particular winter afternoon, just before I had a chance to thank God that day, that I heard the 'tape-recorder inside my head'. It was time for the kids to go home, and I was trying to get their coats, mittens and boots on, and get them to line up at the door before going out to the busses. My 'patience bank reserve' went to zero, and I blew like Mt. Vesuvius, spitting anger and frustration from the center of my classroom and shouting, "You kids are driving me crazy!" And, "You're acting like five year olds!"

This had been a favorite phrase my parents had used. And I'd certainly responded to it when I was a kid. My parents had had success in gaining control of their unruly brood within just seconds of sounding the

horn. It was effective — and demoralizing. How 'uncool' was it to be acting like a 5-year old. Now I was 22, a relatively new adult, and I rather liked the sound of it; it had possibility, and power.

However, life has a way of kicking me right in the rear when one of these old messages really doesn't need to be repeated. So getting back to my story ...

One thing was certain — my explosion did get the kids' attention. The room became quiet, bodies became still. And then, I felt a tugging on my sleeve. I looked down at a fair-haired blue-eyed boy with a missing tooth right in front so when he talked his tongue occasionally pushed out through the open space.

"Hey teacher," he said. I looked toward the tug of my shirtsleeve, then into his lake blue eyes. "Hey teacher. But we are five years old!"

Again I was demoralized, only this time by the youngest of teachers. I managed to get my kindergartners lined up and out to the busses, then I returned to my classroom, sat in my 'teacher chair', dumbfounded, and asked myself, "What just happened here?"

It was in the moments following this incident that I realized I had been 'programmed' — and I took the opportunity to begin to re-program. I did not want to be a 'parrot' merely repeating words which I had heard as a child. And in this case, the truth was that those were not the words I wanted to use. Fortunately for me, the 'truth' tugged on my shirtsleeve and came face to face with me. This little boy was not a metaphor — he was the Real 5-year-old McCoy. And so, being unsuccessful at demoralizing my classroom of five-year-olds with "You're acting like five-year-olds!" I knew then that I wanted to be able to interact with them in a much more positive and much less demeaning way. So I went about creating my own 'tape recording' of words to use with them.

Not all messages left on our 'mental' tape-recorders are undeserving; however, all messages need to be tuned into, listened to, and examined to see if they indeed work for us in a positive manner ... or not. And if not, we then have the opportunity to re-program. After all, it's our tape recorder! ▲

INNER LIGHT MINISTRIES

CALENDAR CLASSES & PROGRAMS: MARCH - JUNE, 2002

PRESENTED BY JIM GORDON:

For additional information, call Laura Kesten at 512-894-0992

WEEKLY CLASSES: Jim's weekly Austin class is held **Tuesdays 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm**,
ILM Center, Franklin Sq. Bldg., 3724 Jefferson, Ste. 100, Austin, TX.

Each class includes spiritual teaching, practical exercises, group discussion, and meditation. Jim helps participants to become more deeply in touch with the Spirit within.

PRESENTED BY BRIAN YEAKEY:

SPIRITUAL COUNSELINGS: Call Brian at 512-306-1056 for an appointment.

The Spiritual counseling sessions, that ILM President and Elder Jim Gordon has provided as a service to individuals over the years, are now available from ILM Minister Brian Yeakey. In this Spirit of service, Jim has asked Brian to continue this action of supporting individuals in their spiritual upliftment and growth. These counseling sessions are offered as a service to assist individuals to awaken to the Spirit of who they are, to recognize the day-to-day reality of Spirit in their lives, to help bring clarity to different life issues, to move through the hardships of life, and to experience Loving and all that Spirit has to offer.

If you would like a counseling session with Brian, call 512-306-1056 to make an appointment. Sessions last approximately 75 minutes and can be done in person or over the phone. These are tape recorded and the cassette is given to you at the end of the session. Brian is also available to do counselings in person when he is traveling in your area. There is no charge for this service; however, donations are welcome.

WORKING WITH SPIRIT IN RELATIONSHIPS

with ILM Ministers: Jim Gordon and Brian Yeakey

DATE: Saturday, April 6, 2002

TIME: 9:30 AM - 6:30 PM

PLACE: Denver, Colorado

WHERE: The Park Lane Condominiums
460 S. Marion Parkway—The B Party Room

COST: \$35

This workshop will focus on working with Spirit in creating greater intimacy in all of our relationships, including those with ourselves and with God. We will explore how to effectively communicate with ourselves, others and God so that we can more fully experience the Peace, Loving, and Joy of Spirit.

For further information and to register call Brian at 512-306-1056.

INNER LIGHT MINISTRIES CALENDAR

PRESENTED BY LAURA KESTEN:

For additional information, call Laura Kesten at 512-894-0992

STORIES UNTOLD: In this workshop, we learn to write from our hearts about our own experiences and our own truths. We will meet for an entire year, every three months, and during the off months, you and a 'writing buddy' from the group will meet to write and share. Participants will decide on his/her own end product — perhaps an autobiography, or short stories, or poetry, etc. As a group, we will support our projects through to the final stages of editing.

Hours: Friday, 7pm through Sunday, 12 noon. Registration fee includes lodging and meals.
\$100 per meeting.

GILCHRIST, THREE RIVERS, MI
2002: MARCH 29-31, JUNE 28-30,
SEPTEMBER 29-31, DECEMBER 27-29

ALMA DE MUJER, AUSTIN, TX
2002: APRIL 26-28, JULY 26-28
and OCTOBER 25-27
2003: JANUARY 24-27

COUPLES: In this workshop, we will explore the differences between men and women — how they think, feel, communicate and relate. Throughout this weekend, we will view John Gray's **MEN ARE FROM MARS, WOMEN ARE FROM VENUS 4** videos which are as follows: *Understanding Martians & Venusians, Improving Communication, Giving & Receiving Love, Lasting Intimacy & Fulfillment*. Gray is insightful, comprehensive and delightfully humorous as he shares his wisdom on the often misunderstood areas of relationships. You and your partner will be surprisingly entertained, and inspired to bring more awareness, understanding, and love into your relationship. Opportunities to apply this new information will be given throughout the program as you and your participate in practical exercises. Registration fee includes lodging, meals, and all workshop supplies.

APR 5-7 Fri, 7 pm - Sun, 12 noon Pretty Lake, Mattawan, MI \$225/couple

A CIRCLE OF WOMEN:

THE JOURNEY: During this evening we will work on "journey books" — a journal filled with quotes, pictures, drawings — anything which has meaning for you, and which reminds you of Spirit and your connection with Spirit.

APR 19 Fri, 7 pm – 9 pm ILM Center, Austin NC

SPRINGTIME IN A TEEPEE: Join us for this special overnight to just hang-out, have great discussions, share wisdom, tell stories by the fire, and celebrate with good things to eat. Limited to 8 women. MUST RSVP.

MAY 17-18 Fri, 7 pm – Sat, 10 am Laura Kesten's home, Dripping Springs NC

The Circle of Women will not meet during the summer months but will resume its monthly Friday evenings in September.

COMMUNITY MOVIE NITES: We'll make the popcorn, you bring your own non-alcoholic beverage, and we'll see YOU at the movies. All are welcome.



GANDHI: After 20 years in the making, this incredibly moving epic gathered nine Academy Awards in 1982. This film is a story of Mahatma Gandhi, a small and modest man, who gave his people hope and led an entire country to freedom. "Gandhi" is truly a vision of the heart and soul of a man.

MAR 22 Fri, 7 pm- 9:30 pm ILM Center, Austin NC

INNER LIGHT MINISTRIES CALENDAR

PRESENTED BY STEVEN R. McAFEE:

For additional information, call Steven at 260-485-2167

SUNDAY SERVICES: Steven periodically conducts worship services as a guest minister for various churches and spiritual groups in the Ft. Wayne area. The following are presently scheduled:

MAR 31 — EASTER SERVICE	7:00 am	Unity Christ Church	Ft. Wayne
MAR 31, MAY 5, and JUNE 2	11:00 am	Brigade of Light	Ft. Wayne

MEDITATIONS: Group meditations are held in conjunction with certain inter-faith holy days. Each session has a specific focus to assist us in working with the spiritual energies and symbols of that particular holy day. The sessions begin with a guided inner process and move into a time of silent contemplation. We meet in our home at 6228 Lombard Place, Ft. Wayne. No charge.

MAR 24	8:00 pm-9:00 pm	PALM SUNDAY — Focus on joy
MAR 27	8:00 pm-9:00 pm	PASSOVER — Focus on freedom
MAR 29	8:00 pm-9:00 pm	GOOD FRIDAY — Focus on courage
MAY 16	8:00 pm-9:00 pm	SHAVUOT — Focus on inner revelation

COMMUNITY NIGHTS: The Ft. Wayne ILM community comes together for potlucks, music nights, video nights, and outings. Most of these events are suitable for children. No charge.

APR 24	7:00 pm-9:00 pm - Music night — bring your voice, your instruments, your hearts!
MAY 29	7:00 pm-9:00 pm - Chanting and drumming — come experience it for yourself!
JUNE 27	7:00 pm-9:00 pm - Movie night — it's a surprise!

KIDS MEDITATION: We are considering the formation of a meditation class for children and early teens (9-16 yrs), which would meet once a month (third Sunday of each month) at 10:30 am in Ft. Wayne. If there is sufficient interest, we will begin the classes in March. If you are interested in being involved, please call Steven right away.

MONTHLY STUDY CIRCLE: Jesus & First Century Christianity: Using the Bible, the Dead Seas Scrolls, the Nag Hammadi writings, and recently published archaeological and textual discoveries, we will study Christianity as it might have appeared in the days of its origin. What we discover may surprise you! We will also look at the teachings of Jesus in their own cultural context, revealing new depths of meaning and mystical insight. No previous Biblical knowledge is necessary to participate. I encourage regular attendance to receive the most benefit from this series (which is scheduled to run through the end of the year on the 1st Sunday of every month.). Donation.

MAR 3, APR 7, MAY 5, and JUNE 2	} 1:30-3:30 pm	Executive Room—Signature Inn	Ft. Wayne
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APPLIED SPIRITUAL COMMITMENT (“ASC”) PROGRAM: This year-long program presently consists of 24 people who are committed to supporting one another in the process of integrating spiritual practices and values into their everyday lives. The monthly meetings are open only to those enrolled in the yearly program. If you would like to learn more about this program, please call Steven.

MAR 15-17	Fri. 7:30 pm-Sun. 2:00 pm	Auburn Inn	Auburn, IN	\$125
APR 21, MAY 19, and JUNE 9	} 2:00 pm-5:00 pm	Auburn Inn	Auburn, IN	Donation

INNER LIGHT MINISTRIES CALENDAR

PRESENTED BY STEVEN R. MCAFEE: (continued) For additional information, call Steven at 260-485-2167.

SHABBAT (SABBATH) RETREAT: Experience the sweetness and joy of coming together for a time of spiritual rest and celebration, setting aside the worries of the world to enter into communion with the Divine. Space is limited, so register early!

APR 19-21 Fri. 7:30 pm - Sun. 10:00 am GilChrist Three Rivers, MI \$125

SWAPPING GROUND: BRING YOUR STORIES TO TELL

facilitated by Laura Kesten and Steven McAfee

Storytelling is one of the most ancient forms of human communication. Sharing stories allow us to express our inner spirit, helps us to create a sense of belonging and community, and can provide us with insights into where we have been and where we are going.

Sometimes the best told tales are the undiscovered gems just waiting to be molded by the mouths and the human spirit.

– Brian Fox Ellis



This program can be experienced as a 2-day, 4-day, or 6-day retreat. If you want to put your toe in to test the water, come just for the weekend. If you would like to wade in a little deeper, come Monday through Thursday, and if you really want to dive in, join us for the whole week!

Our venue is a truly charming 4-bedroom home which is just steps away from a sandy Lake Michigan beach near Saugatuck, Michigan.

2-day: SAT. JULY 6, 2:00 pm - SUN. JULY 7, 7:00 pm (+optional sunset) \$75
4-day: MON. JULY 8, 10:00 am - THRS. JULY 11, 7:00 pm (+optional sunset) \$225
6-day: SAT. JULY 6, 2:00 pm - THRS. JULY 11, 7:00 pm (+optional sunset) \$300

ILM REGISTRATION FORM:

Please send check (payable to ILM) along with this registration form to:
STEVEN MCAFEE, 6228 LOMBARD PLACE, FORT WAYNE, IN 46815

(Please print) **SWAPPING GROUND: BRING YOUR STORIES TO TELL**

NAME(S): **eMAIL:**

ADDRESS & ZIP CODE:

DAYTIME PHONE: **EVENING PHONE:**

(Note: please be aware that new programs are often scheduled after the newsletter goes to press, and, in rare instances, published schedules may have to be altered. For current information on any event or series, please call the presenter or contact person listed with the program. Thank you.)

INNER LIGHT MINISTRIES CALENDAR

ILM PRESENTS:

THE HAND OF GOD: Due to September 11th attack in New York and Washington D.C., the airports were closed across the country for the week that Cynthia was to be traveling from LA to Kalamazoo; therefore we had to cancel her program. We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused you. We are excited that Cynthia has rebooked with us for March.

An ILM sponsored program: **THE HAND OF GOD**, a one-woman play written and performed by actress, singer, and former Miss Minnesota, Cynthia James. Her play is an extraordinary autobiographical musical of Cynthia's personal journey. She shares with the audience her childhood trauma, struggles with relationships, attempts at escaping pain, and finally, coming full-circle, her discovery of healing and forgiveness. Cynthia changes characters many times, adding touches of humor, her original songs and music, and movement, thereby keeping her audiences well entertained. Please call Laura for brochure.

On the following day, Cynthia facilitates a powerful workshop, **WHAT WILL SET YOU FREE? (HEALING THE WOUNDS OF TRAUMA AND ABUSE)**, which offers an integrative experience assisting us in opening our hearts, surrendering the blame, guilt, shame, and rage, and finally, moving on with our lives in a new space where we can choose to live in joy and liberation. Location for both events: Kalamazoo Valley Community College.

MARCH 15	7:30 pm - 9:00 pm	Kalamazoo, MI	\$15/\$20 door
MARCH 16	10:00 am - 4:00 pm	Kalamazoo, MI	\$45/\$50 door

Cynthia is also available for private counseling sessions on:
Sunday, March 17th & Monday, March 18th.

Please contact Laura Kesten at 512-894-0992 for more information. **Scholarships available**

NEW TAPES BY JIM GORDON:

What Separates Us From Our Loving

This seminar is from the weekend workshop, WORKING WITH SPIRIT IN RELATIONSHIPS. In this tape Jim talks about things that block us from our loving: he discusses bringing awareness to our creations, then talks about the process of giving and receiving, then broken agreements, and finally about the light and shadow sides of ourselves.

A Frequency Of Change For A New Millennium

This seminar was presented on October 24, 2000. In this tape, which begins and ends with a meditation, Jim talks about major changes happening on the planet as we move into higher frequencies. Jim explains what we can do as co-creators to become more responsible as we step into these changes.

RECENT ILM TAPES ON MEDITATION:

Practicing Meditation – Connecting With The Divine

BY STEVEN MCAFEE

This tape includes information on what meditation is, suggestions on how to practice meditation, and also includes a short guided meditation.

Three Meditations

BY JIM GORDON

**Starry Sky Meditation, A Healing Meditation
and Balancing The Consciousness Meditation**

Meditation And The Healing Process

BY BRIAN YEAKEY

A seminar beginning with a short meditation followed by a talk on the spiritual healing process and the role meditation plays in that process.

To Order: Each tape is \$8.95 (Please include \$3 per order for shipping and handling.) Checks may be made payable to **Inner Light Ministries** and sent to: Inner Light Ministries, P.O. Box 164332, Austin, Texas 78716-4332. Please include your name, address and phone number. Allow 2-4 weeks for delivery.

To Touch The Heart

EXPRESS YOURSELF THROUGH SERVICE

**IF ANY OF THESE ILM SERVICE PROJECTS INTEREST YOU,
PLEASE CALL YOUR LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE AND JOIN IN.**

ILM Service Projects

In last March's newsletter we presented a column called To Touch The Heart in which we shared about the service projects that ILM had been doing. Well, we're reporting again this year to let you know that it has been a wonderful year of loving service for ILM members!

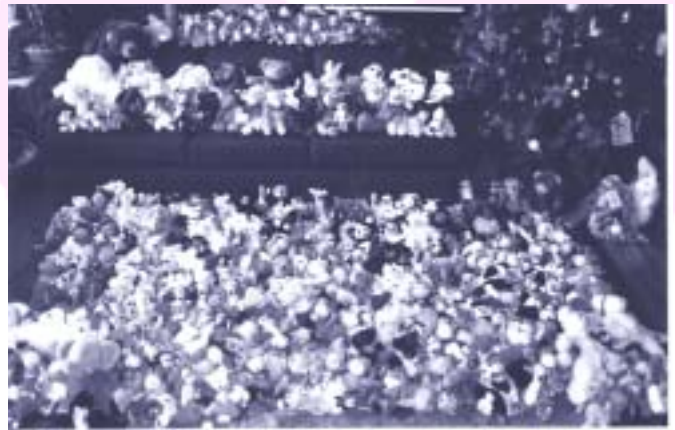
The Coins For Kids project was an incredible success, beyond anything we had expected. All year ILM members in the Austin (Texas) area had been saving their loose coins (and extra bills) to use towards the purchasing of gifts for children in need at Christmas time. And the outcome was extraordinary — we ended up saving over \$5000! Also gratifying was the level of participation in buying and distributing the gifts. We'd decided upon six different groups of children to buy presents for, totaling about 100 children in all. And on one Saturday in early December 36 people, including six children, turned out to do the gift shopping. Then a few days later just as many joined in the wrapping of all the gifts that were bought! The level of joy expressed by all the participants who shared in the giving was a blessing to behold. We

also heard back from many of the recipient groups, expressing a tremendous amount of gratitude for all that they had received. Of course, this just opened our hearts even more, and we have already started saving our Coins For Kids again for this year!



our hearts even more, and we have already started saving our Coins For Kids again for this year!

For the past three years, ILM minister Laura Kesten and her daughter have been doing “Beanie



1044 Beanie Babies

Babies Round-ups,” gathering beanie babies as Christmas presents for the Native American children of Montana. This past year, they decided to invite the people on the ILM mailing list to join in this service project. The response was overwhelming. Over 500 beanie babies were sent to us and over \$1800.00 in donations as well. Every day we would

go to the post office, and the ILM mailbox would be full of boxes and envelopes with donations for Cherish Our Indian Children (who distributed the beanie babies). In



addition, many stores, both in Texas and Montana, also participated in the project either by giving a generous discount or by donating beanie babies and other toys. Our Beanie Babies Round-up grand total was 1044! And we were also able to purchase several dozen pairs of slippers for tribal elders, as well as purchasing other items particularly for older teens. We are so very grateful for the abundance this service project generated. For Christmas 2001, “the forgotten children” on the Indian Reservations

(To Touch The Heart continues)

of Montana were well-remembered. On behalf of the ILM Staff and COIC, we thank you all for your generous and heartfelt contributions.



For the past few years, the Austin ILM community has also donated winter clothing and blankets for

Christmastime delivery to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. This year, the donations filled a U-Haul trailer, which was delivered by an Austin ILM member, Linda Lavender, to the reservation for distribution.

These Christmas service projects filled our hearts with the unique love and joy that comes only from giving. If you would like to participate in next Christmas' charitable projects, you can either send a donation to ILM ear-marked for "Christmas Projects," or call the ILM office for suggestions on goods to donate.



HELPING THE HOMELESS

by Bill Stratton, ILM Production Coordinator and Minister



A friend of mine, who is head of a charitable organization,

shared with me that a lot of homeless people appreciate the little bottles of shampoo, conditioner and other personal items that come from hotels. Since I was doing some traveling and staying at nice hotels I decided that I would collect these items for the homeless. After some time passed, I had collected a good number of items and decided to do something with them. Around that time, I had also observed that there seemed to be a growing number of homeless people on the Promenade in Santa Monica (which is near my home), so I decided that this location would be the target for my project. To accomplish this, I gathered all the soaps, shampoos, conditioners and skin lotions. I neatly packed them into individual baggies, and then I added candy and money to each one.

I started my project by making fifteen baggies and went out to the Promenade. After I gave one homeless man the first baggie I decided to check out his response. Since I use a power wheelchair on such outings, I maneuvered it into a nearby building and watched him. He carefully pulled out each item. The expression on his face appeared as if he

had not seen these travel-size items before, and the way he held them indicated that they were like little treasures. He carefully put everything back into the baggie and placed it with his other belongings. With this viewed success I continued distributing the rest.

A few weeks later, I mentioned this experience to Jim Gordon, and within a short time I received a large box from him filled with hotel toiletries. Again, I made a number of baggies with the various items. As I drove down the Promenade in my wheelchair, I noticed a disheveled looking young guy rummaging through one of the trashcans. I went up to him with one of the baggies held out in my hand, and as he saw me approach he asked, "What is this?" I said, "It's a gift. And there's money inside." Surprised, he exclaimed, "Thank you, Jesus!" as he looked up to the sky. Then he hugged me and again said "Thank you, Jesus!" Next, he placed his hands on my leg and said, "I hope you can get out of this someday" (meaning the wheelchair). While thanking Jesus for the third time the young man hugged me again. It was a very tender moment and I was moved by the experience.

I continued on my way to distribute the rest of the goodies. During the overflow of loving I encountered that day, I found myself asking, "Who is being of service to whom?" ▲



MY ADVENTURES WITH GIZMO

by Steven McAfee, ILM Minister and Midwest Coordinator

It has been nearly a year since I first met “Gizmo.” Gizmo is a crow that lives not quite a mile from our house. I met him last summer on one of my morning walks. As I often do at during these walks, I was chanting: “Holy-holy-holy, the Lord of Hosts; the whole world is filled with His glory” and at the same time practicing looking at the world as if it were filled with the Radiant Presence of God. When I spotted a crow sitting on a fence, I said to him, “Good morning, little brother” — and he suddenly flew over my right shoulder and landed on the ground in front of me. It was actually a little frightening, having him swoop down on me like that. I blessed him and kept walking. He again flew past me and landed right in front of me. So I stopped and sat down. He looked at me, not like a wild bird looking at some potential danger, but as one being to another. Then he jumped up into my lap, looked closely at me, and began making sounds I’ve never heard a crow make before — soft, cooing sounds, not unlike a dove. After a while, I got up and moved on. I had only gone a few paces when he flew up and perched on my shoulder. That really startled me! For a moment, I was uneasy about it, but as I relaxed, so did he. He just sat there as I continued my walk. When I reached the corner where I turn to go back home, he hopped off and would go no further. So I said good-bye. I figured that was the end of the story.

However, the next day, there he was again. This time, just in case, I had come prepared with bread and a water bottle (the weather was very hot). After he had eaten several bites, he walked over and pecked at my water bottle. I poured some water into a small hole in the sidewalk and watched him drink. After he’d gotten his fill, he hopped onto my lap, and allowed me to pet him, seeming very

contented. Since then, I see him nearly every day. He runs over to me when I motion him to come (not “hop”, mind you, but this adorable, little sideways run with his wings just slightly extended to either side). I look forward to seeing him, and I think he looks forward to it, too, because sometimes, like on garbage collection day, he is ‘full’ by the time I see him and doesn’t really want to eat, but he still sits on my lap or rides on my shoulder for a while.

One day during Gizmo’s and my walk, I began noticing the faces of people in their cars as they came to a halt at the corner stop sign. Their faces bore the usual “I’m rushed/worried/stressed/bored with my life” look in their eyes. Then they’d see Gizmo on my shoulder, or eating from my hand, and a look of wonder would come upon them. Their faces were transformed into a childlike innocence. They would look at me and smile. It reminded me of how natural our innocence is and how little it takes to bring it forward into expression. I could see the delight on their faces so clearly, and it gave me a sense of joy. But then a small



girl came by with her dad in a pick-up truck. As they stopped she said, with great excitement, “Oh look, daddy, at the man with the bird! Can we stop for a minute so I can pet him?” With a gruff scowl and a negative reply, he shook his head, and they drove off. And I reflected on how easily we can cut short the innocent joys of this world. Gizmo came into my life while I was practicing seeing and appreciating God in everything, and he is a living reminder to me to continually pay attention to the wonder of life around me. Gizmo reminds me that there are unknown blessings awaiting just around the next corner. Who knows what joys we might find simply by approaching the world in innocence and letting our hearts sing out to God, “Holy-holy-holy, the Lord of all, the whole world is filled with Your glory!” ▲

DISCIPLE-LINE



by Brian Yeakey, ILM Minister

Last November the ILM staff presented a retreat in Kalamazoo, Michigan entitled “The Way of the Disciple.” In this retreat we looked at what it means to be a disciple — including ways we already are disciples, and also ways we could grow more into ‘discipleship’. During one of the group sharings each of the ILM ministers told their own personal stories of discipleship, relating the way that ‘being a disciple’ had unfolded in their lives. I would like to share with you part of my story to demonstrate what ‘discipleship’ means to me.

When I was in college I was very involved in bodybuilding. It was my life. I learned that there were certain things that I needed to do in order to get the results I wanted: exercising, lifting weights, and eating certain types of diets to build up my body. These exercises and diets had already been proven effective by the many bodybuilders who had gone before me and who had created the same results for themselves that I was after. So, I began studying all I could about how I could do those same things. As I would learn different exercises and diets I would try them out for a while and see what kind of results I could produce. Through several years of trial and error, I learned how the different things worked for me — some worked very well and others didn’t. Eventually, through my own experience with this, I learned to build myself up to the point where I won a bodybuilding competition (“Mr. Kalamazoo”).

Shortly after this competition, my life began to change. I lost my interest in bodybuilding. Instead, I began to wonder what ‘life’ was all about. And so I set out on my ‘spiritual search’. However, I had learned a valuable lesson from my experience in bodybuilding. I learned that if I wanted to learn about something, the thing to do was to find the people who’d already had the

experience that I was looking for, and then to apply what they had learned in my life. It didn’t take me long to discover who, and what, was ‘out there’ teaching about God and Spirit. And so, like I did in bodybuilding, I began to apply the techniques and exercises proven to get the results I was after. I began a regular and consistent practice of meditation and prayer, spiritual-self study, and service, so that I could have the spiritual experiences I was searching for.

As I applied myself to the techniques I was learning, I began having spiritual experiences. So I kept doing them. I kept myself “in line” with what was working for me to get the results I wanted. The discipline I had learned through my bodybuilding was now paying off in my spiritual path. Through this I began to realize what discipleship was about — simply practicing those things, regularly, that produce the results I want.

It was up to me to come into alignment with the process of ‘doing what worked’ in order to create the experiences I was after, then simply doing it. And through the discipline of doing these practices, I learned the way into Spirit. This “way” is what I call my “line” into Spirit. Discipline is my “disciple-line” ... The Way of the Disciple! I used to be a disciple of bodybuilding, practicing the techniques and exercises to build my body, now I’m a disciple of Spirit, practicing the spiritual techniques and exercises to build my spirituality.

It’s up to each of us to do the practices that work for us, to create the experiences that we are after. So, if what you want is God, throw a “line” to God — become a disciple of a spiritual practice that works for you. Then see if a little “disciple-line” won’t pull you aboard the “disciple-ship” that you want to be on, sailing the Ocean of Love! It’s a ride of a lifetime — one that produces peace, joy, love and happiness. ▲

INNER LIGHT MINISTRIES NEWSLETTER

ABOUT ILM

INNER LIGHT MINISTRIES (ILM) is a nonprofit outreach organization founded in the fundamental principles of ancient esoteric Christianity. It is dedicated to the development and balancing of the fourfold nature of the individual. Towards this goal, it provides education and services concerned with the integration of the spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical aspects of the self, and also provides publications and materials that aid in this process.

Among its fundamental tenets is that we truly are “temples of the Holy Spirit.” As we seek and express this presence within, we find the peace, love, power, and wisdom we all so earnestly desire. The many services of ILM are geared towards this path of individual unfoldment — such as meditation, study, and prayer on an individual and group basis.

Service to humanity and the planet is ILM’s second major emphasis, and ILM encourages indivi-

An excerpt from a new tape,
*A Frequency Of Change
For A New Millennium*

by Jim Gordon

Part of what you are seeing on the planet today has to do with the response to this higher frequency coming onto the planet, and coming into our own consciousness. That’s why you’re seeing on the planet today a lot of different disturbances and conflicts within societies, within groups, within tribal traditions, within all kinds of different structures on the planet having to do with human nature.

(Please see page 7 for information on ordering tapes.)

dual service, in any of a wide variety of possible forms, as a vital aspect of our daily experience.

Please write or phone for more information about ILM.

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