



INNER KNOWING

by Jim Gordon, President of ILM

Experience is everything. That is what I learned from my parents when I was young. Experience is what is important because it is through experience that we gain understanding and knowing. With understanding and knowing we can change our lives. We can become what we want to become and truly know from that inner knowing what it is we want to be. Through the inner knowing gained by experience we can change our world around us as well as the world within.

My father would tell me that knowledge also is a great thing to have, but if knowledge is *all* you have, then you have only a part. He would say to me that knowledge is often praised and even worshiped in the world. Often people who gain vast amounts of knowledge are honored and made very important in the world. He would tell me that many people who have knowledge do attain things in this world that seem to make them happy. But true happiness is not found in knowledge or in the things that knowledge acquires. Knowledge is something that helps us to live in the world and helps us to fulfill certain tasks in the world. It is fine to gain knowledge because it will help us to live in harmony with the world. Having knowledge of the traffic laws, for example, helps us to drive the streets safely so we don't end up hurting others or ourselves. But my father would also say that knowledge alone is not enough to create a joyful and joy-filled life.

So, as I was growing up I was always looking at these two things in life, knowledge and knowing. I was gaining knowledge at school through my studies and from what the teachers presented. I was beginning to understand the how and the why of the world around me. The mind was becoming a good tool for me in the world.

I found it harder to find a place in the world to understand inner knowing through experience. Where I ended up finding the greatest inner knowing was in

my prayer time, which I later came to realize was meditation. It was in this time of focusing within and experiencing within that I became aware of the inner light and the wisdom of inner experience.

I started thinking of all this recently when at a talk I had given, someone came up afterward and asked a question. "How do I know that what you are saying is true?" I was glad to hear this question come forward because I knew in that moment they were truly searching for understanding of inner experience. I said to the person that what I share in my talks is my truth that I have come to through inner experience, that is, it is my *knowing*. I have always found that when I share from my own experience in this way, then what I share stirs something in others—namely, their own inner knowing of their own truth.

When I have shared from the mind and the information that I have gathered with the mind, I have found that the sharing becomes 'heavy' and 'charged' with conflicting energies that cause the people in the room to feel heavy, confused, and doubting. That is because information alone does not stir in us the spirit of knowing. Knowledge, which the mind is great at gathering and sharing, is not what I want to share in my talks. Knowledge is useful in certain areas of life, but when it comes to awakening to loving and inner knowing, knowledge tends to act as a barrier. Knowledge is gained through gathering information and storing it in the mind for future reference while knowing is gained through experience. You might look at knowledge as having to do with the world around us, while knowing has to do with the world within us.

What I share is from the inner knowing gained from my experience of the inner self through meditation. I share that I might stir in others the desire to sit down and close their eyes and go inside and begin to have their own inner experience and inner knowing. Then we can have what my father spoke of when he talked about the inner knowing. We can have a joyful and a joy-filled life. ▲



THE JOURNEY OF AWAKENING

by Brian Yeakey, ILM Minister

As you may recall from the last newsletter, Jim Gordon has announced that he is now doing initiations through ILM into the spiritual Path of Sound & Light, a pathway that is journeyed inwardly (in Spirit) through the practice of a specific meditative technique. By taking this inner journey, one is able to come into the knowing of one's True Self, the Soul. We also call this pathway the Path of Liberation, because as one comes into the knowing of one's True Self, one becomes liberated from his-or-her ties to these 'realms of illusion', and therefore is no longer 'bound by' these ties, these karmas, to have to return, to reincarnate, back again and again to this dimension that we call physical. This journey is an amazing process of spiritual awakening!

My own journey of spiritual awakening began in December of 1988. I was five months away from graduating from college. I remember it well because something inside of me changed and I had no control over it. All I knew was that something was different and I didn't know how or why that happened. So I set out on a journey of discovering what was going on within me. It was in this process of searching that the experiences of awakening in Spirit began to unfold for me.

I began my search by getting a hold of and reading many books that had to do with spiritual, psychic, and 'out-of-body' experiences. As I read these books I would try out the different types of meditations and exercises that each one was recommending. In the doing of these techniques I began having inner experiences. It was a wonderful process because as I would read one book and have inner experiences, then I would be 'guided' to the next book and have other inner experiences. One experience kept leading me to the next, and so on and so forth. This is how I found the Path of Sound & Light.

In this process I began to be aware of an invisible 'force', an energy or spirit that was always present

with me in every experience that I was having. This force was in fact the very thing that was bringing me into and moving me through all of the experiences that I was having. I could never see *It*, but I was always aware of *It*. Until one day, a couple of years ago in an inner experience, I turned around and looked up in Spirit and saw the Hand of God holding me and carrying me through everything that I was going through. It was through this experience, I realized, that it always has been God who has been carrying me through everything I have been experiencing in my life.

Before this experience, I had many others with God's Helpers (as described in the ILM book, "The Staff of The Shepherd"). All along I was having inner experiences with different angels, spirit guides, masters, teachers, beings of Light and Sound—all of which were assisting me on the inner journey of my own spiritual awakening. It wasn't until I was ready to have the 'greater knowing' that God let me see it was He who was assisting me Himself, even through all of His 'staff' of helpers. And, with all of the help I received, through all of the 'inner journeys', I eventually came into the conscious experience of my own Soul.

I learned to look to my own experiences and follow the guidance I was aware of from within. I learned that it was through my own experience that I could trust and allow God, both inwardly and outwardly, to do whatever was in His Will to assist me in my awakening. It was only in having the experience that I awakened into the 'knowing' of what it is—not through reading about it, but **by doing it!**

Through all of this, I realized that God truly is The One running the 'show' (called life) and I'm just along for the ride. And what a ride it is! Now, as I continue to step forward on this Path of Spiritual Experience and Awakening, it is much easier for me to surrender and let God do what God does. I just continue to travel the Path of Sound & Light which assists me in *waking up* to what God is doing! ▲

INNER LIGHT MINISTRIES

CLASSES & PROGRAMS: MARCH – JUNE, 2003

PRESENTED BY JIM GORDON:

For additional information, call 512-306-1056

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.

REMASTERED TAPE

BY JIM GORDON

The Levels To Soul And Beyond

(This tape will be available April, 2003.)

"The physical level is the place that all souls want to be, because in a physical body you can experience emotion, you can experience creativity, you can experience the mind, you can experience the unconscious of the void—all in one body, all at one time, and you can work all of those levels together. And in that process you can create more karma for yourself on the physi-

cal as well as on all these other levels, or you can undo it on all these levels through this physical body at the same time. That's what meditation is about—it's a process of going into this body and beginning to work those different levels inside of you so that you begin to free yourself of the karma that's created on all these levels inside of yourself and outside of yourself."



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.*

PRESENTED BY BRIAN YEAKEY:

SPIRITUAL COUNSELINGS: Brian is available for spiritual counselings. Call 512-306-1056 to schedule an appointment.

These counseling sessions are offered as a service for assisting people in awakening to the Spirit of who they truly are, in living the day-to-day reality of Spirit in their lives, in bringing their lives into greater alignment with walking the spiritual Path of Sound and Light, and in experiencing all the Loving that Spirit has to offer.

Please allow 60 minutes for your session and come prepared with specific questions. Sessions can be done in person or over the phone. They are tape-recorded and the cassette is given to you at the end of the session. There is no charge for this service; however, donations are welcome.

Service: God In Loving Action WORKSHOP

FACILITATED BY JIM GORDON, LAURA KESTEN, BRIAN YEAKY AND STEVEN MCAFFEE

WHERE: ILM Center – Austin, TX

DATE: Friday-Saturday, May 9-10, 2003

TIMES: Friday: 7:00 pm - 10 pm, and
Saturday 9:00 am - 9:00 pm,

SUGGESTED DONATION: \$50/person

The path of Spirit is a three-fold path of Prayer/Meditation, Study, and Service. This workshop is being dedicated to Service: Service to God, Service to Ourselves, and Service to Others.

We will focus on the following:

What is Service?

How can Service assist us on our path to God?

What is the greatest Service we can do?

How can we fit Service into our already busy lives?

Please join us in this uplifting workshop as we rejoice in the many opportunities of Service.

"The path of service is not a matter of burden or duty, nor is it mechanical or ritualistic. It is simply living the qualities of Spirit and learning by doing."

– Jim Gordon, **THE KNOWING OF GOD**

Please send check (payable to ILM) along with this registration form to:
ILM, P.O. Box 164332, Austin, TX 78716-4332. For further information call (512) 306-1056.

SERVICE: GOD IN LOVING ACTION WORKSHOP—AUSTIN, TX

(Please print.)

NAME(S):

EMAIL:

ADDRESS & ZIP CODE:

DAYTIME PHONE:

EVENING PHONE:

WORKING WITH SPIRIT IN RELATIONSHIPS

with ILM Ministers: Jim Gordon and Brian Yeakey



DATE: Saturday, April 5, 2003

TIME: 9:30 AM - 6:30 PM

PLACE: Colorado Springs, Colorado

WHERE: The Hearthstone Inn—Conference Room

506 North Cascade Avenue

SUGGESTED DONATION: \$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.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE MEDITATION PATH OF SOUND AND LIGHT

**with ILM Ministers: Jim Gordon
and Brian Yeakey**

DATE: Sunday, April 6, 2003

TIME: 1:30 PM - 4:30 PM

PLACE: Colorado Springs, Colorado

WHERE: The Hearthstone Inn—Conference Room

506 North Cascade Avenue

No Charge

Jim and Brian will be sharing
about the process of **initiation**
into the **Path of Sound and Light**,
an inner path of **awakening** to the **knowing of yourself** as **soul**.

The process for **applying** for personal initiation into this pathway **through ILM**

will be presented, and there will be an opportunity for questions and answers.

For further information call ILM at 512-306-1056.

TO REGISTER: Please check event(s) below and send check (payable to ILM) along with this registration form to: Inner Light Ministries, P.O. Box 164332, Austin, TX 78716-4332

WORKING WITH SPIRIT IN RELATIONSHIPS

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE MEDITATION PATH OF SOUND AND LIGHT

(Please print.)

NAME(S): **EMAIL:**

ADDRESS & ZIP CODE:

DAYTIME PHONE: **EVENING PHONE:**

INNER LIGHT MINISTRIES CALENDAR

PRESENTED BY LAURA KESTEN:

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

STORIES UNTOLD, KALAMAZOO, MI: *Have you heard your “calling” to write? Have you answered it yet?* In this 2003 year-long program, we attend to our own personal callings to write—to write from the heart about our life experiences—our tragedies, our triumphs, our insights, our wisdom, our awakenings, and our opening hearts. We do this through the healing words of our own *untold stories* as we write them down on paper, and then share them in a loving and supportive group which gloriously becomes our “writing family” for the year. (No experience is necessary!)

MAY 16-18	GilChrist (retreat)	Three Rivers, MI	\$125
JULY 11-13	Yarrow (retreat)	Augusta, MI	\$125
SEPT. 12-14	Martha’s Cottage (Lake Michigan retreat)	Saugatuck, MI	\$125
DEC. 5-7	The Radisson (not in retreat)	Kalamazoo, MI	\$ 45

STORIES UNTOLD, AUSTIN, TX: Class description is the same as above. The dates for the Austin program are as follows:

APR. 4-6, JUNE 6-8, AUG. 1-3, OCT. 10-12, DEC. 12-14, 2003

The Hill Country Lighthouse, Dripping Springs, TX \$100

THE UNFOLDING CREATIVE SPIRIT: An uplifting, experiential workshop designed to awaken, liberate and embrace the creative self. We emphasize the process, not the product, and offer a variety of experiences with pencil, watercolor, oil, clay, and other mediums, in very unconventional ways, as a means to enhance the process of liberating our creativity. (No experience necessary!)

MAR. 14-15	7:00 pm-7:00 pm	The Hill Country Lighthouse, Dripping Sprgs, TX	\$ 75
APR. 13	10:00 am-7:00 pm	TBA Kalamazoo, MI	\$ 35

A CIRCLE OF WOMEN: The theme for each evening is a surprise! Interested? Then come and join us for these three special Friday evenings of celebrating the spirit of women. The dates are as follows:

MAR. 21, APR 25, MAY 23 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM The ILM Center, Austin, TX NC

MOTHERING OURSELVES: Using the book, *Mothering Ourselves*, by Evelyn S. Bassoff, we explore the journey between our mothers and ourselves, as daughters. Bassoff’s extraordinary book eloquently shows us how to turn disappointments of the past into something hopeful and empowering. And as we invite Spirit into our hearts, we can move toward more meaningful, intimate, and honest relationships with our mothers and ourselves.

JUNE 27-29 The Hill Country Lighthouse, Dripping Springs, TX \$100

(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

PRESENTED BY STEVEN R. McAfee:

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

SUNDAY SERVICES: Steven periodically serves as a guest speaker for various churches and spiritual groups in the Ft. Wayne area. If you would like him to speak to your group, please call to make arrangements. The following are presently scheduled:

MAR. 16, MAY 25, JUNE 29	11:00 am	Brigade of Light	Ft. Wayne
MAR. 30	11:00 am	Temple of Love & Light	Ft. Wayne
APR. 6, MAY 18	10:30 am	Unity Christ Church	Ft. Wayne
APR. 18 (Good Friday service)	12:00 pm	Unity Christ Church	Ft. Wayne
APR. 20 (Easter service)	11:00 am	Brigade of Light	Ft. Wayne

COMMUNITY NIGHTS: The Ft. Wayne ILM community comes together for potlucks, music nights, video nights, or outings. Most of these events are suitable for children. Please call for current information or to suggest an activity.

JUNE 9 7:00-10:00 pm 6228 Lombard PL, Ft. Wayne, IN No Charge
Movie Night—WHAT ABOUT BOB? Please bring your own soft drinks—we'll provide popcorn!

MONTHLY STUDY CIRCLE, FT. WAYNE: JESUS & FIRST CENTURY CHRISTIANITY. We are studying the teachings of Jesus within their own cultural context, as they may have been practiced in his own day. What we are discovering may surprise you! No previous Biblical knowledge is necessary to participate. We will be meeting on the following Sundays. The YWCA Villa is located at 2000 N. Wells St. in Ft. Wayne. Donations accepted.

MAR. 16, APR. 13, MAY 18 2:00-4:00 pm YWCA—Ft. Wayne Donation

MONTHLY STUDY CIRCLE, KALAMAZOO: SEEKERS OF INNER LIGHT. Steven McAfee and Carolyn Dailey have formed a new monthly study group in the Kalamazoo area. This group is intended to serve those spiritual seekers who desire a community of kindred spirits with whom to study and share their journey. Steven will be present with the group at least every other month for support, singing, and sharing. Meeting locations will vary. If you are interested, please call Carolyn at 269-327-6851.

MAR. 15 3:00-5:00 pm Location TBA, Kalamazoo, MI Donation
MAY 31 3:00-5:00 pm Carolyn Dailey's home, Kalamazoo, MI Donation

S*E*E*K* PROGRAM (*Sharing *Enlightenment, *Experience & *Knowledge): This program is open only to those already enrolled in the yearlong series. If you would like more information about the yearlong programs, please contact Steven.

MAR. 30 2:00-5:00 pm Signature Inn Ft. Wayne, IN \$10
APR. 27, MAY 25, JUNE 29 2:00-5:00 pm YWCA Villa Ft. Wayne, IN \$ 7

(Steven's Calendar continues on the next page.)

A DAY WITH SPIRIT

Join INNER LIGHT MINISTRIES for a day of

1.

Informal Sharing and Questions & Answers



with ILM Ministers,
Jim Gordon
and Brian Yeakey

WHEN: Saturday, March 22, 2003 **TIME: 10:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.**

WHERE: Kalamazoo Valley Community College

SUGGESTED DONATION: \$15

Everyone is welcome to this day of sharing. Bring your questions or just come and listen.

2.

Jim and Brian will be sharing
about the process of **initiation**
into

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE MEDITATION PATH OF SOUND AND LIGHT

the **Path of Sound and Light**,

an inner path of **awakening** to the **knowing of yourself** as **soul**.

The process for **applying** for personal initiation into this pathway **through ILM**
will be presented, and there will be an opportunity for questions and answers.

WHEN: Sunday, March 23, 2003 **TIME: 2:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M.**

WHERE: Brigade of Light—YWCA Villa, Fort Wayne, IN

No Charge

Spiritual Counselings with ILM Minister, Brian Yeakey

3. These counseling sessions are offered as a service
for assisting people in **awakening** to the **Spirit** of who they truly are.

Brian will be available for spiritual counseling sessions:

WHEN: March 19 and 20, 2003

Donation

To schedule a counseling session with Brian call 512-306-1056.

TO REGISTER: Please check event(s) below and send check (payable to ILM) along with this registration form to:

Steven McAfee, P.O. Box 5139, Fort Wayne, IN 46895

A DAY WITH SPIRIT

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE MEDITATION PATH OF SOUND AND LIGHT

(Please print.)

NAME(S): _____ **EMAIL:** _____

ADDRESS & ZIP CODE: _____

DAYTIME PHONE: _____ **EVENING PHONE:** _____

If you need more information about these events, call Steven at 260-485-2167.

ILM HAPPENINGS

ILM is pleased to **W**elcome a new, full-time **S**taff member, Sheridan Robinson. Sherri has been working with us behind the scenes part-time since August of 2001. With all that has been unfolding for ILM now, her help is needed more than ever, and she has been a wonderful blessing for us. We want to officially welcome her on board and say how much we love and appreciate her! (Yay, Sherri!) One of the ways she helps us is by handling our correspondences, whether by email, mail, or phone. So, the next time you call us, more than likely it's her voice you'll hear as the one on the other end of the line. Speaking of which, our 512-306-1056 phone number is our main ILM line to reach us with your questions, requests, tape & book orders, and inquiries. Also, you can email us at: ilmtx@aol.com or write us at ILM, P.O. Box 164332, Austin, TX 78716-4332. These are now the official contact numbers to direct your correspondence.

To Touch The Heart



Our local (Austin Texas) ILM members had another great year with the Coins For Kids Christmas service project. This year we saved over \$6200 in coins, cash and checks (exceeding last year's total of just over \$5000!) which we had a great time spending on toys and other items as gifts for children in need. This year we purchased gifts for 120 children in the Austin area, and, in addition, gifts for the Native American Ridge Indian Reservation in American children, we also blankets and just before Lavender drove a U-Haul truck Christmas blessings all the way Kids service experience was were involved, whether helping with the shopping, or the wrapping of the gifts, or through the giving of donations or even driving a U-Haul! We all got to experience being of service through sharing our loving with other souls, and the joy that that service brought forward. Check out the pictures we've added for your enjoyment, and see if they touch your heart.

We have once again started saving our Coins For Kids for the current year. 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 the kinds of goods to donate.



Indian children on the Pine South Dakota. For the Native collected toys, clothing and Christmas, ILM member Linda filled with Austin Texas up to Pine Ridge. The Coins For truly a great time for all who



ANSWERING THE CALL



by Steven McAfee, ILM Minister and Midwest Coordinator

When I was young, the kids in my neighborhood used to play outside every chance we got, often until after dark. We played all kinds of things: football, basketball, hide and seek, red light/green light, and lots of other things that had no names but were just spontaneous eruptions of fun. The neighborhood of yards was the world we lived and laughed and cried in, and on those wonderfully endless summer nights, it seemed as though it would never end.

Then, invariably, in the midst of our activities, it would come—the call—the voice of someone’s parent calling out their child’s name to come home. Whenever I was tired and hungry, the call was a welcome one. Whenever I was caught up in what we were playing, I wasn’t ready to leave and would breathe a sigh of relief when the name that was called wasn’t mine. But in either case, sooner or later, my call would come. I would hear my dad’s familiar whistle (famous in my neighborhood) and then hear him call out my name. My time had come to make the journey home.

I loved being at home. I was blessed to have a home with parents who loved me and each other. Our evenings consisted of delicious, home-cooked meals around a table together with pleasant conversations, followed by a night of television; and then a bath and prayers before bed. On weekends, there were those special midnight snacks watching the late-night sci-fi movies with my dad. I felt loved and cared for. While I enjoyed the time in the neighborhood with my friends, it wasn’t always safe out there. We had the proverbial bully; there were occasional arguments, the need to prove oneself, and the times that we were made fun of. Once I was home, no bully could touch me, no one made fun of me, and no matter what happened, I knew I was safe. I knew I belonged.

Today I hear a different kind of call, and yet, in one way, the same: it is still the voice of my Father calling out to me. For a long time, I thought this call meant I had to do something special in the world, to be somebody important and to make an impact on the world. So, for many long years, I kept searching to find just the right job, just the right place, just the right

relationship, just the right thing to do in the world that would fulfill God’s plan for me. I kept expecting God to tell me what it was He wanted from me. I always felt there was something more that I was missing, something just around the corner, if I could only find it. I now realize that God did not want anything from me in the sense that I was thinking. All God wanted was me. And, though I did not know it, what I wanted was God. I have come to realize that the call I was hearing was simply to be true to myself. What I was really seeking was the same thing that God wanted: for me to experience myself as soul and to know my place in God’s kingdom. Now what I want to find is not my calling, but my home.

I believe that this is the call that we are all to some day answer: the sound of God’s voice calling our name, telling us that it is time, time to leave the playing fields of space and time (our neighborhood) and come back where we belong into the realm of Soul. I am not speaking of a journey we take at our death. Indeed, it is said that if we do not learn to make the inward journey into Soul while we are alive, there is little chance of doing so after we are dead (instead we will just go through another round of rebirth into this world). The path back Home is one that has been hidden within us since the beginning of time. It is the path of the Holy Spirit that the master reveals to his disciple, but not to the world at large, as Jesus explained privately to his disciples: “The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom has been given to you, but not to them.” (Matt.13:11). It is the path of initiation into the living stream of Sound and Light within us. Some of us already hunger for this opportunity, longing to feast at the “table of the Lord.” But many people in the world do not; for now, they are content with what the world has to offer.

In my neighborhood, the sound of my dad’s whistle was familiar and unmistakable. It was meant for no one but me. So too, when our time to return comes, the call we hear is just for us, and no one but us can respond. Our call may not come in words, but it will be just as irresistible as my dad’s whistle penetrating through whatever else we are doing, commanding our attention and reminding us of something we had nearly forgotten in the midst of our ‘pretend’ world: Home. ▲



MOM

by Laura Kesten-Beaver, ILM Minister

On a chilly-for-Texas Monday afternoon this past January I received a phone call from my oldest sister, who informed me that our mother had had a massive stroke. Within ninety minutes of receiving the call, I was on a plane heading to the place I spent my childhood years, now where my mother lay in a bed unable to talk or move much. In a seat by the window, I rested my head on its small frame, and cried softly over the humming engines.

My tears were spilling out of many different emotions. You see, I hadn't seen my mother in three years and I'd had only limited contact with her for the past 15. I loved my mother and I believed she loved me, but because of unresolved family dynamics it was impossible for me to maintain a relationship. In my mind I went back fifteen years, back to the crossroads in my life where I'd faced the two paths down which I could travel: the first path would have kept me participating in the unhealthy family dynamics, and the second was a road of healing and of breaking a pattern of abuse that had been both generations and lifetimes old. Those were my two choices. I knew, in my heart, that I couldn't have both. For me, I felt I wasn't strong enough to find healing *and* maintain my family relationships with those still keeping 'the family secrets' and thus the old family ways. It was too easy to fall back into the old patterns that I knew all too well. So I chose the road that would lead me to healing. But, in my heart, it was perhaps the most difficult decision I had ever made.

And now I was returning, to say my good-byes to my mother, and to reunite with my four siblings, with whom I'd also had only limited contact, as the one who had left the family. I had no idea what to expect. I continually kept asking for God's grace and praying for peace, forgiveness, and healing for us all.

The next morning back in my old home town, it was bitter Michigan-cold when I left my hotel room and got into the rental car and drove to the hospital, the very hospital in which I was born. A light dusting of snow covered the familiar streets and sidewalks.

I could not have prepared myself for the flood of emotions that pumped through my body when I first walked into the hospital room where my mother lay and

my oldest sister watched over. My sister and I embraced, and then I went to the bedside of my mother. I took her hand, and she opened her eyes. I said, "Hi mom. It's me, Laura." I started to cry. She blinked, and then blinked again. I continued, "I am so sorry for everything that's happened." She closed her eyes tightly, then opened them, looked right at me, closed them again, and drifted off to sleep.

The next day my mother was transported to a hospice center, a beautiful and loving place that gave my mother the dignity to let go from this world, and her children the dignity to heal with our mother and with each other. We were able to take care of her, love her, and offer our loving good-byes to her. One sister, each day, told mom what day it was, where she was, and read her the get-well cards that had been sent. Another sister gave her a manicure. Another sister, an artist, showed mom her sketchpad. I brought her purple flowers and brushed her hair. One of my nephews read to her. The youngest of her grandsons, age 6, would run in, say, "Hi Grandma. I love you Grandma," then run back to the room across the hall where the rest of the family gathered, allowing mom to rest quietly in her own private room.

On her last day, I had the opportunity to spend a lot of the day alone with her. At times my mother's eyes stayed half opened and I could see them going back and forth as if she were reading something. I felt this strange-yet-peacefulness all around her, with her. And I felt much peace, love and forgiveness within my own heart as I held her hand. Whenever she opened her eyes fully, I would talk softly to her. For the first time in over 25 years, all five of her children, our spouses, and most of her grandchildren, were together with her. I said, "We're all here, mom, all your kids and most of your grandkids. We're all here because of you, because we love you. And we're all talking to each other." She briefly stroked my thumb. And later that evening, she passed on.

As for my siblings and I, we agreed to meet at one of our homes each year in a gesture to move forward and look for family healing. Whatever the future holds, I returned back to my life in Texas with a warm feeling of peace in my heart. My prayer on the airplane up to Michigan, for peace, forgiveness and healing had, for me, been answered. ▲

INNER LIGHT MINISTRIES NEWSLETTER

ABOUT ILM

INNER LIGHT MINISTRIES (ILM) is a nonprofit organization 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 ILM's 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, joy, 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 service to humanity on an individual and group basis.

ILM also offers initiation into the meditation practice of "The Path of Sound and Light," an inner

The Path of Sound and Light

by Jim Gordon

"This pathway of liberation, this pathway of soul transcendence, is a pathway that will take you inside and awaken you inside to the truth of who you really are. It is a pathway that will begin the process of your soul traveling back through the realms of this creation into the realms of God's creation, the spiritual realms."

—Jim Gordon

(Please see page 3 for information on ordering tapes.)

path of spiritual awakening.

Please write or phone for more information about ILM.

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