

photo

IN GOD'S TIME

by Jim Gordon, President of ILM

When I was 19 years old I had the blessing of meeting Dr. Don Kelly, an orthodontist who had a practice in Grapevine, Texas. This meeting began a eleven-year odyssey that taught me a wonderful lesson about God's generosity.

For years I had been having physical problems and had not found a doctor or practitioner who could help. Then one day a friend of mine mentioned Dr. Kelly, who was practicing much more than just orthodontics. He was having remarkable results in assisting people with all sorts of health challenges, by combining nutrition, food supplements, glandulars, diet, and meditation. I decided to go and see for myself. Within two visits to Dr. Kelly's, my life changed drastically. Instead of physical challenges I was finding healing and balance. My body changed, my outlook changed, and for the first time in many years I felt that I had my health back.

One day I was sitting in his office when Dr. Kelly was called out of the room. As I sat looking around at all the supplements and materials he worked with, I heard myself say a little prayer inside: "Lord, I would like to help people in this same way, assisting people to take responsibility for their own health. Lord, I turn this over to you for I do not know if this is what would be for my highest good. Please show me the direction to go."

For several years I thought about that prayer and looked to see how I might move in the direction of fulfilling it. I attended college at night, went to classes offered in these areas and did whatever I thought would support me in moving in this direction. However, nothing came of it. Eventually I became interested in other things and set aside the idea of practicing like Dr. Kelly. I even forgot about my prayerful request.

Eleven years went by, during which time I was making a good living working as the manager of an art gallery and frame shop. Then one day a friend of mine, Lucille, who managed a health food store called me. She said, "My assistant manager quit yesterday. For some reason I just know this job is

yours. I know this will be a big cut in your salary, but do you want it?" I asked for more information including what the salary was, and told her I would consider it for a couple of days. I said this mainly out of courtesy because I knew I could not move to a job that paid much less than I was making. However, as I hung up the phone I heard a loud "YES" in my head. "YES YES YES, this is what you asked for years ago and now is the time to fulfill your prayer." I honestly was not sure what this was about - and then I remembered my prayer in Dr. Kelly's office. "But the salary is so low, and that was so long ago - I don't know if I want this now," I protested. "Ask and you shall receive," came the reply. "But 11 years later?" However, as I reflected on the memory

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of what I prayed for in Dr. Kelly's office, I knew that this was the answer to my prayer - and I knew that I wanted to go for it. I called Lucille back and said, "Okay."

Then, three weeks into the job, Lucille told me she had been promoted to general manager of the chain of health food stores. I was promoted to store manager - and my lost salary was restored. Also, to get me up to manager level I was sent to school to get my license in clinical nutrition. Within ten months I was working with people much as Dr. Kelly had worked with me.

Later, in meditation, I was reflecting on this improbable chain of events and asked why it had taken so long. A voice inside of me said, "Ask and you shall receive, in MY time and in MY way." Then I realized that God's time might be different from mine and so I began to relax more into God's time, not mine. Now when I find myself becoming impatient with myself, others, or the things around me, I stop and reflect on what I heard: "Ask and you shall receive, in MY time and in MY way." ■

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THE PROMISE OF SPRING

by Steven McAfee, ILM Midwest Coordinator

As I write this article, it is snowing outside my window, there are several inches of snow on the ground, our road could be used for an ice-skating rink, and the wind chill is something just below unthinkable. I find myself thinking how odd it is that, due to the time it takes to create, print, and mail out a newsletter, by the time you are reading this article, it will probably be some time in March, most of the winter will be past, and spring will be just around the corner. This "time warp" has set me to thinking.

Imagine for a moment that intelligent beings from another galaxy have just arrived for the first time and are visiting with me here in my home now as I write this article. They would see the winter scene I described all around us. Now suppose I were to tell them about spring: the beautiful greens everywhere, the scent of colorful flowers, the gentle rains, and the mild temperatures. They would have a difficult time taking in the sights, sounds, and "feeling" of it, because they have had no experience as a reference point with which to understand it. Such a "spring" may even seem unreal or impossible to them; at best, it would appear unlikely that

The saints and teachers who have gone before us tell us that it is possible to live in love and not fear, that it is possible to forgive and be healed, that we can actually know God and experience His Presence and kingdom within us right now.

something such as spring could come from all this icy cold bleakness. Yet, to us who are familiar with the rite of passage from winter to spring, the change seems quite simple and commonplace.

If the mysteries of nature are so challenging to convey to one who is unfamiliar with them, consider then the mysteries of the Spirit. When spiritual teachers or sacred scriptures tell us about God and the kingdom of heaven, and how that kingdom is within us this very moment, we may find the reality

of it as difficult to accept as my imaginary visitors did the idea of spring in the midst of winter. When we hear saints of different traditions all speaking with overwhelming devotion to God, surrendering all their burdens to Him, and living a life of inner peace and joy in the midst of all the suffering, injustice, and turmoil in the world and in their very own lives, it may seem contrary to our experience. I remember one time in a workshop talking about God as our heavenly father and how much He loved us, cared for us, and protected us. Afterward a woman told me she had such a hard time relating to that, because her earthly father had been exactly the opposite of all these things. Her experience did not make it easy for her to believe what I was saying. Often that is the case with spiritual teachings. The world often does not give us the kind of personal experiences which make it easy to understand and accept spiritual realities. The saints and teachers who have gone before us tell us that it is possible to live in love and not fear, that it is possible to forgive and be healed, that we can actually know God and experience His Presence and kingdom within us right now. How wonderful and how fantastic it sounds! Sometimes that which we long for most is the very thing that is hardest for us to believe. But the witness of those who have gone before us and the living testimony of those among us who have seen the wonders of the spiritual kingdom, tell us it is true and that the same joy they have found, we can find.

Just as winter does not become spring overnight, so also do we not find ourselves suddenly spiritually transformed overnight. But deep within us the seeds of truth are there. The Creator who, in springtime, makes life come back with resplendent beauty into what once looked dull and lifeless, is the very same Creator who directs the unfolding of our lives. Hidden in every winter is the promise of spring, and it will come as surely in our spirit as it does in nature. Given the right blend of sunlight and water (meditation and prayer), the right nourishment (spiritual study), the right climate (spiritual fellowship), and the opportunity to unfold (loving service), we ourselves will one day also blossom, into a beauty beyond the glory of any spring the earth has ever seen. ■

THE INNER LIGHT MINISTRIES

Calendar of Classes and Programs

Presented by JIM GORDON: For current information, call Laura Kesten-Beaver 512-894-0992.

LOCAL CLASSES: Each class includes spiritual teaching, practical exercises, group discussion, and meditation. Jim helps participants to find ways of getting more deeply in touch with the Spirit within.

Tuesdays 7:00-9:00 PM, ILM Center, Suite 100, 3724 Jefferson, Austin, TX

Communion Service with Jim, 10:00 AM, Swedenborg Church, Urbana, OH, and

Experiencing The Inner Light workshop with Jim, 2:00-6:00 PM, Springfield, OH.

Call Susan Zion at 513-484-3090 for details of both workshops.

March 16 Ohio

Presented by LAURA KESTEN-BEAVER: For current information, call Laura 512-894-0992.

A Circle of Maidens: (Open to girls 7-12) Maidens in this circle share a place of belonging within a group as they learn how to honor and support themselves, each other, and all of life. Emphasis on gratitude, respect, co-operative and communicative skills, and personal wisdom.

March 29 1:00-6:00 PM Austin, TX

A Circle of Women: Monthly gathering. This evening is specially dedicated to the celebration of ancient woman spirit where women join together to experience the support of an uplifting, nurturing, and self-empowerment circle.

May 9 7:00-10:00 PM Austin, TX

Bosom Buddies: Come with your bosom buddy and experience this workshop in retreat together. All processes are done with your buddy and are designed to create joy, laughter, and a delightful connection between kindred spirits.

April 4-5 Austin, TX

June 20-21 Kalamazoo, MI

June 27-28 Camp Mack, IN

The Unfolding Creative Spirit: This is an uplifting, experiential workshop designed to awaken and embrace the inner and outer creative self, offering a variety of experiences as a means to enhance this process of liberation. Also, through a personal dialogue with the creative imagination, we will begin to discern new possibilities and options within the inner and outer realms of our lives.

March 15 Kalamazoo, MI

June 14 Urbana, OH

PeaceMaker: This workshop offers an opportunity to journey through the rich Iroquois story of the PeaceMaker, reliving its teachings and participating in transformational processes, in the hope of being empowered in our lives and community, allowing peace and harmony to unfold within and around us, bringing us closer to the heart of our own PeaceMaker within.

June 6-8 Midwest (to be announced)

The Writer Within: Through specific writing processes, this workshop offers a self-explanatory journey through the realm of our minds and hearts, teaching us more of who we are, and of how we think and feel about the collage of our lives—from the ants in our sugar bowl to the desire to live in the Spirit of God.

July 12 Richland, MI

Presented by STEVEN MCAFEE: For current information, call Steven at 219-485-2167.

LOCAL CLASSES: Classes include spiritual teaching, group sharing, and meditation. The spring class series will be focused on mystical Bible study and building a sense of spiritual community and belonging. In addition to the weekly meetings, Steven periodically schedules community nights, which may consist of an inspirational movie and discussion in someone's home; a family potluck, sharing, and singing night; or a local service project.

Tuesdays 7:30-9:00 PM, Unity Church, 3232 Crescent Ave., Ft. Wayne, IN

(Calendar continues on next page.)

Presented by STEVEN MCAFEE (continued):

Contemplative Christianity: The next meeting in this series will be held in Ft. Wayne March 7-9th. Enrollment is still open even if you have not attended the previous sessions. Prayer, spiritual study, contemplation, quietude, forgiveness, fellowship, and mystical aspects of Christ are shared and practiced. All participants receive a handbook with suggested spiritual disciplines and a book of collected readings on the contemplative life.

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| Workshop | April 13th | Ft. Wayne, IN |
| Workshop | May 11th | Ft. Wayne, IN |
| Retreat | May 30th-June 1st | Camp Mack, IN |

Celebrating Passover Together: Honoring Jewish Passover, Essene "feast of love," and Last Supper of Christ.

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| March 25 | 7:30-9:00 PM | Ft. Wayne, IN |
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The Joy of Easter: Worship service.

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| March 30 | 10:30 AM | Ft. Wayne, IN |
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Creating A Life of Love: 10:30 AM talk followed by a potluck lunch and SEMINAR 12:30-4:30 PM.
June 8, at the "Brigade of Light," Ft. Wayne, IN

The Human Journey # 2

An ILM Retreat with Jim Gordon, Steven McAfee and Laura Kesten-Beaver

APRIL 25-27, 1997

WHAT IS IT? A new series of spiritual training programs called *THE HUMAN JOURNEY* series. The series consists of three different weekend retreats, entitled *THE HUMAN JOURNEY #1, #2, AND #3*. This retreat will be *THE HUMAN JOURNEY #2*. You are welcome to attend even if you have not participated in weekend #1. *THE HUMAN JOURNEY* is a set of programs in which we share teaching, experiential activities, group discussions, and meditation to explore timeless questions about the mysteries of life. To get the most benefit out of this series, we recommend that you attend all three programs, but you do need not take them in sequential order. Each retreat gives all of us the opportunity to discover more of who we are and what our life can be.

WHERE IS IT? The Kellogg Biological Station, "Terrace Room" of the Academic Building, 3700 E. Gull Lake Drive, Hickory Corners, MI 49060 (near Battle Creek).

HOW DO I REGISTER? \$150 per person. (REGISTER BY APRIL 1ST FOR A \$25 DISCOUNT PER PERSON.) Complete and return the form on the bottom of this page, along with a check to ILM to:

Steven McAfee, 6228 Lombard Place, Ft. Wayne, IN 46815 (219-485-2167)

Upon receipt of your registration, we will mail you a confirmation letter, which will include a map to Kellogg's, instructions on where to go when you arrive, and a list of items you will need to bring.

REGISTRATION FORM

NAME (s): _____

ADDRESS, CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

DAYTIME PHONE: _____ EVENING PHONE: _____

AMOUNT ENCLOSED: _____ VEGETARIAN MEALS: (CHECK IF DESIRED): _____

(OPTIONAL) I WILL BE ROOMING WITH: _____

(PLEASE SPECIFY, IF THIS PERSON IS REGISTERING ON A SEPARATE FORM)

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SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

MEDITATION, STUDY, AND SERVICE

by *Laura Kesten-Beaver, ILM Minister*

This past November, I spent eighteen days in India visiting my spiritual teacher. The reason I chose to travel the arduous thirty-six hour trip was to be free of worldly distractions, thus able to immerse myself in learning about spiritual practice - meditation, study, and service - under the guidance of my spiritual teacher. I learned much more than I ever imagined I would.

What I learned first was that there are always distractions no matter where we are - the mind itself is a playground of distractions. Even when the body cannot physically be in Disneyland, at a mall, with friends, baking cookies, etc., the mind sees to it that we can still be there just by thinking or dreaming of such places or activities. So being in India *did* help to keep me from being distracted from *performing* in the physical world but I found that I have yet to learn to still the mind during my spiritual practice. I realized that not only is stilling the mind not an easy task but it is also an ongoing and life-long process.

In the group meetings with my spiritual teacher I learned that quieting the mind in meditation is the most important aspect of spiritual practice - because it is a way to commune with God. For me, and perhaps for many of us, it is a most difficult task to **I have come to call my mind the “trickster” because it is a master at tricking me into falling for one of the many excuses it has on file for not meditating.**

do on a daily basis. I learned that first and foremost we must train the mind to do what we want it to do. We must first get in the habit of saying “No” to the mind when it tries to persuade us to not sit in meditation. I have come to call my mind the “trickster” because it is a master at tricking me into falling for one of the many excuses it has on file for not meditating. It knows all of my weaknesses and will tell me things like, “We can’t sit that long,” or, “We can meditate later.”

Once we give in to the mind, it then becomes very powerful. So, again we must get back on

course and take control over the mind. My spiritual teacher suggested that one way we can make our minds obey is to start with small matters. For example, we can put a piece of candy in front of us and restrain from eating it for five minutes. The mind will try all different tactics for us to indulge in the candy before the five minutes, but if we resist, then we have taken a step in training the mind to behave.

He also said that it is important to set reasonable amounts of time for meditation. If our goal is to sit in meditation for two hours, our minds need to be trained to sit for that length of time. One way is to begin with sitting for fifteen minutes, then increase the time each week until we are able to sit for the whole two hours.

The second part of spiritual practice is study. Reading books and other materials, and attending meetings or classes which are oriented toward spirituality can help us to stay focused on our spiritual paths. Being in India, free of worldly duties, I had the opportunity to attend to my spiritual study. Every morning before rising I would read from a spiritual book, and then again after lunch, and once more before shutting out the light for the night. This routine becomes habit forming and thus, even though I am back home again, I am still reading spiritual material first thing in the morning and the last thing before going to sleep at night.

The third part of spiritual practice is service. Serving others provides opportunities for us to create humility in ourselves. Webster’s Dictionary defines humility as “the state of being humble; absence of pride.” I learned from my spiritual teacher that when we become servants out of love, serving without the need for recognition or acknowledgment, we are then serving in the absence of pride - and thus the hold that our egos have on us is lessened. This, he states, is the path to humility.

Although the tasks of spiritual practice seem rather simple, they are not so easy to fulfill. It takes great dedication and perseverance to persuade the mind to do what we require of it. The payoff, however, is without a doubt, supreme, for attending to our spiritual practice is the way for us to focus on God, to bring us closer to Him, His word, and His loving. ■

ABOUT ILM

INNER LIGHT MINISTRIES (ILM) is a nonprofit outreach organization founded in the fundamental principles of ancient and 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 really 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.

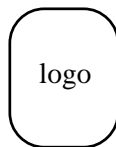
Service to humanity and the planet is ILM’s second major emphasis, and ILM encourages individual service, in any of a wide variety of possible forms, as a vital aspect of our daily experience. Please write or phone for more information.

An Excerpt

In a very real sense, whenever we are Loving anyone or anything, we are also Loving God, because all is God. Ultimately, there is no separation. It is also true that there is no Love but God’s, and so whenever we are Loving, we are allowing His Love to be expressed through us. But it is worthwhile to also explore the subject of Loving God, the Creator, as distinct from His creation, and from the perspective of the Love within us, which is ours alone to share.

– from **LOVE AND LOVING**
by Jim Gordon

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