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What's on Our Agenda?

A message from Jim

We all have our own definitions of the words that we've learned in our lifetime. We often live by these definitions, never reevaluating them to see if they are really helpful (or even really true). A good example is the word *cooperation*.

Many of us think that we're in cooperation when we're really more in *separation* – self-oriented activity, based on our own personal interests and goals. Yet we think of ourselves as cooperative because that's what we've seen in others or learned to believe cooperation should look like. To cooperate is actually to work together for a common purpose; yet all too often we are *interacting* with others without really cooperating at all! Sometimes we are only cooperating with our own hidden agendas, and when this is the case, is it any wonder that we find struggle and wars and bickering and tension?

We need to learn how to cooperate within our individual selves as well, and yet we often find separation here, too, with different agendas from the different aspects within us: the emotional aspect wants one thing, the mental wants another, and the body wants something else. As before, we may think we're living in cooperation when in fact we may be far from it, often without our awareness. This lack of inner cooperation then manifests in an inability to create what it is we are seeking, and it is often reflected in the outer conflicts we may be having with others.

It is therefore up to each of us to pay attention and to find out if we have true cooperation within – to be aware of whether the physical, emotional, and mental aspects of ourselves are holding to a common goal and purpose. In the group setting, whether at home or on the job, we

can also ask ourselves if we are in cooperation with the common good of the group or whether we, on some level, may be holding out for our own personal agendas *instead* of the highest good of all.

Two important ways that groups can begin to work more effectively together is by “setting the stage” and establishing a common definition of *cooperation*, and then clarifying what their common goals really are. It then becomes so much easier to hold to that focus and to reference back to it when cooperation has gotten lost. Once we have this focus, we should stay open to the issue of whether our common definition and purpose are being served, and be willing to share openly within ourselves and with one another whenever we see them obstructed.

Without such a common direction, disruption, disharmony, and dissatisfaction result, and the effectiveness of the group is greatly diminished. This is as true in the “group” within ourselves as it is in a group of several individuals working together. But wherever there *is* true cooperation, a flow of harmony and fulfillment begins to manifest. We see our goals being reached and the common good really *being* served. True cooperation is always reflected in harmony, appreciation, mutual respect, and genuine sharing, which are aspects of the loving Spirit within us all. Whenever we can establish such a place of harmony, the Spirit can begin to come forward and work through us to manifest yet a higher purpose and an even higher good. In a very real sense, by learning to cooperate within ourselves and with one another, we begin to cooperate with the higher Light of Spirit. Only then can we honestly say we are “about our Father's business,” and what greater agenda could there ever be? ■

We'd Love to Hear from You

If you have suggestions or requests for future newsletters, please let us know.

ON THE BULLETIN BOARD

INDIANA-MICHIGAN-OHIO

ILM's **Steven McAfee** offers a broad variety of seminars and retreats in Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana, often in connection with Faithful Heart Learning Center of **Grand Rapids**. He leads Thursday evening classes in **Fort Wayne** covering various aspects of spiritual development (on a love offering basis). For details, call Steven at (219) 485-2167.

HAWAII

Jim Gordon, founder of ILM, leads an ILM study group on Tuesdays from 7-9 PM, and a meditation group on Sunday mornings, 10-12. Other worthwhile spiritual study groups meet on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings. All meetings are held at 108 Kuine Place, **Honolulu**. For more information, contact Tom Beaver at (808) 732-8934.

TEXAS

Minister, author, and newsletter editor, **Nick Martin** has been spending most of his time working with Jim Gordon on the new ILM book series. *Love and Loving* is now in print, *The Knowing of God* has been sent to press, and two others will be released in 1993 (\$6 each plus \$3 postage). Contact Nick: P.O. Box 36, Center Point, TX 78010.

Editor's note: several readers have expressed interest in a fuller understanding of what ILM represents. Perhaps the best summary is in the ILM Doctrine:

The Doctrine of Inner Light Ministries

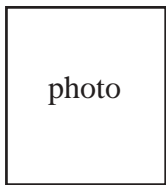
We, in the Church of Inner Light Ministries, believe that the spirit of God dwells within each and every human being. We believe that in order to worship as God intended, one goes within, privately, through prayer and meditation. Towards this end, we in ILM practice such spiritual activities daily, and gather on a regular basis with others who believe as we do. Part of this belief is that we worship God as was done in the past, when the Christian community was just forming. Then, the people gathered together and offered prayer, song, and discussion, took communion, and performed baptism. Today, as then, we come together and worship by participating in group prayer and meditation, and listen to and discuss spiritual material presented either on tape, or by someone in the group, such as an ILM minister or an area coordinator. Written materials may also be the subject of study and discussion.

In Matthew 6:1-6, it is taught that when we pray, we should not go before the world and shout our prayers to God so that all know what we ask or share with Him. Rather, it is urged that we go within, to "the closet," the quiet place that is private, and there pray. ILM therefore encourages prayer and meditation on a daily basis.

ILM encourages each person to find for

themselves the spiritual truth within them. Because a conceptual understanding may be very helpful to this process, ILM does recommend certain study materials that may be of value in better understanding ourselves as spiritual beings. Primary study materials include printed and taped materials developed and distributed by ILM, and the Bible (both the Old and New Testaments). *A Course in Miracles* and *The Aquarian Gospel* are also recommended and can offer a good foundation from which to build, and these also serve as worthwhile materials for ILM study groups to read and discuss. The list of helpful materials is by no means limited to these few, and other materials may certainly be brought into the group as well.

ILM believes in the teachings, "Do to others as you would have them do to you" [Lk 6:31], and, "Give, and it will be given to you" [Lk 6:38]. ILM thus encourages that service projects be considered a part of one's daily life. These projects can be done individually, or as part of a group or community project. One thereby learns selfless love and the blessings of giving and receiving. As Jesus taught, "whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me" [Mt 25:40]. ■



Beyond the Temple

by Steven McAfee

There's a poster I once saw, with a magnificent picture of a sailing ship, sitting at anchor in a harbor; and the caption underneath it reads, "A ship in a harbor is safe, but that's not what ships are built for." This simple idea has meaning on many levels, with much to offer about how we pursue our spiritual growth.

There seems to be a tendency in spiritual communities to see spirituality as somehow distinct from normal, everyday life. We often have a subconscious mind set that says, "This is the mundane, while this over here is the *real* spiritual." This perspective is not usually a matter of genuine discernment – that this world is a physical, challenging, and transient reality, in contrast to the divine, blissful, and eternal reality of Spirit. Instead, most of the time that we make such a distinction, there is a subtle judgment that goes along with it, and a subtle assumption that the mundane is *not* a spiritual life and therefore we must do our spiritual work apart from it.

We leave our jobs and families to go away to spiritual retreats, we drive across town to attend our worship services, and we withdraw into our private inner "towers" to be filled with the Spirit. All of these, in themselves, may be wonderful, and yet it is much like taking people into temples and isolating them from the rest of the world, its activities, and its people.

In ancient days, students in search of Spirit usually withdrew from the world in order to intensively immerse themselves in spiritual study and spiritual presence, until they eventually *became* that presence – until it began to fill them and radiate through them, naturally and effortlessly. They then *left* those temples and returned to the everyday world, to bring to it the spiritual presence they had found.

In truth, we can't give away what we ourselves haven't found. We must therefore discover that we have our own inner healer, our own

inner wisdom, our own inner strength, and our own inner comforter, all of which are made possible through the Spirit that dwells within us. If we have not yet found this truth and instead believe that these come from ministers, religions, churches, and support groups, then we do not yet "have it" to share with others. But if we *have* found these blessings in the temple within, we begin to realize that true spirituality is not a matter of how much understanding we possess or how many inner experiences we have had; instead, true spirituality is demonstrated by how *loving* we can be in the everyday living of life.

No matter what may be happening in the outer world, we can always go into the temples within and find the loving which we can then bring into our daily affairs. This is the miracle in which we all can participate: being genuinely loving on an everyday basis. It's not a matter of leaving the inner temple, and not of withdrawing and hiding ourselves there; instead, it is going within and finding, and then walking out again, carrying the Light we've found there into our activities in the world.

When spiritual presence is found *only* in churches and temples, it is only uplifting to those who are there. But if all of us who experience it there then walk out as points of that spiritual Light, it then reaches out to everyone, everywhere we go – not just to people who think as we do, or to people who feel safe to us because they share our beliefs. We can unveil our loving to *everyone*, and as we radiate our Light outward to others, it will find a response in them: it will invite them to step forth into the loving within them and begin to bring it out to others as well. This is the way we transform the world and the way that we help to transform each other. It is not enough to *find* the Light; it *is* enough to share it – through being and doing. So, whatever you've found, whether it's just a little candle or whether it's a giant supernova, take the Light you've found within and offer it to the world outside the temple, outside the harbor. Ultimately, that's what we all have come for. That is the voyage we were all built to sail. ■

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 end, it provides education and services concerned with the integration of the spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical aspects of the self, and with the development of 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 – through meditation, study, and prayer on an individual and group basis.

Service to humanity and the planet is its 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.

A Special "Thank-You!" from the editor

I always feel genuinely warmed and grateful when one of our readers takes the time to drop us a card or a note to let us know of a change in address. To those of you who have been so thoughtful, I sincerely thank you!

COMMUNICATIONS TAPES

Our September workshop held in Fort Wayne was a great success. Cassettes are available for those who were unable to attend. Please write or call for a listing.

INNER LIGHT MINISTRIES

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A Letter to Our Readers

Dear Friends:

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

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

INNER LIGHT MINISTRIES CREED

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

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

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

Please cut along dotted line

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

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

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

Please remove my name from the ILM mailing list: _____

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

We thank you and bless you!

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